

Victims of Communism-Manatee

HANDBOOK 2024-2025*



Website: <https://vocmanatee.org/>

Victims of Communism – Manatee (VOCM) is dedicated to enabling high school students to learn first-hand about Victims of Communism. We do this by augmenting Florida’s curriculum on this topic so that young people will understand why the hundreds of millions of victims died under Communist rule over the past century. We are achieving this objective by providing a competitive scholarship program to students in Manatee County public, private, and home schools. Our mission is to build strong, responsible leaders who value the U.S. Constitution, personal integrity, academic excellence, patriotism, and civic involvement.

***As Adapted from the Manatee History Day Rule Book**

Handbook Table of Contents

VOCM

I. What is Victims of Communism Day	4-10
A. Invitation Letter / FL House & Senate Bills / About the Contest	4-7
B. Definitions	8-10
II. Program Overview	
A. VOCM Theme, Topics, and Analysis Points	11-13
B. Topic Development	13-14
C. Contest Categories.....	14
D. Rewards for Participation.....	14-15
E. Important Notices for Contestants.....	15
III. Rules for All Categories	
A. General Rules for All Categories.....	15-18
B. Required Written Material for All Entries.....	18-23
C. Entry Procedures	23
D. Workshop Rules	23-24
IV. Individual Category Rules	
A. Essay (Paper).....	24-26
B. Exhibit.....	26-29
C. Oratory	29-30
V. How Will Your Entry Be Judged?	
A. Benefits of the Evaluation Process.....	30-31

B. Who are the Judges?.....	31
C. How Does the Evaluation Process Work?.....	31
D. Consensus Judging.....	31
E. The Subjective Nature of Judging.....	31-32
F. The Decision of the Judges is Final.....	32
G. Evaluation Criteria.....	32
i. Historical Quality.....	32-33
ii. Relation to Theme.....	33
iii. Clarity of Presentation.....	34
H. Rule Compliance.....	34-35
I. Sample Judges' Evaluations.....	35-37
VI. Additional Scholarship Information	38
A. National History Day	38-39
B. American Legion	39-40
C. Veterans of Foreign Wars	40-41
D. Dissident Project	41-42
E. Manatee County Republican Women's Club	43
VII. Other	
A. Contacts and Acknowledgments	43
B. Program Comparisons	44
C. Exhibit Size Requirements	45
D. Word Count Examples	46

Victims of Communism Invitation Letter

Dear VOC-Manatee Scholarship Candidate,

In 2022, Governor DeSantis approved the recognition of November 7 as the day to commemorate the Victims of Communism. Each year we will honor and reflect on the horrific loss of life and livelihoods of well over one hundred million people as a result of this political ideology.

VOC-Manatee is inviting you to engage in a scholarship competition to address the ongoing threat of Communism around the world. If you participate in this program, you can choose from three categories of presentation forms: **written essays, scholastic exhibits, or oratorical presentations**. Each of these presentation types offers you an opportunity to reuse and adapt this same academic research material to participate in other, similar scholarship competitions, and we will provide you with information on them.

Students in Manatee County public, private, or home schools are welcome to participate, from their freshmen through senior years. To give you the necessary context, you must attend a **one-day Workshop** at the Lakewood Ranch Public Library on 9/7/24. Registration will begin that morning at 09:30; the program will start promptly at 10:00. If there is sufficient space, you may bring one parent or guardian with you. We will register the first 30 parents or guardians who sign up.

You will have a chance at up to a \$3,000 Scholarship for the tertiary educational or vocational institution of your choice. We are excited to be able to offer you this opportunity to realize the benefits of our program. **VOCM's Scholarship Awards** will be presented on **October 29** at 6:00 pm at the Manatee Performing Arts Center. All participating students and their parents/guardians are welcome to attend. The scholarship funds will

be awarded directly to the winners by VOCCM. (We strongly urge that the parents/guardians immediately put that cash into a 529 education account for their son or daughter.)

Please download and print this entire document from our website and bring it with you to our Workshop on Saturday, September 7.

Best Regards,

VOCCM President

Jack May

Message from Governor DeSantis in 2022

“At a time when Marxism, socialism, and communism are actively promoted by prominent politicians and pop-culture figures in our own country, it is more important than ever to teach Florida’s schoolchildren about the horrific history of Communist countries and to provide them with opportunities to hear from individuals who suffered under the rule of Communist dictators,”

said **Governor Ron DeSantis**. “That is why I established Victims of Communism Day.”

Then, on April 17, 2024, at the Bay of Pigs Museum in Miami, Governor DeSantis signed a second bill, Senate Bill (SB) 1264-2024, called “An Act relating to the History of Communism....” Beginning in the 2026-27 school year, Florida public school students in all grades will study the history of Communism, both inside the United States, and internationally, with a particular emphasis on Cuba and other Latin American countries.

In addition to learning about the atrocities committed in foreign countries under Communist rule, Senate Bill 1264 also requires age-appropriate “[c]omparative discussion of political ideologies, such as communism and totalitarianism, which conflict with the principles of freedom and democracy essential to the founding principles of the United States.”

https://www.theepochtimes.com/us/florida-gov-desantis-signs-anti-communist-education-bill-into-law-5631423?utm_source=ref_share&utm_campaign=copy

This last requirement is actually the point of our established scholarship program about the Victims of Communism for Manatee County students to study. Your research projects will focus on the differences between how citizens of Communist countries have been and/or are treated by their own governments, versus how American citizens are, and can expect to be, treated by our own government. The freedoms, rights, and responsibilities outlined for us by our Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Bill of Rights, and other founding documents written for us in the late 1700s will still endure – so long as “We the People” remain vigilant in holding our government accountable.

The 2022 FL House Bill:

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2022/395/BillText/er/PDF>

The 2024 FL Senate Bill:

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2024/1264/BillText/er/PDF>

PLEASE READ THIS!

Before you begin work on your entry, you and your parents should read this Handbook carefully. It contains rules and guidelines that you must follow to compete in the VOCCM competition. Also:

1. A parent or guardian must also sign the Permission Slip on this website.
2. You must register your project Topic (Communist leader) and Category (type of presentation) on the VOCCM website by September 20.
3. You can change your mind and edit that entry online before the projects are due on October 19.
4. More information about topics, sources, and deadlines is available from your VOCCM Contest Coordinators.

Find your Coordinators, John Settineri, Jr., and Jim Pesnichak at the end of this Handbook and at: <https://VOCCManatee.org>.

Also note that, along with a limited Resource Library on the VOCCM website, an important research source is the national website for Victims of Communism at: <https://Victims of Communism | Keep the flame of liberty alive>

ABOUT THE CONTEST

Through your participation in this contest, you will experience important benefits beyond learning about interesting issues, ideas, people, and events of your choosing related to various Communist leaders.

You will hone your expressive abilities as you demonstrate command of your topic and present your work in one of the competition's three formats: written essays, scholastic exhibits, or oratory (speech) presentations.

At our Workshop on September 7, you will have the opportunity to meet students from other schools, exchange ideas with actual victims

(survivors) of Communism, and then later, demonstrate the results of your work. Your success in researching and producing a VOCCM entry may earn you a VOCCM scholarship.

Definitions

ENROLLMENT: The VOCCM program is organized on our website and the contest is open for enrollment up through Sept 1st. Please enroll at <https://VOCCManatee.org>

CONTEST YEAR: Students may enroll in the VOC-Manatee “Victims of Communism” scholarship program for the upcoming school year beginning on July 1 each year. Work on a project can begin after each student selects a topic from the list below, and the students will be able to engage more deeply in their research after the Workshop in September.

RULES FOR ENTRY:

Multiple entries (in any category) or reusing research from a previous year’s project will result in disqualification. One project may be entered once within a contest year.

FAIR USE: The use of copyrighted material for your project falls under the Fair Use doctrine, which identifies educational use for non-commercial purposes as acceptable with certain limitations. You should not place your project in a non-academic public setting, such as a commercial Internet site, without obtaining permission from the copyright owner. Read more here: <http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html>

PLAGIARISM/AI: Presenting the work or ideas of others in ways that give the impression that they are your own (copying information word-for-word without using both quotations and citations, paraphrasing an author's ideas without proper attribution, or using visuals or music without giving proper credit). Plagiarism in any form will result in disqualification from the contest, as will any use of artificial intelligence (AI) in your final project. Your entry must be your work.

RULE INFRACTIONS: Failure to comply with the rules will count against your entry but will only result in disqualification as delineated immediately below. Judges will take any rule infractions into consideration in their final rankings.

DISQUALIFICATION: Removal of an entry from competition. A project may be disqualified from the contest on four grounds:

1. Plagiarizing all or part of the VOCM project. Please note that failing to give proper credit is plagiarism.
2. Reusing anyone's project (or research from a project) from a previous year.
3. Tampering with any part of the project of another student.
4. Any use of Artificial Intelligence to edit or complete your project.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: This means describing or otherwise providing appropriate settings in which to understand your subject's time period. Settings might include relevant physical, economic, political, intellectual, and/or socio-cultural characteristics of the place and time.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: This means providing an understanding of a topic's development over time and its influence.

PRIMARY SOURCE: Something that was written or produced in the time period you are investigating (letters, speeches, diaries, newspaper articles from the time, oral history interviews of people from the time, documents, photographs, artifacts, and anything else that provides firsthand accounts about a person or event). This definition also applies to primary sources found on the Internet. A letter written by President Lincoln in 1862 is a primary source for a student researching the Civil War era. An article about the Vietnam War published in 2001 and not written by an eyewitness or participant about his or her experience is not a primary source. An interview with an expert (such as a professor of Vietnamese history) is not a primary source, UNLESS that expert actually lived through and has firsthand knowledge of the events being described. Primary materials such as quotes from historical figures or photographs of historical events, when found in secondary sources, can be used effectively in VOCCM projects; however, these are not considered primary sources.

NOTE: Check out the “Conducting Research” page in the Contest section on the National History Day website at <http://www.nhd.org> for additional help on primary sources.

SECONDARY SOURCE: A source by an author who was not an eyewitness or a participant in the historical event or period. Secondary sources are interpretations of primary sources, research, and study. Secondary sources provide context for a historical event. For example, high school history textbooks and history books about a particular topic are secondary sources; so are biographies and reference sources such as encyclopedias. This definition also applies to descriptive articles or information found on the Internet.

II Program Overview

Theme

VOCM Themes – Various examples of Communist rule in many different countries around the globe are qualified to be addressed in the VOCM scholarship competition:

Mandatory VOCM topics for Scholarship consideration

Select one **Topic** (Communist Leader)

Select 2-3 analysis areas in **Analysis Points** (1-5)

Select Analysis Point 6 /VI (**mandatory**)

Topics (Specific Communist Leaders)

- Vladimir Lenin and the Russian Revolution
- Josef Stalin and the Soviet System
- Mao Zedong and the Chinese Cultural Revolution
- North Korea's Kim Dynasty (you may research any or all of them: Kim Il Sung; Kim Jong Il; and/or Kim Jong Un)
- Romania: Nicolae Ceausescu and the Romanian Communists
- Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution
- Ho Chi Minh and North Vietnam's Viet Minh Independence Movement
- Pol Pot and the Cambodian Khmer Rouge
- Daniel Ortega and Nicaragua's Sandinista Movement
- Nicolás Maduro and Venezuela's Chavismo Movement.

(Note: If you wish to research a Communist leader not listed here, please contact the Contest Coordinators for approval.)

Analysis Points:

- I. Analyze how Communist political ideologies conflict with the principles of freedom, capitalism, and democracy.
- II. Analyze how the Communist leader you've chosen shaped his country's political, economic, educational, judicial, and social systems to reflect his personal ideology and how that affected ordinary citizens.
- III. Analyze the actions that conflict with the principles of freedom, capitalism, and democracy.
 - i. Identify how authoritarian regimes victimize their citizens by:
 1. Restricting individual rights and choices, resulting in poverty, starvation, migration, and systemic lethal violence
 2. Suppressing freedom of speech and religion through the use of state-controlled violence.
- IV. Analyze how Communism impacts the principles of checks and balances:
 - a. Consent of the governed
 - b. Democracy
 - c. Due process of law
 - d. Federalism
 - e. Individual freedoms and rights
 - Including private ownership of property and businesses

- f. Limited government
 - g. Representative government
 - h. Republicanism
 - i. Rule of law
 - j. Separation of powers
- V. Analyze how enduring Communist rule is as a governance model in a given nation, and whether its longevity, or lack thereof, is tied to its flexibility and ability to overcome challenges.
- VI. Distinguish how the United States' Constitutional republic's governance practices and treatment of its citizens differ from those of authoritarian and totalitarian states.

Topic Development

Effective VOXM entries not only describe events or developments made by your chosen individual or his system or movement, but they also analyze and place them in their historical context. To help you draw conclusions about your topic's significance in history, ask yourself the following questions:

- How was my topic (person) significant in history in relation to the VOXM theme of state-controlled violence and victimization of his own citizens?
- How did my topic develop over time?

- How did my topic influence history?
- How did the events and atmosphere (social, economic, political, and cultural aspects) of my topic's time period influence my topic in history?
- Why is my topic important, particularly in relation to the United States' Constitutional governance model at that time, or over time?

Contest Categories

You must enter one of three categories:

- Written essay
- Exhibit
- Oratory (speech)

Each category is judged separately.

NOTE: Choose a category in which you can make the best use of your unique abilities, talents, and interests. Be careful to choose the most suitable category in which to present your research and conclusions and take into consideration the availability of equipment and resources. You should also consider which categories can be reused for other scholarship competitions.

Rewards for Participation

The most important rewards are the skills and new knowledge that you will acquire as you move through the VOCCM program. In addition, since the VOCCM scholarship program finishes early in the school year, we have

specifically designed our program to enable students who are interested in applying for multiple, similar scholarships to re-use and adapt their same VOCCM historical research to qualify for those other scholarships.

Those include:

1. The Veterans of Foreign Wars' "Voice of Democracy" scholarships
2. The American Legion's Oratorical Contest
3. The National History Day/Manatee History Day Contest
4. The Dissident Project's Essay Contest
5. The Women of Manatee County Republican Club Scholarship
Donna Fornier, President: (ndmoresr@yahoo.com)

Information on these scholarships is provided later, below. Please remember you must adapt your work to meet the specific academic criteria for each scholarship program.

Important Notice for all Contestants

All contests are held in public areas. You are solely responsible for the security and safety of your own equipment and artifacts. VOCCM program officials and sponsors will not be responsible for the loss of, or damage to, exhibits, props, equipment, or personal belongings.

III. Rules for All Categories

General Rules for All Categories

Rule 1 | Theme: Your entry must relate clearly to the VOCCM theme of Victims of Communism and meet all the Topic Analysis requirements. Within all your chosen analysis points, you must explain your topic's significance in history, and how it compares to America's Constitutional republic.

Rule 2 | Contest Participation: You may participate in the research, preparation, and presentation of only one VOCCM entry each contest year.

Rule 3 | Individual Entries: An essay, individual exhibit, or oratory presentation must be the work of only one student.

Rule 4 | Development Requirements: Entries submitted for competition must be original and have been researched and developed in the current contest year. Revising or reusing an entry from a previous year—whether it is yours or another student’s—will result in disqualification. The contest year begins each July, culminating in a scholarship award ceremony, this year on October 29, as we prepare to commemorate Victims of Communism Day on November 7.

Rule 5 | Construction of Entry: You are responsible for the research, design, and creation of your entry. You may receive help and advice from teachers and parents on the mechanical aspects of creating your entry, such as typing your paper and other written materials. You may seek guidance from your teachers as you research and analyze your material, but your conclusions must be your own. You may have reasonable help preparing your project.

Examples of reasonable help include:

- A parent or teacher instructs you on how to use an editing software program.
- A parent uses a cutting tool to cut the exhibit board or performance prop that you designed.
- A teacher offers editing suggestions on your historical paper or shows you how to use super-scripts and footnotes or endnotes for citations.

- A mentor may provide context on your topic as both a primary or secondary source.

NOTE: Objects created by others specifically for use in your entry violate this rule. Examples include a parent editing your essay or an artist drawing the backdrop for your exhibit. You may receive reasonable help in carrying and placing props and exhibits.

Rule 6 | Tampering with Another VOCM Entry: You may not tamper with, deface, or alter another student's entry. Doing so will result in your project's disqualification.

Rule 7 | Contest Day Deadline: All three categories of submissions (essays, oratorical presentations, and exhibits) are due on October 19, 2024. The written essays must be uploaded to the vocmanatee.org website by October 19, and the oratorical presentations and exhibits will be judged at West Bradenton Baptist Church Family Life Center, 1305 43rd St W, Bradenton, FL, at 10:00 am, on that same date: Saturday, Oct 19, 2024, starting at 10:00 am.

Rule 8 | Setup: You are responsible for setting up your own exhibit, equipment, or props at the contest. You may have reasonable help carrying them, but setup must be completed by you.

Rule 9 | Supplying Equipment: You are responsible for supplying all props and equipment. All entries should be constructed with transportation, setup time, size, and weight in mind (e.g., foam board versus solid oak for an exhibit, folding table versus antique desk to display it on, etc.). You must provide your own equipment, including computers and software, unless the contest coordinator has specified that certain equipment will be provided at the contest venue. In this case, VOCM will provide folding tables and chairs for your use. Be prepared.

Rule 10 | Discussion with Judges: For exhibits only, you should be prepared to answer judges' questions about the content and development of your entry and to explain the design, research, and creation of your entry. Judges need to know that your entry is the result of your own work. However, you may not give a formal, prepared introduction, narration, or conclusion if/as you speak with the judges. Let the judges' questions guide the interview. Ultimately, your entry should be able to stand on its own without any additional comments from you.

Rule 11 | Prohibited Materials: Items potentially dangerous in any way—such as weapons, firearms, animals, organisms, plants, etc.—are strictly prohibited. Such items will be confiscated by contest officials. Replicas of such items that are obviously not real are permissible. Contact your Contest Coordinator to confirm guidelines before bringing the replica to the contest.

Rule 12 | Title: Your entry must have a title that is clearly visible on all written materials.

Required Written Material for All Entries

Rule 13 | Written Material: Your entry must include the following written material in the order presented below:

1. A title page as described in Rule 14;
2. An annotated bibliography as described in Rule 15.

Rule 14 | Title Page: A title page is required as the first page of written material in every category. Your title page must include only the title of your entry, your name, and the contest category in which you are entered, and applicable word counts. Please see Figure 2 below for

examples of required elements for the essay, exhibit, and oratory presentation categories.

NOTE: The title page must not include any other information (pictures, graphics, borders), except for that described in this handbook.

Figure 2 | Sample Title Pages

Title
Name
Historical Essay
Paper Length: 2,234 words

Title
Name
Exhibit
Student-composed
Words: 489

Title
Name
Oratory Presentation
Length of Pres: Min

Rule 15 | Annotated Bibliography: An annotated bibliography is required for all categories. List only those sources that contributed to the development of your entry, i.e., sources that provided usable information or new perspectives in preparing your entry. Sources of visual and audio materials and oral interviews must be included. Bundle photos or other materials from the same collection into a single citation. Your annotated bibliography is not included in the word count. For example: Bates, Daisy. "The Long Shadow of Little Rock." New York: David McKay Co. Inc., 1962, pp. 24-30.

NOTE: Oral history transcripts, correspondence between you and experts, questionnaires, and other primary or secondary materials used as sources for your entry should be cited in your bibliography but not included as attachments to your bibliography.

Rule 16 | Style Guides: Style for citations and bibliographic references must follow the principles in a recent edition of one of the following style guides: 1. Kate L. Turabian, "A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers"; or 2. Joseph Gibaldi, "MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers." Regardless of which manual you use, the style must be consistent throughout all written material. Here is an example of citations shown in a written text, along with the annotated bibliography below:

The second major issue debated at the Yalta Conference was the destiny of the Polish state. The Polish nation fluctuated between existence and partition throughout European history. After World War I, the Treaty of Versailles created the modern Polish state. In 1939, Germany demanded land and economic concessions from the nation, and the Polish government refused to concede to these demands. On March 31, 1939, Poland signed an agreement with Great Britain and France in which these nations promised to provide aid to Poland if attacked by Germany. On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland with two

army groups while stationing the German Navy to prevent a British attack from the sea.ⁱ Warsaw was surrounded by September 17, and after heavy bombing raids, surrendered ten days later.ⁱⁱ Poland was overrun quickly, “with a speed that astonished the rest of the world.”ⁱⁱⁱ The Polish government and military leaders fled to France, and later to London. Poland remained occupied for most of the war. Soviet troops finally took control of Warsaw in January 1945. Poland was largely “written off at Yalta,” despite the fact that it fought with the Allied powers in exile.^{iv} The representatives at the Yalta Conference made the following decision regarding the Polish state: A new situation has been created in Poland as a result of her complete liberation by the Red Army. This calls for the establishment of a Polish Provisional Government...which is now functioning in Poland should therefore be reorganized on a broader democratic basis with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad. This new Government should then be called the Polish Provisional Government of National Unity.^v

i. James L. Stokesbury, “A Short History of World War II” (New York: Harper, 1980), 69--71.

ii. John Keegan, “The Second World War” (New York: Penguin, 1989), 46.

iii. Stokesbury, “A Short History of World War II,” 75.

iv. Keegan, “The Second World War,” 542.

v. “The Yalta Agreement,” The Avalon Project, Yale Law School, last modified 2008, accessed January 3, 2014, <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/yalta.asp>.

Rule 17 | Plagiarism: You must acknowledge in your annotated bibliography all sources used in your entry. Failure to credit sources is plagiarism and will result in disqualification.

Rule 18 | Award Presentations: The scholarships will be awarded on October 29, 2024, at the Manatee Performing Arts Center: \$1,000 each for the best written essay, oral presentation, and exhibit; \$3,000 for the best overall presentation; and \$500 each for second place in each category.

Entry Procedures: For this VOCM scholarship competition you must:

1. Register online, meet specific deadlines, and follow the procedures established by the Contest Coordinators.
2. The Parental Consent Form must be signed on the website in advance of the 9/7/24 Workshop.

You are responsible for knowing and meeting the deadlines, which are:

3. Online registration begins on July 1 and ends on September 1.
4. Mandatory Participation in the one-day Workshop on September 7, which will be held at the LWR Library from 9:30 am to 2:30 pm.
 - a. Register your project title and the category on the VOCM website by September 16 (you can change your mind—just resubmit your entry before October 12).
5. Completion of all projects by October 19:
 - a. Upload and submit written essays on that date (Oct 19)
 - b. Present speeches and exhibits at West Bradenton Baptist Church, Family Life Center, 1305 43rd St W, Bradenton, FL, on October 19, 2024, beginning at 10:00 am.

Rules for Participation in the Mandatory Workshop

- Attendance at the September 7 Workshop, at the Lakewood Ranch Library, Conference Room A, in its entirety is required for participation.

- Video/audio recording or photography during the Workshop is not allowed.
- All participants must be pre-registered in order to attend the Workshop. Walk-ins will not be permitted.
- Participation is limited to high school students residing in Manatee County, or residing in another county, but attending a Manatee County public or private school. Up to 30 students may bring one parent or guardian.
- The program will be strictly limited to the first 70 students enrolled in the program.
- The Parental Consent Form must be signed on the website in advance of the 9/7/24 Workshop.
- Participants will have 6 weeks to complete their work products prior to Judging on Saturday, October 19th.
- Awards will be presented on Tuesday, October 29 at 6:00 pm.

IV. Individual Category Rules

A Written Essay

An essay is the traditional form of presenting historical research, and it must conform to all general and category rules. Your essay should be grammatically correct and well written.

A1: Length Requirements

- Historical essays must be between 2,000 and 3,000 words.
- Each word or number in the text of the paper counts as one word. This includes student-composed text as well as quotes from primary or secondary sources.

- The 3,000-word limit does not apply to notes, the annotated bibliography, illustration captions, and appendix material. Appendix material must be referenced in the text of the paper. Extensive supplemental materials are inappropriate. Use of appendices should be very limited and may include photographs, maps, charts, and/or graphs only.

NOTE: Oral history transcripts, correspondence between you and experts, questionnaires, and other primary or secondary materials used as sources for your paper should be cited in your bibliography but not included as attachments/appendices to your paper.

A2: Citations

- Citations—footnotes or endnotes are required.
- Citations are used to credit the sources of specific ideas as well as direct quotations.
- Refer to Part III, Rule 16, for citation styles. Please note that an extensively annotated footnote should not be used to get around the word limit.

A3: Preparation Requirements

- Essays must be printed on plain, white 8.5 x 11-inch paper with 1-inch margins on all sides.
- Pages must be numbered consecutively and double-spaced with writing on one side only, and in 12-point font.
- Essays, including a title page and annotated bibliography, must be uploaded and submitted to the vocmanatee.org website by October 19, 2024.

- Winning papers sometimes are published by contest officials; you must be prepared to give permission for such publication.

B Exhibit

An exhibit is a visual representation of your research and interpretation of your topic's significance in history. The analysis and interpretation of your topic must be clear and evident to the viewer. Labels and captions should be used creatively with visual images and objects to enhance the message of your exhibit.

B1: Size Requirements

- The overall size of your exhibit when displayed for judging must be no larger than 40 inches wide, 30 inches deep, and 6 feet high.
- Measurement of the exhibit does not include the table on which it rests; however, it does include any stand that you create.
- Circular or rotating exhibits or those meant to be viewed from all sides must be no more than 30 inches in diameter. See Figure 3 (page 45) for illustration.

B2: Word Limit

- A 500-word limit applies to all student-composed text that appears on, or as part of, an exhibit entry.
- This includes the text that you write for titles, subtitles, captions, graphs, timelines, media devices, or supplemental materials (e.g., photo albums, scrapbooks, etc.) where you use your own words.
- Brief factual credits of the sources of illustrations or quotations included on the exhibit do not count toward the 500-word limit. A date (January 1, 1903) counts as one word. See Figure 4 (at end below, page 46) for

additional explanation. NOTE: Be careful that your message is clear in the exhibit itself. Extensive supplemental material is inappropriate. Oral history transcripts, correspondence between you and experts, questionnaires, and other primary or secondary material used as sources for your exhibit should be cited in your bibliography, but not included as attachments to your bibliography or exhibit.

B3: Media Devices

- Media devices (e.g., DVD players, tablets, mp3 players, video monitors, computers, etc.) used in an exhibit must not run for more than a total of three minutes.
- Quotes from another source (e.g., clip from a documentary, primary source music, etc.) are considered quotes. Any student-composed questions, narration, or graphics incorporated within a media presentation are subject to the 500-word limit (Rule B2).
- Viewers and judges must be able to control media devices. Any media devices must fit within the size limits of the exhibit.
- Any media devices used should be integral to the exhibit—not a method to bypass the prohibition against live student involvement.

B4: Crediting Sources

- All quotes from written sources must be credited on the exhibit.
- All visual sources (e.g., photographs, paintings, charts, and graphs, etc.) must be credited on the exhibit and fully cited in the annotated bibliography.
- Brief, factual credits do not count toward the word total. See Figure 6 (at end below) for an example of the difference between a credit and a caption.

B5: Required Written Materials

- Six copies of your title page and bibliography should be presented to the judges for review. Be sure to bring an additional copy for your own reference.

Refer to Part III, Rules 15-16, for citation and style information.

Counting Words

Examples from an exhibit board on the number of student-composed words:

John Quincy Adams served as the Secretary of State....

Student Composed words: 9

These are all student-composed words.

--

On August 18, 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified....

Student Composed words: 7

The date counts as one word.

When Thomas Jefferson wrote that “All men are created equal” in the Declaration of Independence...

Student Composed words: 10

Direct quotations from primary and secondary sources do not count as student-composed words.

“Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth...” Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863

Student Composed words: 0

Direct quotations from primary and secondary sources and brief, factual credits do not count as student-composed words.

Photos of winning scholastic exhibits sometimes are published by contest officials; you must be prepared to give permission for such publication.

Note that video recordings and/or photographs of winning exhibits sometimes are published by contest officials; you must be prepared to give permission for such publication.

C. Oratory Presentation (Speech)

An oratorical presentation is a spoken portrayal of your topic’s significance in history and must be an original production. It is essentially a two-for-one: a written essay that you deliver verbally. It should be scripted based on research of your chosen topic and should have somewhat more dramatic appeal than a dry essay by virtue of your telling of a significant historical story, but not at the expense of the historical information itself. You may read from your script, if needed. Because a speech does not have footnotes or endnotes, you should provide the sources of your information within your presentation.

C1: Time Requirements

- Oratorical presentations should last a minimum of eight minutes, and they may not exceed ten minutes in length. Timing starts at the beginning of the performance following the announcement of the title and student name.

C2 Introduction

- The title of your entry and your name must be the first and only announcements prior to the start of the presentation.

C3 Script

- The script for your oratory should not be included with the written material presented to the judges.

C4 Required Written Materials

- Six copies of your title page and bibliography should be presented to the judges for review. Be sure to bring an additional copy for your own reference. Refer to Part III, Rules 15-16, for citation and style information.

Recordings of winning oral presentations sometimes are published by contest officials; you must be prepared to give permission for such publication.

V. How Will Your Entry Be Judged?

Benefits of The Evaluation Process

VOCM's goal is to provide you with a high-quality, educational experience— whether or not you win a scholarship or other recognition. The judges' evaluations are part of the learning and skill-building process of VOCM. The judges' evaluations help you to improve skills and provide positive feedback for the hard work you have put into producing your project. The judges' comments also can provide you with ideas for revisions and enhancements, if you should choose to re-use this material for separate scholarship programs. Remember, regardless of the outcome, by participating in the VOCM scholarship program, you will

benefit from the experience. You will gain research, critical thinking, academic writing, and presentation skills that will last your entire life. You will become an expert on an important topic of interest to you and to others. You will learn to manage your time and acquire poise and self-confidence.

Who are the Judges?

Historians, educators, survivors of Communism, experienced veterans, and others interested in history and education serve as judges in the VOCCM competition. The Contest Coordinators work very hard to ensure a quality judging experience.

How Does the Evaluation Process Work?

At official VOCCM contests, each category usually is judged as a whole by a panel of judges. Time constraints due to the number of entries often require entries in some categories to be divided among several teams of judges. Finals then become necessary. In such cases, the entries judged best by each team of initial judges are re-evaluated by a new team of judges to determine the winning entries in the category. The number of entries in finals and procedures for judging vary by contest and category and are within the discretion of the contest officials.

Consensus Judging

Judges will not assign a numerical score to each entry; rather, they will rank the entries in their group. Judges are required to consult with each other in determining individual rankings. Judges are encouraged to review the results of their category to assure accuracy in the evaluation process.

The Subjective Nature of Judging

Judges must evaluate certain aspects of your entry that are objective (e.g., were primary sources used; is the written material grammatically correct and accurately spelled, etc.). But judges also must evaluate interpretive aspects of your entry that are qualitative in nature (e.g., analysis and conclusions about the historical data, etc.). Historians often reach different opinions about the significance of the same data. It is therefore crucial for you to base your interpretations and conclusions on solid research. Judges will check to determine whether you used available primary sources and whether you were careful to examine all sides of an issue and present a balanced account of your research and presentation. Your annotated bibliography is critical to this process.

The Decision of the Judges is Final

You, your parents, and your teachers should realize that inadvertent inequities may occur in judging and that contest officials do want to be informed of any problems. If you have a concern, ask your coordinator about the correct process to follow in notifying officials. The decision of the judges is final.

Evaluation Criteria

Historical Quality (40%)

The most important aspects of your entry are its historical quality as well as your analysis of it, and how you relate that research and analysis to the VOCCM theme of differentiating Communist dictators' governance models from the United States' historical Constitutional governance model. As you do your research, you should ask yourself the following questions to help you focus on your historical analysis.

- Is my entry historically accurate?

- Does my entry provide analysis and interpretation of the historical data rather than just a description?
- Does my entry demonstrate an understanding of historical context?
- Does my annotated bibliography demonstrate wide research?
- Does my entry demonstrate a balanced presentation of materials, in both the United States' context and that of the Communist country and its leader(s) that I am comparing with U.S. historical governance?
- Does my entry demonstrate use of available primary sources?

Relation to Theme (40%)

Your entry must explain clearly the relation of your topic to the **VOCM theme** of telling the story of Communist rule and its victims in a specific time and place, comparing that governance model to that of the United States, either then, or as a rule. You should ask yourself the following questions to help focus your topic on the theme and its significance.

- How does my topic relate to the theme?
- Why is my topic important?
- How is my topic significant in history and in relation to the VOCM theme?
- How did my topic (selected leader) influence history? Was his rule in fact a turning point in history? Was the writing of the U.S. Constitution a turning point in history? What are their respective legacies?

- How did the events and atmosphere (social, economic, political, and cultural aspects of my topic's time period) influence my topic in history?

Clarity of Presentation (20%)

Although historical quality is most important, your entry must be presented in an effective manner. You should ask yourself the following questions to help you focus on your presentation.

- Is my entry original, creative, and imaginative in subject and presentation?
- Is my written material clear, grammatically correct, and accurately spelled?
- Is my entry well-organized?
- Do I display stage presence in my oratory presentation, i.e., do I display command of my material?
- Is my visual material presented clearly?

Rule Compliance

Rule infractions occur when you violate any of the rules stated in this Contest Handbook. Infractions are not grounds for disqualification, but judges will take any rule infractions into consideration in their final rankings. Failure to comply with the rules will count against your entry. A project may be disqualified from the contest on three grounds:

1. Plagiarizing all or part of the VOCCM project, or any use of Artificial Intelligence in your final product. Please note that failing to give proper credit is plagiarism.
2. Reusing a project (or research from a project from a previous year or entering a project in multiple VOCCM entry categories within a contest year).
3. Tampering with any part of the project of another student.

Judges' Criteria – Sample Judges' Evaluations

1. On the next two pages you will see the Judges' actual tabulation sheets. The first one is the analysis points review; the second one is the criteria review for assessing the historical quality, clarity and creativity, and relationship to the VOCCM theme of your research project.

Fig #1: Judge / Student Evaluation Sheet

Student: _____

Date ____/____/____

Category: _____

Analysis Points: _____

Judge: _____

Judging Criteria	Y	N	Comments (Strengths, Areas for Improvement)
Historical Quality (40%)			
Entry is historically accurate			
Address Analysis Points (see AP Score Card)			
Places topic in historical context			
Shows wide primary sources			
Uses available primary sources			
Clarity & Creativity of Project (40%)			
Project, written material, is original, clear, appropriate, organized, articulate.			
Project is organized, has visual impact, correctly uses maps, photos, etc.			
Project conveys desired impact.			
Relationship to the Theme (20%)			
Clearly related topic to theme			
Demonstrates significance of topic in history and draws conclusions, including in comparison with U.S. historical governance model			
Rules Compliance			
Maintains size requirement (40x30x72)			
Includes annotated bibliography			
Media device maintains time limit (3 mins.)			
Maintains word limit (500 words - exhibit) (2,000 – 3,000 words – essay; 8-10 mins – speech)			
Overall Rating (Circle One)			
Superior Excellent Good			

Fig #2: Evaluation Sheet: VOC Manatee AP

Student: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Category: _____

Analysis Points: _____

Judge: _____

Judging Criteria	Evaluation			Comments
	'	Ave	+	
Analysis Points				
1. Communist political ideologies				
2. Shaped his country's political, economic, educational, and social systems				
3. Actions that conflict with the principles of freedom, capitalism and democracy.				
4. Analyze how Communism impacts the principles of checks and balances:				
a. Consent of the governed				
b. Democracy				
c. Due process of law				
d. Federalism				
e. Individual rights and Property				
f. Limited government				
g. Representative government				
h. Republicanism				
i. Rule of law				
j. Separation of powers				
5. Communist Rule and its longevity is tied to its flexibility and ability to overcome challenges.				
6. Distinguish the US Constitutional republic's governance practices and treatment of its citizens from those of authoritarian and totalitarian states.				

ADDITIONAL SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION:

Participants in the VOCCM Scholarship Competition may wish to compete in similar scholarship programs in addition, soon after this one in the school year. For each of the following, it is possible to reuse and appropriately adapt your research for these competitions as well.

Disclaimer: The information below is for guidance only; it is each student's responsibility to confirm the rules, deadlines, etc., and meet the necessary qualifications of the respective competitions. (See Program Comparison Chart: Figure #1, pg 44.)

For both the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars Scholarship Programs, their only category is Oratory.

Each has different requirements. The Legion's U.S. Constitution-focused program does not change from year to year, while the topic for the VFW's high school-level "Voice of Democracy" program in 2024-25 is **"Is America Today Our Forefathers' Vision?"**

VOCCM has consulted with the National Headquarters for both the American Legion and VFW. Both have confirmed that a comparison of the U.S. Constitution and the U.S. governance model featuring individual freedoms and the rule of law against the governance models of Communist Russia (and then Soviet Union), China, Romania, Cuba, Cambodia, North Korea, Vietnam, Nicaragua, or Venezuela under their leaders listed above would be an acceptable entry in their respective oratorical competitions, if appropriately adapted to meet their requirements.

National History Day / Manatee History Day

For National History Day/Manatee History Day, the theme for 2024-25 is **"Rights and Responsibilities in History."** The VOCCM Project could fit well

into this school year's (2024-25) program. NHD/MHD has categories for essays, individual and group performances, exhibits, websites, and more.

For more information about MHD and answers to frequently asked questions about rules and procedures, see the NHD website at <http://www.nhd.org> and <https://nhd.org/en/contest/theme/>.

AMERICAN LEGION

About the Oratorical Contest

“A constitutional speech contest”

The American Legion Oratorical Contest exists to develop deeper knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students. Since 1938, the program has presented participants with an academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities, the history of our nation's laws, the ability to think and speak clearly, and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship.

Young orators earn some of the most generous college scholarships available to high school students. Over \$203,500 in scholarships can be awarded each year. The overall national contest winner gets a \$25,000 scholarship. Second place takes home \$22,500, and third gets \$20,000. Each department (state) winner who is certified into and participates in the national contest's first round receives a \$2,000 scholarship. Those who advance past the first round receive an additional \$2,000 scholarship. The American Legion's National Organization awards the scholarships, which can be used at any college or university in the United States.

Eligible participants must be citizens of or lawful permanent residents of the United States. High school (public, parochial, military, private or home school) students under age 20 are eligible. Competition begins at the local post level and advances to a state competition. Legion department (state-level) representatives certify one winner per state to the national contest, where department winners compete against each other in two speaking rounds. The contest caps off with a final round that decides the three top finishers.

The oration must be on some aspect of the Constitution, with emphasis on a citizen's duties and obligations to our government. The same subject and oration used in the department contest must be used in the national contest. Speeches are eight to 10 minutes long; three-to five-minute extemporaneous speeches on an assigned topic also are part of the contest.

For more information:

<https://www.legion.org/oratorical/rules>

Please follow the on-line application instructions by the given deadline, and be prepared to compete in the Oratorical Program by applying as appropriate at: American Legion Kirby Stewart Post 24, 2000 75th St., W, Bradenton, FL 34209; or at American Legion Post 325, 3412 U.S.-301, Ellenton, FL 34222.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS (VFW)

Voice of Democracy

Rules and Eligibility

The VFW is dedicated to promoting patriotism and investing in our future generation. If you are a democracy-loving high school student interested in a \$35,000 college scholarship ... these scholarships may be for you.

Established in 1947, our **Voice of Democracy** audio-essay program provides high school students with the unique opportunity to express themselves regarding a democratic and patriotic-themed recorded essay. Each year, nearly 25,000 ninth through 12th grade students from across the country enter to win their share of more than \$1 million in educational scholarships and incentives awarded through the program.

The national first place winner receives a \$35,000 scholarship paid directly to the recipient's American university, college or vocational/technical school. A complete list of other national scholarships ranges from \$1,000-\$21,000, and the first-place winner from each VFW Department (state) wins at least a scholarship of \$1,000. Before submitting your essay, download the [2024-2025 entry form here](#) and find your sponsoring [local VFW Post](#) as applications must be turned in by **midnight, Oct. 31**.

Email Address: <https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/youth-scholarships>

Again, please follow the VFW's on-line enrollment instructions and note the quick submission deadline of October 31. You can submit your physical copies of your oratorical recording and supplemental documentation to VFW Post 10141 at 5105 Manatee Ave W, Bradenton, FL 34209.

DISSIDENT PROJECT: National Essay Contest

[Dissident Project National Essay Contest 2024 | college scholarships | Going Merry](#)

Description: [From 2023 Inaugural Version] Have you ever stood tall in the face of injustice? When did you realize the value of your American freedoms? What caused this realization? What does it mean to be free? On our trips to schools around the country, we've heard from hundreds of incredible young people. You're a dissident, too — and it's time to tell the world your story. In our first national essay contest, the Dissident Project wants to award the bravery and resilience of three high schoolers whose essays touch our hearts. The final five contenders will be judged by a panel of esteemed guests who do important work in the journalism and human rights space. Keep reading to pick your prompt, meet our guest judges, read the rules, and check out the prizes.

Application requirements for the Dissident Project National Essay Contest are:

- Essay
- Application form

Additional Information: The inaugural Dissident Project Essay Contest will encourage conversations about liberty, bravery, and freedom beyond the classroom. Each of our six prompts is designed to inspire personal reflections on how American values have impacted students' lives. Submissions should be in the form of a 500-800-word essay-style response to one of the six prompts provided. The top five selections will be evaluated by a panel of esteemed guest judges. The winner will receive \$3,000 in scholarship funds, along with professional-level editing from Dissident Project's parent organization, Young Voices—a talent agency for liberty-minded young people. The winning essay will be published in a national outlet. Second and third prize winners will be awarded \$2,000 and \$1,000, respectively, and their pieces will be published in the Dissident Project Blog. All three top finishers will gain immediate admittance to Dissident Project's Student Advisory Board.

Award Amount: Chosen applicants will receive up to a \$3,000 award. The total dollar amount awarded for this scholarship is \$6,000.

Deadline Information:

Deadline for this scholarship is Sunday, December 31, 2024.

Women of Manatee County Republican Club

Please contact President Donna Fournier for application guidelines at (773) 512-9366 or ndmoresr@yahoo.com. It is a \$500 scholarship and the deadline for entry is April 1st of each year. This scholarship is both a scholastic grade point and an essay competition.

Contacts: Victims of Communism-Manatee

340 165th Ct NE / Bradenton, Florida 34212 / VOCCM Email:
info@VOCCM.org

VOC-Manatee Student Coordinators:

1) John Settineri, Jr.

Email: john.settineri@protonmail.com

Mobile phone number: 914-588-0415

2) Jim Pesnichak

Email: pesnichakj@yahoo.com

Mobile phone number: 941-320-3199

Web: <https://www.VOCCManatee.org>

National Website: <https://www.victimsofcommunism.org>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

VOC-Manatee would like to thank the National History Day/Manatee History Day program for allowing us to borrow from and adapt their Rule Book for our use in creating our VOCCM Student Handbook.

NHD Rule Book May be duplicated without permission of National History Day; however, duplication for profit is prohibited.

Fig #1. Program Comparisons

Category	VOCM	VFW	AL	MHD	DP	MWRC
1 Paper/ Essay	X			X	X	X
2 Exhibit	X			X		
3 Oratory	X	X	X			
4 Performance				X		
5 Documentary				X		
6 Exhibit				X		
7 Website				X		

VOCM - Victims of Communism Manatee
VFW - Veterns of Forien Wars
AL - American Legion
MHD - Manatee History Day
DP - Dissident Project
MWRC - Manatee Women Republican Club

Figure 2 (pg 26)

NHD / MHD		
CATEGORY	INDIVIDUAL	GROUP
Paper/ Essay	Y	N
Performance	Y	Y

Documentary	Y	Y
Exhibit	Y	Y
Website	Y	Y

Figure 3: Exhibit Size

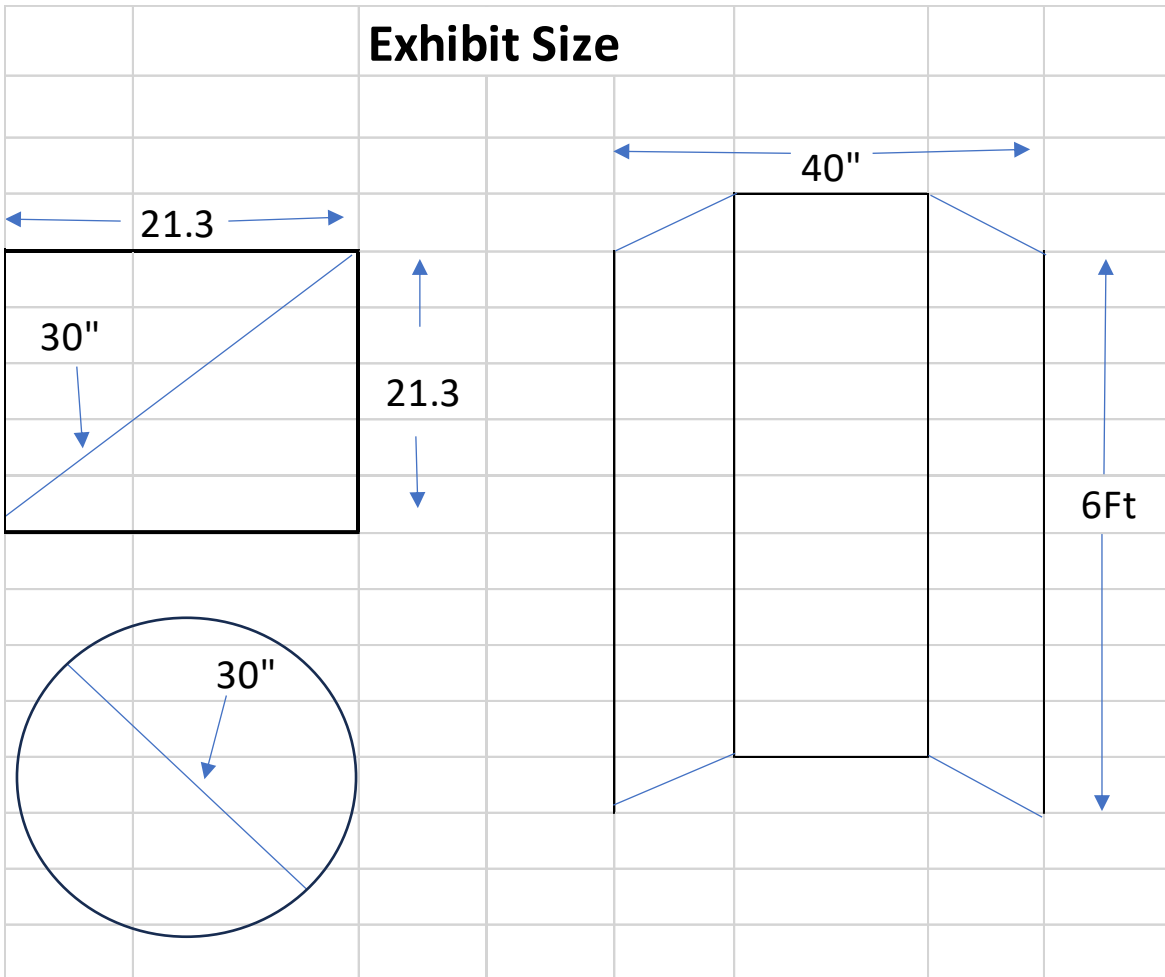


Figure 4 - Word Count

Example from an exhibit board	Number of student	Explanation
John Quincy Adams served as the Secretary of State....	9	These are all student-composed Words
On August 18, 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified....	7	The date counts as one word.
When Thomas Jefferson wrote that “All men are created equal” in the Declaration of	10	Direct quotations from primary and secondary sources
“Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth...” Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg	0	Direct quotations from primary and secondary sources

i

ii Xxx

iii Xxx

iv Xxx