



**The Platteville Optimist Club** encourages area students to submit their essays for the 2024-2025 Optimist International **Essay Scholarship Competition**. The topic for this year is "How Optimism Has Paved My Road to Success."

**Application Information:**

- The essay contest is open to students under the age of 19 as of October 1, 2024.
- Students should carefully read the competition rules on the application.
- Applications can be obtained from the teacher, school office, or downloaded from the "Events" tab on [www.plattevilleoptimists.org](http://www.plattevilleoptimists.org)
- Essays must be submitted with a completed application (postmarked or emailed) by **Friday, January 31, 2025** to the address or email listed on the application.

**Contest Information:**

- All contestants will receive a Certificate of Participation for their submission along with a laminated copy of the Optimist Creed.
  - The top three contestants will be invited along with their parent(s) or guardian(s) to an Optimist Club Meeting to receive their checks and read their essay (optional) to the Platteville Optimist Club Members at a date and location to be later determined.
1. Three Club Level winners will be awarded an Optimist International Essay Contest Medallion and a check for \$150, \$100 and \$50 respectively for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place. The 1<sup>st</sup> place winner will have their essay submitted to the District Level competition.
  2. District Level: The 1<sup>st</sup> place winner at the District Level will receive a \$2,500 scholarship and a plaque.

Questions about the local contest may be directed to Amy Coffey at [acoffey513@gmail.com](mailto:acoffey513@gmail.com) or 608-843-6828. We look forward to hearing from you and best of luck!

- *The Platteville Optimist Club*

# Revised 2024-2025 Optimist International Essay Scholarship Competition Application

PRINT Name \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Age on Oct 1, 2024 \_\_\_\_\_

Did you enter any other Optimist Club's Essay Contest this school year?  Yes  No

**Contestant Agreement:** I have studied the rules of the contest, and I will be bound by all the requirements. I understand entries will be run through plagiarism and AI detection software.

Contestant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## Parent or Guardian Permission:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, grant the Optimist Club/International my permission to use a picture or video of my son/daughter, for their public relations purposes. Optimist Club/International may use the photo or video in any publication they see fit.

I give my permission for my child/ward to participate in this scholarship contest.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsoring Optimist Club Name Platteville Optimist Club

Sponsoring Optimist Club Number 09137

Language:  English, or if District language is different:  French or  Spanish

## Official Topic: "How Optimism Has Paved My Road to Success"

Each contestant must be given this copy of the rules and complete the entry form, above.

### Section I - General Rules

1. The Optimist International Essay Contest is divided into two levels of competition: Club (preliminary contest) and District (scholarship competition). The winner of a local club contest advances to the District Scholarship Competition.
2. Contestants must enter through a local Optimist Club.
3. Contestants must compose an original essay with limited guidance from others. Webster's Dictionary defines an essay as an analytic or interpretive literary composition. Works of fiction or poetry will not be accepted.
4. All District-level contests must have a minimum of three (3) contestants participating.
5. Optimist International will have the right to edit, publish or otherwise duplicate any essay entered into the contest without payment to the author.

### Section II - Qualifications for Contestants

1. The contest is open to contestants under the age of **19** as of October 1st of the current Optimist International contest year (October 1 – September 30) **and who have not yet completed secondary school or its equivalent, including CEGEP students in Québec, Canada.** There is no minimum age. Contestants must enter in the District in which they reside. United States contestants attending school on a military installation outside the U.S. are eligible to enter in their last home of record. Contestants residing in non-Districted areas where there are no Optimist Clubs are not eligible for competition.
2. Contestants are eligible for only one Club's essay contest during any given year. (October 1st - September 30th)
3. No individual having previously won a District Essay scholarship will be eligible to compete at any level of the competition again.
4. All contestants at each level of the contest must provide proof of age and identification in the form of a copy of either their birth certificate or passport before participating. A copy of the Club winner's document will be submitted to the District contest.

### Section III - Contest Rules

1. Participants must write on the official contest topic for the current year.
2. Each entry must begin with a title page containing topic, number of words, writer's name, address, phone number, name of school and date of birth.
3. The official topic should be at the top of title page and at the top of page 1. (penalty of 3 points)
4. The word count must also be listed at the top of page 1 (penalty of 5 points)
5. Essays must contain at least 700 words but no more than 800 words. Every word of the essay is counted. This does not include the title, bibliography, or footnotes. Hyphenated words count as 1 word. (Deduction of 5 points for each 25 words over/under limit – French essays will allow 50 words over/under before deduction. Words are to be counted manually.
6. Each page of the essay must be numbered starting with page 1, not the title page. The numbers must be centered at the bottom of each page.

7. Any quotations or copyrighted material used in the essay must be identified properly, using a recognized citation format. For example, use of a specific writer's format (such as MLA, APA, Chicago style). Failure to identify non-original material will result in disqualification.
8. No reference can be made in the essay that identifies the contestant, parents, school, community, sponsoring Optimist Club or District. (Deduction of 5 points or fraction based on degree of identification)
9. An essay should be written in English, or it may be written in either French or Spanish if the language used is accepted by the District of entry.
10. The entry must be stapled together in the upper left-hand corner. Covers of any type are not accepted.

#### Section IV – Judging

1. Judging will be completed by a panel of three qualified judges who are not acquainted with the contestants. At the Club level, judges may be Optimist Members. At the District level, judges must be non-Optimists. (Friends of Optimists are excluded and can be used as judges).
2. In an effort to conceal the identity of each contestant, each entry will be anonymized and assigned a number by the Essay Contest Chair. The assigned number will be placed on the title page and page 1 of the essay. The title page will then be detached and retained by the Essay Contest Chair. The judges will be given the essays bearing only the assigned numbers.
3. Judges will not discuss or compare the essays being judged.
4. Only judges can assign a penalty or award points.

#### Section V – Scoring of Contest

1. Scoring procedures at all levels of the contest will be identical.
2. Material Organization (Logical interpretation of the subject, adherence to topic): 30 points
3. Creativity: 15 points
4. Vocabulary and Style (Phrasing and continuity): 30 points

5. Grammar, Punctuation, Spelling: 20 points
6. Adherence to contest rules (prepared in a proper format): 5 points

#### Section VI – Penalties

1. Failure to list official topic on the title page and at the top of page 1 of the essay: 3 points
2. Failure to identify total number of words: 5 points
3. Failure to type essay, doubled-spaced and single-sided: 5 pts. per infraction (15 pt. max)
4. Failure to stay within the 700-800 words: 5 points for each 25 words over/under limit. French Essays will allow 50 words over/under for the deduction. Words are to be counted manually.
5. Self-identification: 5 points or fraction based on degree.

#### Section VII - Awards

1. Club level – official medallion and/or certificate
2. Clubs are allowed to give monetary awards of up to \$500 per winner for the Essay contest in addition to the official medallions. The Club level awards may be given in the form of a scholarship, savings bond or cash prize but are completely discretionary.
3. District level - plaque and a \$2,500 college scholarship for the first-place winner.
  - A. Scholarships are paid through the Optimist International Foundations in the United States and Caribbean and the Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation in Canada.
  - B. Scholarships awarded are for use only at a college, university, or trade school.
  - C. All scholarships will be payable only to the educational institution of the recipient's choice, subject to the approval of Optimist International.
  - D. All scholarships will be administered by Optimist International.
  - E. Winners of an Optimist International scholarship must claim their scholarship by the age of 25.

The contest chairperson will decide all protests in accordance with the official rules. The District Chair is the final authority, and no appeals will be recognized.



#### HOW TO ENTER:

Students are to enter through a local Optimist Club in their area. Most local clubs run their Essay contest from October to the end of January. Judging at the local level is completed in February. Late entries are not accepted.

Once submitted, essays may not be returned. Standings are not reported to applicants. The sponsoring club will contact the winners.

Name of local Club:

Platteville Optimists

Chairperson: Amy Coffey

How to contact: Phone or email

Phone: 608-843-6828

Email: acoffey513@gmail.com

Mailing Address:

1230 Union St. Platteville, WI 53818

Special Instructions, if any:

**Essay & completed application must be submitted (postmarked or emailed) by: Friday, January 31, 2025.**