



# Texas Society SAR

## Tips for the Knight Essay Contestants



The George S. & Stella M. Knight Essay Scholarship Contest is designed to allow students to explore topics based on original research and deal with an event, person, philosophy, or ideal associated with the American Revolution. Each student's 800-1,200 word essay will be judged based on its historical accuracy, clarity, organization, grammar and spelling, and documentation.

Please review the below requirements:

### ESSAY REQUIREMENTS

**TITLE PAGE:** The following must be listed on the title page:

- Title of Essay;
- Contestant's full name, grade, home address, phone number, and e-mail address;
- Contestant's school name, address, and phone number;
- Statement of how the Contestant learned of the contest (if from the Internet, include the URL of the website); and,
- The essay's word count.

**ESSAY PAGES:** The essay must:

- Contains a minimum of 800 and a maximum of 1,200 words (excluding title page, footnotes, bibliography, and the biography page);
- The first page must include the title;
- No Contestant information is on the essay pages;
- 12-point Times New Roman font and double-spaced;
- Page size is 8 ½" by 11" with 1" margins on all sides;
- Essay pages are numbered sequentially, starting with 1; and,
- No graphics, special covers, or bindings are allowed.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY PAGE(S):** The bibliography must:

- Include citations in the essay;
- Bibliographic references must be in accordance with a widely used, publicly available citation system (the Chicago Manual of Style, MLA Manual of Style, or MHRA Style Guide), and the bibliography page must specify the system used;
- No Contestant information is in the bibliography;
- A minimum of five (5) references, three (3) of which must be published works (encyclopedias or internet sources are acceptable but not considered part of the three (3) published works).

**BIOGRAPHY PAGE:** The biography must be:

- Limited to one page; and,
- Include academic awards/achievements, school activities, community activities & college plans.

Contestants can be disqualified for failing to meet the above essay requirements. For example, the essay MUST be 800 to 1,200 words– not more than 1,200 or less than 800. Often, Contestants fall short of, or go beyond, the word length requirement.

Grammatical errors and/or misspellings can downgrade – or even eliminate, if excessive – an otherwise excellent essay. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the Contestant enlist an ELA teacher to review the essay for these issues before submission.

While the essay is the Contestant’s sole responsibility, you should ask others to review drafts. Excellent resources are your ELA and history teachers. They can review and critique your drafts to ensure the essay addresses the topic, catch grammatical errors, and make the essay flow naturally.

A total word count must be displayed at the end of the essay. While the word count should only reflect the number of words in the essay’s text, articles of speech (e.g., the and a/an) should not be counted in the word count. (Use the Find command for “\_a\_”, “\_an\_”, and “\_the\_” in the document to count the number of these articles, which can then be subtracted from the total number of words.) Also, ensure the word processing software does not count the title or your name.

## SCORING THE ESSAY

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*Please be aware that software will be used to check submitted essays for plagiarism and the use of AI. Any essay that is found to have been plagiarized or to have used A.I. will result in disqualification.*

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Essays will be judged on a 100-point scale. Below are the allotment of those points:

1. Historical accuracy (0-25 points)
2. Clarity of thought (0-20 points)
3. Organization and proven topic (0-25 points)
4. Spelling and punctuation (0-10 points)
5. Grammar (0-10 points)
6. Documentation & bibliography (0-10 points)

While spelling/punctuation and grammar account for a maximum of ten (10) points each, no essays should have any points deducted in these categories. Still, each year, some essays have such deductions awarded by judges. Therefore, please use your word processor’s spelling and grammar check features. However, be aware that such functions are not 100% foolproof, as they will not correct homonyms and other issues. Asking others to read your essay will help in reducing these errors.

The more published sources you cite in your essay, rather than Internet-based sources (e.g., Wikipedia, etc.), the greater the chances you will receive a total of 10 points for that category (assuming your bibliography is formatted correctly) from the judges. Ask your history teachers for primary and secondary sources you should consult. In addition to published books, remember to consult journals and other published resources.

If your school library does not have the source(s) you need, try your local public library. They all have an Interlibrary Loan (ILL) service whereby you can request any book/article/etc. that can be sent to your library, usually for free. Check out [WorldCat](#) to find out if nearby libraries have what you need. The reference librarian will be able to assist you in this matter.

While you might not be able to check out books, you might find what you need there if you have a college/university nearby with a library. You can certainly read and take notes for your essay at the library. In addition, if you plan to attend a college/university after high school, this is an excellent way to begin learning the research skills you will need.

## FORMATTING FILES

When submitting all of your documents, all filenames should use the following convention:

*Last Name\_First Name – File Description.XXX*

For example, “Smith Jane – Knight Essay.doc,” “Smith John – Parental Release.pdf,” “Smith Jane – Knight Essay Application.pdf.”

The application is to be submitted in six parts as PDF formatted files:

1. Application (please use the Aug 2023 version)
2. Title Page,
3. Essay,
4. Bibliography,
5. Biography, and
6. Parental Release/Permission form.

The essay shall also be submitted as a WORD formatted file using the same file naming convention.

## DEADLINE & QUESTIONS

If you start your essay at the beginning of the school year, you should have plenty of time to use the available resources to improve your essay. In addition, while the submission deadline for the chapter is December 31<sup>st</sup>, if you submit your essay before that date, the Chapter’s Knight Essay Chairman will have a chance to review your essay. If he sees any missing requirements, he can return the essay to you to correct. However, once the deadline has passed, he cannot notify you of any errors, and your essay will have to be scored as is.

If you have any questions, please contact your local SAR Chapter’s Knight Essay Chairman or the Texas Society [Knight Essay Chairman](#).