

# Application for 2019-2020 Optimist International Essay Contest

PRINT - the Michigan District is NOT responsible for illegible entries.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ M F

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

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

Telephone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Have you participated in another 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 of the requirements.

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

## Parent or Guardian Permission:

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

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

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

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.

Sponsoring Optimist Club Name \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsoring Optimist Club Number \_\_\_\_\_

Language:  English  
The Michigan District only accepts applications written in English

## Please send application to address below:

### Official Topic: "Is Optimism the Key to Achieving The Dreams you iMagine?"

Each contestant must be given a copy of the rules and complete the entry form. The rules contain information about the contest, judging and awards.

#### Section I - General Rules

1. The Optimist International Essay contest is divided into two levels of competition: Club and District.
2. Contestants must enter through a local Optimist Club, or an at-large contest if the applicant resides on a Military installation. An At-Large contestant may not have competed in an Optimist international or District contest in the same year.
3. Contestants must compose an original essay with limited guidance from others. Webster's dictionary defines an essay as an analytic or interpretative literary composition. Works of fiction or poetry will not be accepted.
4. All District-level competitions must have a minimum of 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 1<sup>st</sup> of the current Optimist International contest year (October 1 – September 30) and is not enrolled as a degree seeking student of a post-secondary institution. Contestants must enter in the District in which they reside. U.S. contestants attending school on military installations outside the U.S. are eligible to enter in their last home of record.
2. Contestants are eligible for only one Club's contest during any given year.
3. No contestant who has previously won a District

Optimist Essay contest scholarship will be eligible to compete at any level of the competition again.

4. All contestants at each level of the contest must show proof of age before competing. Optimist Club may require a copy birth certificate or passport if offering a Club scholarship separate from Optimist International. District winners must provide a copy of the birth certificate or passport with the District entry documentation.

#### Section III - Contest Rules

1. Participants must write on the official topic.
2. Each entry must begin with a title page containing: the official topic, number of words, writer's name, address, phone number, name of school and date of birth.
3. At the top of page 1 should be the official topic and the number of words (penalty of 2 points for lack of topic and 5 points for failure to identify the total number of words correctly).
4. Essays must be typewritten and double-spaced. (Deduction 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).
6. Each page of the essay must be numbered starting with page 1 of the essay, not the title page. The numbers must be centered at the bottom of each page.
7. Any quotation or copyrighted material used must be identified properly. For example, use of a specific writer's format (such as MLA) may be specified by the instructor overseeing the contest. Failure to identify non-original material will result in disqualification.
8. No reference can be made 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 may be written in either English, French or Spanish if the language used is an official language of the country in which the sponsoring Club is located.
10. The entry must be stapled together in the upper left-hand corner. Covers of any type are not accepted.

#### Section IV – Judging and Timing

1. Judging will be completed by a panel of three qualified judges. At the Club level, judges may be Optimist Members, who are not acquainted with the contestants. At the District level, judges must be non-Optimists.
2. In an effort to conceal the identity of each contestant, each entry will be 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 essay bearing only the assigned number.
3. Judges will not discuss or compare essays being judged.
4. Only judges can assign a penalty or award points.

#### Section V – Scoring

Scoring procedures at all levels of the contest will be identical.

1. Material Organization – logical interpretation of the subject, adherence to topic: 30 points
2. Creativity – 10 points
3. Vocabulary and Style – phrasing and continuity: 30 points
3. Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling: 20 points
4. Neatness: 5 points
5. Adherence to Contest Rules – prepared in the proper

format: 5 points

#### Section VI – Penalties

1. Failure to list official topic: 2 points
2. Failure to accurately identify total number of words: 5 points
3. Failure to type essay and double-space: 5 points
4. Failure to stay within the 700-800 word limit: 5 points for each 25 words over/under limit
5. Self-identification: 5 points or fraction of based on degree of identification

#### Section VII - Awards

1. Club level – medallion
2. District level – plaque and a \$2,500 college scholarship for the first-place winner
  - A. Scholarships are funded by the Optimist International Foundation in U.S. and Caribbean and the Canadian Children's Foundation in Canada. Scholarships awarded are for use at a college, university or trade school only.
  - B. All scholarships will be payable to the educational institution of the recipient's choice, subject to the approval of Optimist International.
  - C. All scholarships will be administered by Optimist International.
  - D. Winners of an Optimist International scholarship must claim their scholarship by the age of 25.

### For more information contact:

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Email/phone: \_\_\_\_\_

#### DEADLINE Jan 31

for most, but not all, local clubs

<https://michiganoptimists.org>  
Click "Scholarships" to find Essay and information on how to enter the contest.