

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 essays being judged.
4. Only judges can assign a penalty or award points.

Section V – Scoring of Contest

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 – 15 points
3. Vocabulary and Style (Phrasing and continuity): 30 points
4. Grammar, Punctuation, Spelling: 20 points
5. Adherence to contest rules (prepared in the proper format): 5 points

Section VI – Penalties

1. Failure to list official topic: 3 points
2. Failure to identify total number of words: 5 points
3. Failure to type essay, double-spaced and single-sided: 5 points per infraction (max 15 pts.)
4. Failure to stay within the 700-800 word limit: 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

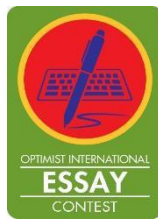
Section VII - Awards

Only Optimist International awards obtained from Shumsky or Ansell are to be given at all Club and District level contests.

Club level - medallion or certificate

1. 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.
2. 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 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.



Club Chair's Planning Timeline

July-August 2024

- Attend the International Convention for training and advice, if available!
- Present the program to your Club.
- Review the contest package program on the Optimist website.
- Contact schools and organizations for participation in the upcoming school year's contest. Give them time to include it in their plans!

September 2024

- Set the Club contest date — Clubs can hold their contest anytime between October 1st and early February.
- Give participating schools and organizations posters, applications and contact information so they can start to spread the word!
- Present the budget.

October 2024

- Contact the District Essay Chair and find out if there is an entry fee to submit the Club winner's essay to the District contest.
- Put up posters in areas where young people gather to publicize the contest.
- Publicize the contest in the local media.
- Choose three qualified judges who are not acquainted with the contestants.
- Order Club award medallions, certificates and any other items needed for the contest from Shumsky or Ansell's Awards (in Canada).

November 2024 - February 2025

- Have essays turned in by your deadline so you have plenty of time to have them judged.
- Conduct judging and select a first, second and third place winner.
- Submit the District Entry Form, copy of the birth certificate or passport, **and** first place-winning essay to the District Essay Chair. It must be received by **February 28, 2025**.
- Present the first, second and third-place awards at a Club meeting or special dinner and have the winners read their essays.

March 2025

- Complete the Club Chair Evaluation form in this guide and submit to Optimist International.
- You may return the non-winning essays to authors.
- Circulate a press release and photos of winners to the local media.
- Present a final report to the Club.