

Americanism Essay 2026 Contest Information



Alabama Elks Association

"What Does Service To Your Country Mean To You?"

Competition Rules

1. Essay participants must be in the **5th, 6th, 7th, or 8th grade**
Monetary awards for national winning essays from each grade level as follows:
 - * \$1,000 for 1st place, * 500 for 2nd place; * \$250 for 3rd place
2. Length is not to exceed 300 words and **MUST** be legibly printed in blue or black ink or typed in black.
3. Pages must be stapled. No binders, folders, or paper clips to be used to secure pages.
4. Required essay title sheet **MUST** include the following: Cahaba Valley Elks Lodge #1738, Sponsoring Teacher's Name, School Name, Student's Name, Grade, and Class Period.
6. Essays are due to the Cahaba Valley Elks Lodge **on or before Friday, January 9th, 2026.**
7. Judging Criteria:
 - **Originality:** Avoid use of trite or worn-out words and phrases = 30 points
 - **Development of Theme:** Focus on your ideas and thoughts = 40 points
 - **Mechanics and Neatness:** Proper Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation = 30 points

Awards

- ★ All students submitting essays to Cahaba Valley Elks Lodge #1738 will receive a certificate for participating in this patriotic activity.
- ★ First place winners in each grade division will be awarded a Commemorative USA Coin Set and advance to the District Level of the competition.
- ★ Winning essays from each division in the Alabama Elks Central District will compete with the South and North District for state awards. State winners from each Division will receive a USA Coin Set and certificate. The Alabama state winners will next advance to the national level of the competition. Winners at this level of the competition will receive from Grand Lodge for each grade the following: 1st Place \$1,000, 2nd Place \$500, and 3rd Place \$250. National Winners will be announced in July 2026.

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