



2026 AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST

**"Explain a Constitutional Right or Privilege
and How It Affects You and Your Family."**

The Contest provides students in each of 4 separate Divisions (5th, 6th, 7th & 8th grades) the opportunity to thoughtfully express THEIR views on the theme above in a formal essay of not more than 300 words. It will be judged on:

- Originality: Use original ideas; avoid cliches & common phrases; include personal examples if possible. The use of "AI" is NOT permitted. (30 points)
- Development of the theme: Stay focused on 1 Constitutional right; explain how it affects the student and family; have a clear beginning and ending; don't 'ramble'. (40 points)
- Mechanics and neatness: Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation; well formatted sentences and paragraphs; neatly printed or typed. (30 points)

Monetary awards are presented to the 'Top 3' Essays at each level of judging;

- Hightstown Lodge Awards - 1st place \$50; 2nd \$35; 3rd \$25 in each Division
- Southwest District Awards - 1st place \$50; 2nd \$35; 3rd \$25 in each Division
- NJ State awards - 1st place \$500; 2nd \$275; 3rd \$150 in each Division
- Grand Lodge national awards - 1st place \$1000; 2nd \$500; 3rd \$250

Essay entries **MUST** include:

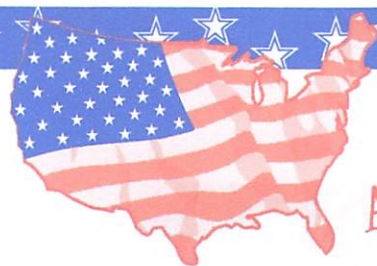
- A properly completed "Cover Sheet"
- The student's NAME, HOME ADDRESS, GRADE; NAME OF SCHOOL ATTENDING and sponsoring lodge (HIGHTSTOWN LODGE) on every page of the Essay

Completed Essays must be returned **BEFORE 12/15/26** to:

**Hightstown Elks Lodge 1955
Attn: Essay Coordinator
110 Hickory Corner Rd.
East Windsor, NJ 08520**

For more information, and an 'on-line' copy of the Contest package, you can visit the Hightstown Elks website at the link below:

<https://elks1955.org/scholarships-%26-contests-1>



AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST

Sponsored by Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of
The United States of America



THEME:

*“Explain a Constitutional Right or Privilege
and How It Affects You and Your Family.”*

RULES:

1. At the time of the contest, eligible participants must be students enrolled in one of these four divisions: I—5th grade; II—6th grade; III—7th grade; or IV—8th grade.
2. Essay length is not to exceed 300 words.
3. Essay must be typed or legibly printed in ink. Also, essay must be submitted as written (or typed) by the entrant.
4. Essay must be submitted for judging to the Elks Lodge nearest to the address of the entrant.
5. Participant must be identified by name, grade, school attending, and sponsoring Elks Lodge on the essay.

AWARDS:

Plaques will be awarded by Grand Lodge for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place for national winning essays in Divisions I, II, III, and IV. Monetary awards will be disbursed for each grade level for 1st Place—\$1,000; 2nd Place—\$500; and 3rd Place—\$250. Winners will be announced at the Grand Lodge Session in Denver, CO, July 4-7, 2027.

ENTRY DATE:

Essay should be submitted to local Elks Lodge on or before December 15, 2026.

The Essay Contest Cover Sheet must be completed for each level of competition and remain attached to the Essay.

Sponsoring Elks Lodge: Hightstown No. 1955
Address: 110 Hickory Corner Rd., East Windsor, NJ 08520
Contact Person: Pat Stecher, Lodge Secretary
Phone No. 609-448-9794
E-mail: hightstownelks@gmail.com





2026-2027 AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST COVER SHEET

(MUST be attached to each Essay)



**“Explain a Constitutional Right or Privilege
and How It Affects You and Your Family.”**

Section 1 — to be filled out by student

(Circle or Highlight One Grade)

•Division I: 5th Grade

•Division II: 6th Grade

•Division III: 7th Grade

•Division IV: 8th Grade

School _____ Teacher's Name _____

School Address _____ City _____ State _____

Student's Name _____ Male ☐ Female ☐ Age _____ Grade _____

Parent's Name _____ Phone (____) _____
(used only to contact the winners)

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

E-mail _____

Send to Local Lodge no later than December 15, 2026.

Section 2 — to be filled out by Lodge Chairman

Chairman's Name Lori Bernas Phone Number (609) 477-4108

Sponsoring Lodge Name & Number Hightstown Lodge #1955

Address 110 Hickory Corner Rd City East Windsor State NJ ZIP 08520

E-mail hightstownelks@gmail.com

Select the top three essays from each division and send them to the District Americanism Chairman by January 31, 2027 or the date established by the State Chairman. (Top three only, do not separate as 1st, 2nd, or 3rd.)

Section 3 — to be filled out by District Chairman

Chairman's Name _____ District _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Chairman's Phone Number (____) _____ E-mail _____

Select the top three essays from each division and send them to the State Americanism Chairman by February 28, 2027 or the date established by the State Chairman. (Top three only, do not separate as 1st, 2nd, or 3rd.)

Section 4 — to be filled out by State Chairman

Chairman's Name _____ State _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Chairman's Phone Number (____) _____ E-mail _____

Select the 1st, 2nd & 3rd place winners for your State and send the 1st place winner from each division to the Contest Administrator, Victoria Watson, by March 31, 2027.