

SENIOR ESSAY CONTEST



The Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma's High School Senior Essay Contest was established in 1966 to provide Masons a way to support public schools in their communities. Each year, a new essay topic is selected that will engage students in meaningful discussion on current events. By engaging in this writing exercise, we hope that students will demonstrate proficiency in expressing observations, thoughts, and conclusions logically and professionally. Over the years, the program has evolved, but the commitment to education has remained steadfast.

THE 2025-2026 ESSAY TOPIC IS:

***"Freedom of Expression in a Divided Nation:
How Do We Protect Speech While Promoting Respect?"***

Prompt: In an increasingly divided society, people often struggle to balance free expression with respectful communication. Social, political, and cultural disagreements can lead to hostility rather than dialogue. How can individuals and communities protect the right to free speech while also encouraging civil and constructive conversations? Support your argument with examples from current events, school life, or your personal experience.

***Statewide Winners will receive a certificate
and the following cash prizes:***

1st Place: \$2000 **2nd Place:** \$1500 **3rd Place:** \$1000 **4th Place:** \$750

5th Place: \$700 **6th Place:** \$650 **7th Place:** \$600 **8th Place:** \$550

9th Place: \$500 **10th Place:** \$450 **11th Place:** \$400 **12th Place:** \$350

13th Place: \$300 **14th Place:** \$250 **15th Place:** \$200

***The school of the 1st place state winner
also receives a \$2000 cash prize.***

***1st - 5th local winners will
receive a certificate.***

CONTEST OVERVIEW:

- Any Oklahoma public high school senior is eligible to submit one entry.
- Essays must be the student's original work. An attestation signed by the teacher and the student that no AI was used must be submitted with the essay. (The AI attestation form can be downloaded from our website.)
- Essays must be submitted as a .PDF via our website, <https://mcfok.org/>
- Essays should be formatted following MLA Style and no more than 1,250 words.
- Essay file should follow this naming system: Last-First_School Name.
- Essays must be submitted no later than October 31, 2025.

The scoring rubric, MLA guidance, essay examples AND MORE are available on our website.

***Scan the QR code to visit our website
for more information***

