



## RULES FOR 2024 OPTIMIST CLUB OF ALEXANDRIA ESSAY CONTEST

Official topic: “Optimism: How it connects us.”

Please read every rule carefully. Failure to follow a rule may result in point deduction or disqualification.

### General Rules

Contestants must compose an original essay with limited guidance from others. Webster’s Dictionary defines an essay as an analytic or interpretive literary composition. Works of fiction or poetry will not be accepted.

### Qualifications for Contestants

The contest is open to students who are in 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade who are enrolled in an Alexandria City Public School and who are under 19 as of October 1, 2023. There is no minimum age.

### Specific Contest Rules

1. Participants must write on the official contest topic for the current year
2. Each entry must begin with a separate title page containing only the topic, number of words, writer’s name, address, phone number, name of school and date of birth. This title page will be removed before the judging so the judges will not be able to identify the writer.
3. The official topic should be at the top of the title page and at the top of page 1 of the essay.
4. Essays must be typed, double-spaced and single-sided.
5. Essays must contain at least 700 words but no more than 800 words. Every word of the essay is counted manually. This does not include the title, bibliography or footnotes. Hyphenated words count as 1 word.
6. Each page of the essay must be numbered, starting with page 1, not including the title page. The numbers must be centered at the bottom of each page.
7. Any quotations or copyrighted material used in the essay must be identified properly, using a recognized citation format. For example, use a specific writer’s format (such as MLA, APA, Chicago style). Failure to identify non-original material will result in disqualification.
8. No reference may be made in the essay that identifies the contestant, parents, school, or community. **The contestant’s name must not appear on any page of the essay.**
9. An essay must be written in English.
10. The entry must include the entry application and must be stapled together in the upper left-hand corner. Covers of any type are not accepted.

Deadline for Entry: Contestants must submit their entries to the Optimist Club Essay Contest contact at their school by 3:15 P.M. March 7.

**For questions, contact Carolyn Miller ([millercl10@comcast.net](mailto:millercl10@comcast.net))**