



Museum & Archives of Rockingham County & Charters of Freedom
Essay Competition

Title: "What does patriotism mean to you"?

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To me, it means a lot of things: It means loyalty to my country and pride in what it has accomplished throughout the years. It reminds me of what my country's protectors, and my ancestors have sacrificed for my country's peace and freedom. It means to me what it may mean to a lot of people, but nonetheless it still matters the same way. Patriotism means a lot to me. I think about it, and I wonder what my country would be without the sense of unity that exemplifies patriotism. If my country, America, didn't have patriots, then, where would that leave my country? America might still be under British rule, there might not be freedom of speech or freedom to have your own guns to protect yourself.

What if there weren't patriots? Who would stand up for all the injustice and corruption? If there weren't people to stand up for my country, if there weren't patriots, then my country wouldn't be nearly as independent as it is now. My country wouldn't be as strong as it is now. Patriotism to me is a loyalty beyond what one could just suddenly have, but a loyalty that you feel purely in your heart.

To me, patriotism is more than flags and bumper stickers, more than protests, and more than words and speeches. Patriotism is all of those things put together and more. We all have a different story of patriotism, a different vision of it. And they all matter more than most could think. The definition for the word patriotism is the quality of being patriotic; vigorous support for one's country. The key word there is support. Patriots support, love, and act in devotional and prideful ways toward their country. Although there isn't much to do for my country, America, as a twelve-year-old, I still consider myself a patriot: I love my country, I support the ones who help it grow and flourish, and I would do anything in my very limited power to help and support it. Patriots work

together for the same overall goal, and they work together to bring each other closer, and share their love, honor, and loyalty for their country.

Patriotism has existed since before President George Washington took office. I look back at patriots like the colonists that fought against the British rule in 1776 to bring us together and, years later, President Abraham Lincoln who worked tirelessly to keep our nation united. Those were patriots who cared for their country a great deal, they dedicated their lives toward America. And, though not all patriots are going to be in history books or become famous, they are still patriots and they count just as much. We take patriotism from what we have learned from past patriots, and we make it our own. We learn from our historic leaders, and we learn what patriotism means. Patriots created America.

There is a Bible verse that I think is pertinent to this certain topic. It is Psalms 145:4:

“One generation shall praise your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.”

To me, this verse is the exact meaning of recognizing the efforts people made for our nation. We look upon the great and noble acts of our past leaders and we learn from their efforts and their influences. We teach our children about these important figures in history, and they learn and grow. They will tell their children and their children's children and so on. We will praise the works of these important people, we will share it with others, and we will honor our ancestors and historic figures through our patriotic actions. And we will honor their dedication and strength. Throughout history we declare all the acts that were important, and we recognize all of the people that made our country America. We recognize the people that brought freedom, the people that made freedom in America possible. Patriots use their freedoms thankfully, and they defend their rights that they so very much deserve. America is the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

So, in conclusion, what does patriotism mean to me? To me, it means freedom, it means honor and pride, and it means my own form of devotion and loyalty towards my amazing country that I love, The United States of America.