

Applicant's Name: Jennifer Hamel

Applicant's SSN: _____
(Last 4 Digits)

ESSAY PAGE

Why I am proud to be an American

Patriotism is a characteristic that I have always considered myself to display a tremendous amount of; however, I recently heard someone use the word "Americanism" and realized that that word is much more appropriate. You see, patriotism describes having a love and loyalty for your country. This is true, I genuinely do love my country, but the word patriotism could be used for any person who loves their respective country, whether it be the United States or somewhere else. Americanism, on the other hand, describes a person who has devotion specifically to the United States. Once I heard that, I knew it was the correct term used to describe me.

Growing up, the Fourth of July has always been way on top of my list of favorite holidays. The holiday is most definitely not the only day of the year that I recognize my love for the United States, but I love that we, as Americans, get the opportunity to celebrate our independence! I look forward to the festivities, including the fireworks, the parades, the flag raising ceremonies, and more than anything, when they play the song "Proud to be an American," by Lee Greenwood at the fairgrounds. The song never fails to bring tears to my eyes. I can remember being in the fourth grade and having my teacher ask me what my favorite song was, and sure enough, my answer was "Proud to be an American." While I may have gotten a few laughs from my classmates, it did not matter because the song was important to me.

"Freedom does not come free" is a phrase that I have been more than aware of growing up, and even more in the last few years. Our country has lost many people fighting for our freedom and I have a hard time when people do not realize just how lucky we have it. Referring back to Lee Greenwood's song, the chorus says "I won't forget the men who died who gave that right to me, and I gladly stand up next to you and defend her still today, 'cause there ain't no doubt I love this land, God bless the U.S.A!" I cannot help but defend my country when I hear someone speaking against it. There are people dying for my freedom and the least I can do is live defending them.

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So now you see that I am a girl who loves the Fourth of July, singing "Proud to be an American" at the top of my lungs, and doing my best to display my Americanism. My prayer is that the hearts of people in America would be broken for those who may never know the meaning of freedom. I hope that we would recognize that while soldiers may be dying for our freedom, they are doing so out of the Americanism in their hearts and that we, as citizens of the United States, would join them in displaying our love for America! "God bless the U.S.A!"