11th Annual Pueblo Home of Heroes Association Essay Contest

Sponsored by the Pueblo Home of Heroes Association and Pueblo City-County Library District
The mission of the Pueblo Home of Heroes Association is to preserve and expand the memorial dedicated to Medal of Honor recipients; to advance the history of the Medal of Honor; honor the legacy of those who have received the Award nationwide; to promote democratic ideals; and encourage among the people of the United States, and especially its youth, citizenship, character, integrity and selflessness as epitomized by the Medal of Honor.

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Pueblo Home of Heroes Association Essay Contest
“What does it mean to you to pledge allegiance to the U.S. Flag?”

Pueblo Home of Heroes Association, in cooperation with Pueblo City-County Library District, is pleased to announce the winners of its 11th Annual Pueblo Home of Heroes Association essay contest.

The following guidelines were required:
   All entries must be typed.
   Elementary School – grades 4 and 5; 300-500 words.
   Middle School – grades 6–8; 400-700 words.
   High School – grades 9–12; 500-1,000 words.
   Select a Medal of Honor recipient other than our local Pueblo heroes.

Pueblo Home of Heroes Association judges were Mary and Nathan Cape, Kevin Cover, Ray LeMasters, Gary and Karen Micheli, and Jim and Paulette Stuart.

Pueblo Home of Heroes Association and Pueblo City-County Library District wish to thank teachers and parents for encouraging their students and children to participate in this essay contest.
Winners

Elementary School

1st Place  Dermot McCarthy – Homeschool – Ms. O’Callaghan
2nd Place  Audrey Schmitz – Belmont Elementary School – Mrs. Meier
3rd Place  Leo Styduhar – Goodnight School – Mr. Casarez

Honorable Mention  Jewelianah Bell – North Mesa Elementary School – Ms. Powell
Honorable Mention  Landon Michael Sanders – Pueblo School for Arts & Sciences at Fulton Heights – Ms. Thomas & Mrs. McLaughlin
Honorable Mention  Bear Styduhar – Goodnight School – Mrs. Thielemeier
Honorable Mention  Matie Upton – Goodnight School – Mrs. Oreskovich

Middle School

1st Place  Leila Snider – Skyview Middle School – Mrs. Johnson
2nd Place  Hai Nayku Palo Moo – Roncalli STEM Academy – Ms. Reed
3rd Place  Lyliah Jaber – Roncalli STEM Academy – Ms. Reed

Honorable Mention  Dwayne Gurule – Roncalli STEM Academy – Ms. Reed
Honorable Mention  Luke Velbis – Daystar Christian School – Mrs. Velbis

High School

1st Place  Thomas O’Conner – Pueblo West High School – Lieutenant Colonel Emond
2nd Place  Chase Malespini – Pueblo West High School – Lieutenant Colonel Emond
3rd Place  Angelica Aguilar Salvador – East High School – Mr. LeMasters

Honorable Mention  Blake Boone – Paragon School – Mrs. Kitchen
Honorable Mention  Jayna Summitt – Paragon School – Mrs. Kitchen
Honorable Mention  Hailey Ure – Pueblo West High School – Lieutenant Colonel Emond
To me, pledging allegiance to the U.S. flag reminds me of our freedoms as Americans. Secondly, I think of the promise of loyalty to our country. Thirdly, I think of feeling united with other Americans when saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

I am glad that we have the freedom of speech because otherwise we would be unable to speak out against injustice. I value the freedom of the press because it leads to informed citizens. Both of these freedoms enable people to speak out against the government without fear of harm.

I am truly thankful for the freedom of religion because it means that people can follow whatever religion they want and not worry about being persecuted. In my studies this year, I’ve learned that many of the American colonies were founded by people fleeing religious persecution. I am glad that I do not have to leave my homeland because of my religious beliefs.

When I say the Pledge of Allegiance I think of how we can have loyalty to our country. One way of being loyal to our country is to be willing to defend it like my grandfathers did when they served in the army. Another way of showing loyalty to our country is being a responsible citizen by obeying the laws, paying taxes, and be willing to serve on a jury. Sometimes being loyal to our country means having to expose our country’s problems and try to fix them like Martin Luther King, Jr. did during the Civil Rights Movement.

When I say the Pledge of Allegiance I think about how we are united as a country, which is important at this time when there are continued racial, political, gender, and economic divisions. I remember that we are united as Americans and strive for an ideal America. America was founded by people of different nationalities and faiths, which makes our country special and strong. We are a nation of immigrants, but we all stand together as Americans. The Pledge of Allegiance reminds us to honor our amazing country.
What Pledging Allegiance to the Flag Means to Me

To me, pledging allegiance is making a commitment to America. This means that when you say the pledge of allegiance, you reinforce the good feeling of being a true citizen of America. Every time I do it, it makes me feel true and free. It makes me feel proud that women have rights and everyone is equal. I will never be ashamed to say it, and will always be proud. I don't feel alone when I say the pledge, but rather that I feel like I have a whole nation of people to back me up. It doesn't make me think of the disagreements in America, but the agreements that make me think of the agreements that make America amazing. It makes me think of others who have done good things for people they barely know.

I enjoy doing good things for the people who have worked so hard to make the dreams of our country a reality, such as veterans. Although I try my best to be caring and good, I feel that veterans are the best role models and I only hope to live up to their examples. Without these people, the pledge would have no meaning whatsoever. The pledge of allegiance makes America beautiful. It makes me feel strong and truly free. It makes me feel that I can do anything I set my mind to. Not only do we have liberty and justice for all in our country, but we have fairness too. If you live in America, you are very lucky, and I understand this fully.

I love America. Anyone who is fortunate enough to set foot in this country will agree. But the pledge is not just as add-on or a general start to our school day; the pledge itself is a reason to love America. Without the pledge, we would not be the same because we wouldn't have the daily reminder of just how wonderful our nation is. It is more important than one might think and plays a big part in our lives, even though the pledge itself only takes up a minute or so to recite. It is very important to realize how things would be without the pledge, so everyone knows how important it is to everyone. It is a tribute to those who have formed this country, and to those of us generations later who continue to strive to keep and make America great. I feel grateful and blessed to be a citizen of this beautiful country, and it is my honor to place my hand on my heart each morning and recite the pledge of allegiance.
Pride for the Pledge of Allegiance

When I say the Pledge of Allegiance it reminds me of the opportunities and freedoms we people in America have. It's an honor to be in America to have great rights for myself and others. It means a lot to me when I say the Pledge. I put my right hand over my heart and when I say I really focus on the words I'm saying and what they mean.

The Pledge of Allegiance is said daily to increase national pride and carry on tradition. Pledge means promise and allegiance means devotion and loyalty. The pledge of Allegiance is basically an oath to me. I pledge to carry on the tradition of allowing liberty and justice to all people in America. When I say “liberty for all” in the Pledge it means that people in America have free speech, can practice a religion they choose, pick a lifestyle they enjoy, and there are many more freedoms too. When I say “justice for all” in the Pledge it means that all people in America no matter their background or skin color will be treated equally and be given the same rights. By saying the Pledge of Allegiance daily I commit to helping others and myself have freedoms and justice.

When I say the Pledge of Allegiance it also reminds me of the fifty states in America and the American flag. I have wondered what the red and white stripes mean once before. I really was surprised when I learned that the white stripes signify purity and innocence. And, the red stripes stand for hardiness and valor. These stripes show vigilance, perseverance, and justice.

And the stripes also stand for the thirteen original colonies. When I say the Pledge I not only think about the words I am saying I am also thinking about the American flag and what it represents too.

The Pledge of Allegiance helps us to remember what it means to be American. To be American means we are free, we are equals, and we have many rights. Saying the Pledge of Allegiance every day at school makes me proud of what I am saying and to be American!
I Pledge Allegiance...

Do you ever hear the words to the pledge of allegiance and it touches a place in your heart? As I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America to me it means justice and makes me think. I think of how we are an indivisible country. I think of the symbolism of the flag, and I think of the wars our soldiers fought so that we could live in the land of the free.

The first thing that I think about is how we are an indivisible country. This means we are strong and stand as one nation united together. I like to think we are a strong country that can make it through anything. Most of all I think about how we are an indivisible country, and how we wouldn't be the way we are without our country's fearless leaders.

Another thing I think about when pledging allegiance to our flag is the actual meaning of the flag. Our flag shows our independence, and represents our nation. The flag gives a statement: Fifty stars for the fifty states. The blue is for vigilance, perseverance, and justice. The thirteen stripes represent the original thirteen colonies. The white stripes represent purity and innocence, and the red stripes are for hardiness and valor. The flag shows our ability and strength to stand united. Our flag represents history all the way from being ruled by Britain to how we are today.

The most important thought that crosses my mind while saying The Pledge of Allegiance is of our soldiers and their bravery through many wars. In the Revolutionary War soldiers fought for our freedom from Great Britain's rule in 1776. One of my least favorite wars was the American Civil War when we were fighting our own nation. The Union soldiers fought the Confederate soldiers over many things, the most significant being slavery. We also fought in World War I, originally named, “The Great War.” After the bombing of Pearl Harbor the United States were forced into World War II. Many lost their lives during that time, including some of my family. That was really my least favorite war of all time. In some other countries people have to run for their lives in fear of soldiers shooting them. In America, it is because of brave soldiers who have fought us, that we are a free nation and can live our lives as we please.

All in all it will always hold great meaning in my heart and mind to pledge allegiance to the United States’ flag of now and forever. I especially think about how we are an indivisible country, what the flag represents, and the soldiers who fought for us. After knowing what it means to me to pledge allegiance to the United States flag, does it mean as much or more to you?
Born in America

To me, pledging my allegiance to the United States flag is a lot more than something kids and adults have to do. Saying the pledge of allegiance to our flag is a way of reminding us, as citizens, of the brave soldiers who have risked their lives for our freedom. Pledging our allegiance is a way of saying, “We're America, we may not be the best but we are free, strong, and happy!” The pledge is more than just saying a couple sentences you may think aren't that important. It's basically talking about how there is liberty and justice for all. How we are one, indivisible nation, under God.

To me saying the pledge of allegiance is a way of saying thanks to all of the people who have protected us, fought for us, and made this country I live in a beautiful and free nation. It allows us to give thanks to the branches of the military who have fought wars for our nation and who have protected us against terrorist attacks. When I pledge to the flag, I feel very lucky we are able to live in a free nation that stands for truth, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. When I'm pledging to the flag I also think, “If it wasn't for all of the men and women, risking their lives every day to keep us safe, we wouldn't be an extraordinary, free nation.

I have many family members, including my step-dad, who have served in the military. They have risked their lives to protect our great American nation. Because of those brave soldiers, we can all sleep well at night knowing that our nation is safe and protected by many, many people. I hope that when you pledge to the flag of the United States of America, you think of how you’re free because you are protected by our military, including the Navy, Coast Guard, Army, Marines, and Air Force. I hope you and every other kid or adult knows we are free and strong. To all of those soldiers out there, thank you for your service. I think of you every time I say the pledge of allegiance.
Every morning in my classroom. I stand next to my desk and put my right hand over my heart. I look to the American flag placed in the corner of my classroom and proudly recite the Pledge of Allegiance. I say this pledge daily and sometimes forget what the words I am saying truly mean. But when I think about the Pledge of Allegiance and what it really means to me I know that “liberty and justice for all” words that are important not only to me but to all American people.

When I say the Pledge of Allegiance and say that “liberty is for all” this is meaningful because it allows everyone to be free in America. Being free in America includes being able to practice your own religion and have free speech. You also can have a lifestyle that you choose and enjoy. You can also have freedom of assembly, which is to get together in a group for different reasons.

Not only is liberty important but “justice for all” is also vital for our daily lives. “Justice for all” means that all people in America no matter if they are a boy or a girl or what color their skin is or whatever religions they practice or follow or what language they speak or if they are poor or rich, will be treated fairly and just like you want to be treated no matter what.

When I say the Pledge of Allegiance every morning I am making a commitment to our American Values. I must remember that all American people should be treated fairly. Whenever I say the pledge of the Allegiance to the U.S. flag I think that the Pledge of Allegiance is what makes America great!
What it Means to me to Pledge Allegiance to the U.S. Flag

Every day I pledge allegiance to the flag in my class. Our entire school recites the pledge together at the same time. The pledge is good to say in the morning every day, to remind you to do good things. It means different things to different people. To me it means to be kind and help out the hungry people.

The person that made the flag made it different. Today’s flag has 50 stars and 13 stripes. There are 50 states for the 50 stars and 13 stripes for the 13 colonies. The first flag only had 13 stars for the 13 colonies. Now it is pretty different and the Pledge of Allegiance is different, too.

The pledge added a few words. Different words were added over time. Today it is still the same as the last time it was changed in 1954. This is what the pledge used to be; “I pledge allegiance to my flag and the republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible with liberty and justice for all.” This is what it is now; “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God indivisible with liberty and justice for all.” So there are many different things that got changed over time. But, even though the words have changed a few times, it doesn’t change how I feel about it. In the part of it that says justice for all reminds me to do good things in the day.

I like that we have a daily reminder hanging in our classroom. It reminds me to be kind to others, follow the rules, show respect and think of those that have fought and still fight for our Freedom. The United States is a great country to live in and the flag is our nation’s symbol to show patriotism.
The Pledge of Allegiance: school-age kids all across the country mindlessly recite these widely known words on a daily basis. Whether it’s a kindergartener, reading the words off of a brightly colored poster on their classroom wall, or an eighth grader like myself, saying the phrases in a bored tone every morning, no one really seems to put much thought into the process these days. But the Pledge has a deeper meaning; a meaning far beyond what younger children can comprehend. There are people who gave their lives to provide everyone else with a safe place to live and do as they please. To me, saying the words of the Pledge of Allegiance should be more than just a mindless habit at the start of each day; it should be a promise, not only to America, but to ourselves, that we will do everything in our power to honor this country and the continuous gifts and privileges it provides.

Let’s take the first section of these words into consideration: “I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands”. By saying this, citizens promise loyalty to our beloved country, and the fair government that keeps society running smoothly. They promise to honor the freedom, rights, and responsibility that the banner symbolizes. When I say these words at the beginning of my day, I think of it as proving my faith and loyalty to the United States, and showing my understanding of the way our government works to protect the people.

The second part says “one nation, under God, indivisible”. These words especially tend to be confusing to young students across the region. I think of it this way: we are all united as one nation, governed by whichever God you believe in (Christian or otherwise), which makes our bonds with each other virtually unbreakable. Our policy of freedom keeps this country united as a whole; unable to be divided in a way unlike any other country in the world.

The last section simply states “with Liberty and Justice for all”. To me, this phrase means that the United States offers freedom and fair treatment for each and every person who enters its border, no matter their race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, gender, or sexual orientation. It says that discrimination is simply not something people should have to worry about in this country; that people can be whoever they want without fear of being tormented. This is, to me at least, the most important part of the Pledge. It shows our country’s willingness to provide independence and fairness to everyone who seeks it.

Personally, the Pledge of Allegiance is a lot more than just a bunch of words for school-age children to mindlessly utter at the start of every day. To me, saying these words shows a person’s promise to this country to be loyal and respect the government that protects the rights of the people. It shows their willingness to honor the policy of freedom that keeps the region united as a whole, unable to be separated by our differences. And, possibly most importantly, these simple phrases ensure that discrimination is never something anyone has to endure here, no matter who they are, what they look like, or what they believe.
What does it mean to pledge allegiance to the U.S. flag? Each and every day of the week I, along with other classmates, stand to say the pledge. When I stand to the pledge the words become more than just words and I’m reminded of how much this country has gone through to be what it is now. All fifty stars on the flag, all fifty states, united as one. A country of freedom, diversity and opportunity.

Reciting the pledge is an honor to me and as well other citizens to be in “the land of the free and home of the brave”. It makes me feel grateful thinking about how blessed I am to be living in a country where I am free. The pledge is a promise to be courageous and prove loyalty to our country. The words “one nation” in the pledge, brings each individual together as one and provides them with the feeling of being protected. We as a country stand together and do everything in our power to fight and protect our nation.

The words ‘indivisible’, ‘liberty’, and ‘justice’ are written in the pledge. These words meaning the nation is unable to be divided, is a free nation, and that each and every one are equals. We are constantly reminded many times that we are a free nation and that all have rights. A diverse nation brought together by many individuals who wrote the Constitution in order to let the people be at ease and equal.

“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.” That is the Pledge of Allegiance, proving I am courageous, I am loyal to my country, and that is a promise. To be in a country that is free, diverse, and fights for equality, lam honored to be a part of such nation. America, “land of the free and home of the brave.” I’m proud to call my home.
The Pledge of Allegiance. Almost every American knows it. It has been recited every day, kindergarten through high school.

The Pledge of Allegiance was written by Francis Bellamy in 1892. It was originally 22 words and read “I pledge allegiance to my flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” Later, the words “the flag of the United States of America” where used instead of “my flag” in 1923. Again, more was added: “under God”, right after “one nation” in 1954. This was the final and current version, reading “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

To pledge allegiance to the U.S. flag is an honor. It represents patriotism and respect to not only my country, but the people who have served and are serving my country and me. It is a sign of my appreciation to and for my freedom and rights as a U.S. citizen. It is to prove loyalty to my country and to promise to do something great to better it for the future. It is hope that my country will do what they can to keep me safe. The pledge might not seem like much, but it has a lot of deep meaning that most likely varies for every individual person.

When I say The Pledge of Allegiance, I am an American citizen. I feel connected and united with my fellow people. It forms something to have in common with other people: respecting and honoring my country.

Roughly 1,196,554 military lives have been taken in the U.S.’s 12 major wars; not to count the civilian lives taken, that’s a lot of people. Reciting the pledge is to honor those lives that were taken.

Pledging allegiance to the U.S. flag is also to thank and show respect to my government officials who do so much. They control our armies, make the big decisions, take care of our economy, and carry out and interpret laws. That’s a lot of work to do, therefore, they deserve all of the respect.

The Pledge of Allegiance was written to unite all nations and countries and create something that they would have in common. It ended up only being used for the United States, but still reached that beginning goal of uniting people. Although, instead of uniting multiple and various nations and countries, it’s united our one country, the United States.
The Pledge of Allegiance is an expression of loyalty to the flag of the United States and the republic of our country. To me, personally, when I pledge my allegiance, I make an oath under God to the United States that consolidates liberty, justice, and most crucial trust in my beliefs and wellbeing of my country and its values.

What is the U.S. Flag and what does it represent to me? For many, at first glance, public education has taught us that the flag represents the original 13 Colonies and the 50 states of the Union. But to me, the U.S Flag represents values, freedom, and courage.

Values, to me, means the ethics and traditions a person follows. For instance, my belief in the First Amendment: Congress shall make no law prohibiting the free exercise of freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people. I would never force anyone to say the pledge of allegiance. I'm merely saying if there is a disagreement with the Government, let's sit down civilly, and talk it out. If we as Americans cannot learn to do this, we will drift so far away from each other that the 'cut' will become a 'wound'.

At my school, Roncalli STEM Academy, we have a daily routine of standing, putting our hands over our hearts, and repeating after our 6th/7th grade Social Studies teacher the Pledge of Allegiance. But in my tenure at Roncalli I have noticed a decrease in both the participation and overall desire to pledge their allegiance to their ever-so-caring country. The country that disposes their freedoms and their rights. Some kids say “Too lazy” “Too boring” but in response I ask “Why is it that the future of America is lazy and unwilling? Why is it that kids disrespect their country and laugh about it?

What is the ‘worth’ of America, what is the regard, the standard, we the future of America hold, what are our values?”

Freedom, to me, means the independence and liberty of a person, and is a fundamental right given to the citizens of the United States by the Constitution. To me, the U.S. flag represents many phases of U.S. history.

Many flags have come and gone, but all have had the combination of either the states or the colonies, symbolizing that the focus is not upon a single state or people but a country. “Our flag is more than just cloth and ink. It is a universally recognized symbol that stands for liberty and freedom. It is the history of our nation, and it's marked by the blood of those who died defending it.”- U.S. Senator John Thune.

Courage, to me, means the bravery and fearlessness in the face of adversity. America has taken part in 12 official wars, 1,264,000 Americans have sacrificed their lives, an estimated 620,000 were lost in the American Civil War. The least we could do for these great American patriots is pledge allegiance to our country, the one they gave their life for. “America was not built on fear. America was built on courage, on imagination and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand.” - Harry S Truman.

The 45th president of the United States, Donald Trump, said “It is time to remember that old wisdom our soldiers will never forget: that whether we are black or brown or white, we all bleed the same red blood of patriots, we all enjoy the same glorious freedoms, and we all salute the same great American Flag.” It’s not about our differences or our similarities. At the end of the day, there will be one, thing that each and every American will have in common: our divine and fundamental liberties and rights that are protected by the history of the U.S. Flag, restored upon by our beliefs and trust every time we pledge an allegiance to the Flag, of the United States of America.

That is what it means to me when I, “pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.”
When I pledge allegiance to the U.S. flag it means a lot to me. When I perform the pledge allegiance, first, I remember all the women and men who fought in the army. Second, it means that you are displaying patriotism and devotion to the U.S. flag. And last, you are also displaying your affection to your country.

Another reason about when I do the pledge allegiance to the U.S. flag, I consider in my mind all the men and women who fought in the war because they were part of the reason that we could do the pledge of allegiance. I am incredibly grateful to the men and women who fought in the war. I remember them all the time whenever you are doing something. When I remember all the people who went to war to fight, I think about all the hardships they face and all the sadness they must go through. But they fight because they want to show they’re to their country by fighting. But you can also show your faith to you’re not only by fighting, but by being honest and truthful.

When you do the pledge of allegiance it means to me that you are promising your loyalty to the U.S. flag. It is just like when you go into the army you are promising that you will serve and fought for the freedom of yourself and the freedom of others. And when you fight it is a high honor, because people remember you because you are risking your life for other people you do not even know. Francis Julius Bellamy, a Christian socialist minister and author, was the original composer of the pledge of allegiance. After the Pledge had been composed, it had been changed a few times. Still Bellamy hoped that citizens would use the Pledge all over the world. School kids now all over the U.S. say the pledge of allegiance in the morning at school.

When you do the pledge of allegiance you are showing patriotism. The way you are presenting patriotism is doing the pledge of allegiance. You are also showing duty when you do the pledge of allegiance. In fact, the Michigan Senate passed a bill telling every school board to have each student in public school to recite the pledge of allegiance. The bill was given on November 10. The pledge of allegiance is used in school, at sporting events, or in public meetings. Doing the pledge of allegiance shows devotion to your country by doing the pledge. You are showing adoration to your country because when you do the pledge you are showing to respect. Showing respect means that you love your country and you want to serve it. You are being patriotic, respectful, loyal, and showing love to your country when you do the pledge of allegiance.

As a result, when I do the pledge of allegiance it means to me that you are showing patriotism, loyalty, respectfulness, and devotion to your country. You are also remembering the men and women that fought in the war. Next time you do the pledge of allegiance, remember these thoughts and why we get to do the pledge. Now when you do it, do it with your full respect and attention to the flag. Since there were a lot of people that died in war. And you should give them all the respect they deserve. They earn that respect since they put their lives on the line for you and me and for everyone else. In fact, the words, “Under God” weren’t added until President Eisenhower encouraged the congress to add it in 1954.
Honor, service, respect, and love of country motivate me to pledge allegiance to the constitution, democracy, freedom, and my home. Many people question the need to pledge to their country; moreover, they think it wrong to pledge to a flag and that it contradicts democracy. Although this belief has become a common argument against reciting the pledge, I consider the purpose behind reciting the pledge to be a matter of principle and respect. I do not pledge to the flag alone; instead, I pledge to respect the men and women who, every day, lay down their lives to protect us. I pledge to the commitment to uphold the American republic. What inspires me is how the pledge epitomizes democracy and the constitutional amendments our forefathers scribed because no one is required, pressured, or forced to say it.

Where do you value pride? That is one rhetorical question one must ask when pondering whether or not they should recite the pledge. Pride is an interesting word because of how differently it is regarded. Personally, I value national pride much more than self-pride. I am proud of democracy and freedom, but I am also proud of our successes as a nation. I pledge allegiance because I want to display my appreciation and support for the actions of my country. I urge myself to be patriotic. I urge myself to be loyal to my country in times of uncertainty, because I understand that the mistakes we make improve us. I pledge in times that I disagree with the government, since a democratic government is truly the reflection of its people.

Truthfully, the pledge of allegiance gives me a warm sensation. It reminds me of what America stands for. It allows me to have one moment, whether happy or sad, to appreciate the things we have been granted and the luxuries we possess as Americans. The pledge is my way of recognizing those who are not thanked: those who militarily serve our nation domestically and abroad, our public servants, and the entire bureaucracy. Without these groups, we would not be the nation we are today. Pledging allegiance has always been a way to thank the groups that allow our democracy to operate. How else do we thank them? When else do we reflect on what gives us our freedoms? When are we appreciative for being members of, what I would call, the greatest nation on earth? The answers to such questions are upsetting. Oftentimes, we disregard some of the most important parts of our lives. I pledge allegiance to challenge this tendency. I pledge allegiance because pledging to a country, to a flag, or, in this case, the U.S. means pledging to a community. It means that I will dedicate myself to the betterment of the people. It supports my aspirations to improve my community. And it furnishes me with the responsibility to carry out my dreams, because in many countries people are not given the same opportunity.

The pledge encompasses patriotism, honor, and respect, but most importantly, it gives you the chance to pledge service to your home. Whether someone agrees or disagrees with the pledge of allegiance or sees it as a symbol of tyranny and oppression, its purpose is to appreciate our luxuries, to support community, and to verbally commit to society. What does the pledge of allegiance mean to me? Freedom.
My name is Chase Malespini. I am in my junior year at Pueblo West High School and I am a corporal in the Army JROTC Program. I am also a member of the JROTC Drill Team. I am writing this essay to answer the question, “What does the Pledge of Allegiance mean to me?” The Pledge is a phrase of hope and inspiration. It gives me a feeling of courageousness, security, and honor. It also makes me feel more connected to my family, especially my father and uncle who were both United States Marines. When I say or read the Pledge, it reinforces my commitment to serving my country in the footsteps of my father.

Each part of the Pledge of Allegiance means something to me. The first line, “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America” makes me feel that I only need one country to support and I that will not betray that country, the USA. The Pledge continues, “And to the Republic for which it stands.” This part makes me feel that I should support my government and trust them since they are there to help us and protect us. In a strong and succinct piece, the Pledge continues, “One nation under God” which makes me feel that the USA has the help of a higher power to help protect us. The next line, “Indivisible” only needs to be one word because it means that the USA can never be divided by anyone, no matter how strong. With the ultimate expression of freedom and confidence, the Pledge ends with the line, “With liberty and justice for all” which makes me feel that everyone deserves liberty and justice, no matter what race, nationality, gender, religious beliefs, or any other factor that makes a person who they are.

The Pledge of Allegiance was written by a great man named Francis Bellamy in August 1892. The Pledge was officially published on September 8, 1892. Francis Bellamy was a socialist minister who was born in 1855 and died in 1931. The original verse of the Pledge was, “I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” It was changed by President Eisenhower during the communist’s threats in 1954 because he encouraged congress to add the line, “under God.” Francis Bellamy’s daughter objected to this proposal, but her objections were disregarded and the line remains, although it is still somewhat controversial.

The Pledge can remind people that the USA is there to protect them and to make them feel secure. The Pledge is not just a phrase that people say just to say it; it’s to remind people where they are fortunate to live and how great this country is. The Pledge’s history is rich and undeniable. It has received a lot of scrutiny, but has withstood the test of time. It should not be revised because even though our country continues to change and evolve, the Pledge is an important piece of what made the USA what it is today.

The Pledge has existed through the best and worst times in American history. It is a connection to our past and a bridge to our future. The question to start this essay was, “What does the Pledge of Allegiance mean to me?” It means more than I can express in a short essay, but the Pledge is a beautiful and amazing set of words that connects us as Americans.
The Pledge of Allegiance

What is the pledge of allegiance? To each individual, it can mean something different. To some the pledge of allegiance is a symbol of our country and the promises engraved in our history; to others it's a symbol of our future. The pledge of allegiance can be many things and to me, the pledge symbolizes many things that reflect our country. Both the good and the flaws.

What makes the pledge of allegiance important to me? Well for starters, it’s a symbol that represents the respect for any soldier who has fought for the freedom for this country, either present day or in the past. It represent the hard work and the sacrifices they made to fight for the rights we have today. It shows the support we give not only to the people in our country but also to those outside. Americans pride themselves on being a country of protectors and interventionist, but like anything in this world, it comes with a cost; the cost is sacrifice. Each soldier has had to make a sacrifice. The sacrifice of leaving their homes, families, and possibly their life. Therefore we show our respect by standing and placing our hand over our heart.

However, I also believe that the pledge of allegiance represent the continued fight in our society today. “One Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all,” that’s what we say and it’s the message our country strives to reach, but like any other place in the world we aren’t perfect. Our country has had many moments of downfall and although we promise a better life for each individual, we have not successfully reached that promise. It’s a constant battle that can be seen in protest such as the protest for equal rights. Rights that although promised, may not always be shown or given equally amongst certain individuals. Rights for women, people of color, problems with education, immigration, and all things that separate and unite the country at the same time. Despite the flaws in our country there is always hope.

Hope for a change, a change that will allow us to all achieve the American dream. Hope lies in every part of this country and it is what we proudly state each time we recite the pledge. To me, the pledge is a promise. It's a promise to respect the country we live in. To be grateful for the opportunities and the moments of greatness. It's the promise to continue fighting for the rights we should all have the freedom to proudly say we can achieve together. It's a promise to address and fix the issues we have, not turn the other way and ignore them. The pledge is the greatest symbol of our country and it represent both the history and future of America. Our promise is a constant movement to ensure we truly have one nation under God with liberty and justice for all. That's what the pledge of allegiance represents to me.
The National Pledge of Allegiance is a time-honored tradition that holds significant meaning in the lives of United States citizens. Most can remember saying the familiar words at the beginning of every school day. But what do these words really mean to individuals and to our society and why do we always feel a sense of pride when saluting our red, white, and blue symbol of freedom? I believe the idea of tradition has a big role to play in our adoration of the Pledge. Our pledge began as a way for students to develop a patriotic bond with our flag and the liberties it stands for and it holds that same purpose to this very day.

For me, the pledge of allegiance is a thank you to all Americans who contribute to our great society. It thanks our armed forces, public servants, and our representatives who ensure our civilization runs properly and fights for the rights of all people. It is a message to foreign bodies that we stand by our nation and the liberties that it protects. Liberties we believe all people of this world have an unalienable right to. The pledge is a statement we make every day to remind us that we might be separate people from different backgrounds who support different parties yet together we are “one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” But the Pledge of Allegiance is far more than just a single statement about our pride and our liberties.

Our Pledge of Allegiance is a promise to ourselves and the rest of the world, a promise that says we will fight injustice across the world. That we will allow no people to suffer while American flag flies. It’s our promise as citizens that we will not take our rights for granted and that we will remember our nation’s past and never forget the mistakes we have made. It’s our promise to the worlds tired, poor, and huddled masses that our nation will always be a land of freedom and a beacon of light for the world. When we hold our hands over our heart we are not pledging to a perfect union. We are pledging ourselves to a society which is always fighting to be better than it was the year before. A society that is fighting to share the liberties it’s been afforded to those who have not been given that opportunity.

So what does pledging allegiance to the flag mean to me? The pledge to me is a reminder that we should always be working to improving our government and society. We are responsible for moving our country forward as we are what prompts change in the world. But the true beauty about our pledge is how every single citizen can have their own interpretation of it and it inspires us to do good in different ways. This is why schools have us salute the flag every morning, to inspire us to develop our own on how America should impact the world and to ensure that we are humble and ready to help the world’s down-traughten masses. We are meant to develop a personal relationship with the pledge and by proxy develop a personal relationship with American ideal and practices.
This means, you pledge, pledge to make a promise, a promise to defend and support our nation. This was meant for U.S. citizens to assure loyalty and respect for the flag and what it represents. I grew up with the pledge of allegiance being everywhere I go, such as sports games, school, courts, graduations, etc.

The way I see it, it is about freedom. The freedom our fallen ones fought so hard for. The pledge of allegiance means a lot to me. I believe you should at very least, stand for those who can't. The pledge of allegiance symbolizes the American flag, my home country, and truly who I am today. I grew up in Colorado Springs, Colorado. I was surrounded by the military and military families in a military town with six bases. Members of my own family fought for my freedom. While on the military bases, when the horns sound at 5 a.m. and 5 p.m., everyone must stop what they are doing and salute if you are a serviceman or woman or put your hand on your heart, in honor of the flag. If you are in your car, driving down the street, you must stop and get out and do this.

When a person of importance, such as a soldier in combat or a member of the government, passes away the president of the United States may issue all flags to be flown at half-staff. What this means is that all flags are flown half way down the flagpole this is out of respect such as someone like another teammate kneeling when another is hurt out of common decency. I agree with this action completely.

Without the pledge of allegiance, many people would not respect and take the flag, let alone my country, seriously. Without it, I would not have many of the freedoms and rights I do today. It symbolizes the harsh times my country and state has been through and what we have done to get where it is today. I respect and love the importance of the flag and will continue to pledge my allegiance to it and anyone who fights for it. Coming from someone of my upbringing, I find it disrespectful that those who don't stand for the pledge of allegiance or the national anthem is equivalent to stepping on the American flag. In my eyes you are not truly an American if you don't stand and support all that has been done for us to be the state and country we are today if you can't support you don't deserve the freedom others risked their lives to give.

This is what the pledge of allegiance means to me.
When reciting the pledge of allegiance, I think about the hardship and work that was put into making the place I call home something to be proud of. There is always a question that crosses my mind when reciting the pledge of allegiance, who created the pledge and why? There are many times when the flag should be admired and remembered but others when it does not seem to be important like during school. I think that students and faculty are required to recite it because it shows foreign exchange students, children, and other walks of life that our flag and the history behind it is the foundation of the United States of America.

There are many meanings within the words of the pledge that essentially give a background story of our Nation, for example the phrase “and to the republic for which it stands” shows that the overall power within the United States of America rests in the hands of the people. When looking back in time a number of things changed when the constitution was signed, and it was a stepping stone that changed the world for the better. The pledge of allegiance means to me that there is one nation created from all walks of life that came together to make something significant that upholds the rights and freedom of people, not depending on race or religion but the ability to work together.

The real question is why was the pledge of allegiance created and why do many other countries not honor their flag as much as the United States? When growing up I always thought of the United States to be the best place on earth and feel like one of the reasons could be because it was a daily routine to say the pledge of allegiance during school. There were many other factors that made me patriotic and the person I am today, but the pledge is what made me think in-depth about the history, worth of our country, and the flag. Many people over the years have fought for the rights that we have today. When standing to say the pledge or listen to the national anthem we put our hand over our heart.

I think of putting our hand over our heart as a way of saying that we are all one when it comes to defending what we cherish most. When I pledge to the flag it is a way of saying thank you to the fallen troops that have served and protected my home. Many of the people that serve learn many values such as Duty, Honor, and Respect. When I see a flag, these specific values come to mind because the flag represents many different aspects of life and liberty. The flag in this type of society is very special and is held high to show that there is no other like it or that there is no other country like the one we have today.

In our hearts we all know that there is no greater feeling than the moment when we all stand at a football game and place our hands over our hearts to pay our respects for the life that we have. Without the pledge I feel like people would not care as much for the flag in general. The experience from having to say the pledge everyday has changed my outlook on the United States and will continue to show kids the importance and meaning of the pledge. The pledge not only gives people a sense of security but also is a heartwarming thing to think about. When I pledge of allegiance to the flag I pledge to uphold the American way.