

## AMERICANISM

The purpose of the Americanism program is to promote patriotism and responsible citizenship. The Americanism work of the ALA includes all activities that strengthen American ideals and uphold the principles of democracy. The security of America lies in citizens who have a true understanding, love for those ideals, and principles upon which the nation was founded, and a willingness to perform these duties even at great personal sacrifice. The work of the Americanism program is educationally based and divided into three phases: work with youth, work with adults, and work with the community. All matters about the flag or patriotic education are classified as Americanism activities. Every citizen should have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Constitution of the United States. Therefore, the ALA has a very definite goal in emphasizing the teachings of good citizenship.

### Activities that fall under Americanism:

- Displaying the U.S. Flag, observing proper etiquette
- Providing Flag Etiquette education
- Sponsoring the Americanism Essay Contests and presentation of Americanism Essay awards in schools; this year's essay title is "How can you be a beacon of light for our veterans?" For the 2026-2027 essay rules, go to <https://www.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Americanism/Get-Involved-Americanism>
- Presentation of U.S. flags to schools and encouraging the Pledge of Allegiance be recited daily
- Promote [www.legion.org/flag](http://www.legion.org/flag) and flag advocacy
- Observe patriotic holidays
  - Virginia is one of three states that has in its state code the *Freedom Flag of Remembrance of 9/11*. This may be displayed on September 11<sup>th</sup> National Day of Service (formerly known as Patriot Day), and throughout the remainder of the month.
- Being an informed voter.
- Promotion of *Star Spangled Kids* programs
- Sponsoring citizenship classes

### Cooperative Effort in the American Legion Family

ALA members can effectively make patriotism a personal matter and select and successfully carry out projects adaptable to the needs of their communities. Work as an American Legion Family to promote these activities at home, in schools, and throughout your communities. Support *American Legion Baseball*, the *Oratorical Contest*, and *Junior Shooting Sports*.

### Other

Recognize local business who display the U.S. Flag, whether daily or on patriotic holidays.

Join the ALA Americanism Facebook group and check the National ALA website frequently for updates.

Excerpted from the *ALA Unit Guide* (2024, pp.68-70), and <https://www.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Americanism/Get-Involved-Americanism> and the *Virginia Code SB 754 (VAC §1-510, Emblems of the Commonwealth)*