

# NORTHEAST TEXAS CHAPTER 416 AIR & SPACE FORCES ASSOCIATION

## Instructions for Essay Contest 2026 (School Year 2025-2026)

**Prizes: 1st Place – \$2,000 // 2nd Place – \$1,500 // 3rd Place – \$1,000**

**Define & defend** your position on the following topic:

### **Artificial Intelligence in the Military: Strategic Enhancement or Serious Concern?**

Write a well-organized and clearly argued response to the topic. We want your conclusion. It is important that you research, evaluate, and synthesize relevant information to reach your own position on this topic and explain, and support your viewpoint. Sources must be cited.

#### **Contest Eligibility**

- Participants must be **seniors** in a **Texas high school** (or at senior level if **home schooled**).
- Contest entry form and the essay must be submitted, by email, no later than **January 9, 2026**.
- **Three (3) separate files:** participants must **sign the Entry form**, Essay in Word and PDF format:
  - **PDF Entry Form**, *use fill form & sign*– file name **LastnameFirstname2026-Entry**
  - **Word document essay** – file name **LastnameFirstname2026-Essay**
  - **PDF file of Essay** - file name **LastnameFirstname2026-Essay**
  - **Example: ClarkeVance2026-Entry / ClarkeVance2026-Essay / etc.**
- Files will be emailed to [Northeasttexasessaycontest@afa.org](mailto:Northeasttexasessaycontest@afa.org) with Subject line – **Lastname Firstname 2026 Essay**

#### **Additional Topic Data**

Does the use of artificial intelligence in the military enhance strategic capabilities or does it raise ethical, legal, and security concerns? Take a stand and write on this topic.

In answering the question, remember there are no right or wrong answers. Your challenge is to describe your position, assess the pros and cons associated with it, establish, and defend it. It is critical that you relate your position to the impact it has on national security.

Find appropriate, supportive information to develop your position. The Air & Space Forces Association website ([www.AFA.org](http://www.AFA.org)), specifically, The Mitchell Institute ([www.mitchellaerospacepower.org](http://www.mitchellaerospacepower.org)) and the Air Forces ([www.af.mil](http://www.af.mil)) & Space Force ([www.spaceforce.mil](http://www.spaceforce.mil)) may have information and articles pertaining to the topic, but you are not limited to these sources.

The **Northeast Texas Chapter 416 of the Air & Space Forces Association (AFA)**, hosted at [www.netxafa.org](http://www.netxafa.org), serves as a dynamic hub for honoring military heritage, supporting airmen and guardians, and engaging the local community through STEM education and patriotic events. The chapter regularly participates in commemorative activities such as flag ceremonies, historical presentations, and community outreach programs including the “Support & Inspire Golf Tournament.” These initiatives reflect the chapter’s commitment to growing students thru education, preserving the legacy of the U.S. Air Force and Space Force while fostering civic pride and awareness of the need for military service throughout Northeast Texas.

The mission of Chapter 416 is to advocate for dominant U.S. Air and Space forces as essential to national security, support the men and women of the Air & Space Forces, and educate the public on aerospace power. Their efforts are grounded in volunteerism and collaboration with veterans, active-duty personnel, and local leaders. For more information, visit their official site at [www.netxafa.org](http://www.netxafa.org). To get involved or reach out, contact the chapter through their website’s contact form or explore event details and updates via their blog and news sections ([www.netxafa.org/news](http://www.netxafa.org/news)). **Ask us about how to join and help!**

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## Instructions for Essay Contest 2026 (School Year 2025-2026)

**Formatting — essays are to be:**

- **Two (2) pages**
- **Third page with *works cited*** in MLA-9 format
- **At least three (3) sources** are required but no limit for *your original work*
- **Times New Roman, 12-point font**
- **One-Inch margins** on all sides; top, left, right, and bottom
- **One-half-inch header:** first and last name, space, page number flush w/right margin
- **Double-spaced, with the title centered on the first page**
- **Indent each paragraph one-half-inch**
- **Use correct grammar and sentence structure**
- **File name as specified for submission** – LastnameFirstname2026-Essay/Entry/PDF

**Formatting and Citation:** Use *MLA-9 format*. Various websites have information. Use the formatting requirements above. Numerous sites help generate citations. You may find the [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/mla\\_general\\_format.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_general_format.html) helpful. You can find all you need at this link; how to cite, how to reference your citation in the text, and more. Please use this as your guide.

### Sample Header Info

Your first and last name, with a space and page number, one-half-inch down in header and placed on right hand margin.

### Example

<div>Vance Clarke 1</div> <div>Northeast Texas Essay Contest – 2026</div> <div>Artificial Intelligence in the Military: Strategic Enhancement or Serious Concern?</div>
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**Sample Citation Page** – See link below for sample citation page.

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/mla\\_sample\\_works\\_cited\\_page.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_sample_works_cited_page.html)

### Final Encouragement to Entrants

We know you are talented, bright, and able! We look forward to your paper and appreciate your participation. We desire properly formatted papers with great content. Please, check the formatting, use the MLA-9 guide reference, and do your best.

If you have questions, please contact:

[Northeasttexasessaycontest@afa.org](mailto:Northeasttexasessaycontest@afa.org)

**NORTHEAST TEXAS CHAPTER 416 AIR & SPACE FORCES ASSOCIATION**

**Instructions for Essay Contest 2026 (School Year 2025-2026)**

**THE FOLLOWING RUBRIC WILL BE USED BY THE CONTEST JUDGES**

		<b>2026 Essay Contest Scoring Rubric</b>	
<b>10%</b>	1	Essay two (2) pages in length.	
	2	Third page with works cited in MLA-9 format.	
	3	At least three (3) sources are cited and annotated in the paper.	
	4	Times New Roman, 12-point font.	
	5	One-Inch margins on all sides; top, left, right, and bottom.	
	6	One-half-inch header: First and Last name, space, page number flush w/right margin.	
	7	Double-spaced, with the title centered on first page.	
	8	Each paragraph should be indented one-half-inch.	
	9	Correct grammar and sentence structure used throughout.	
	10	File name as specified for submission – LastnameFirstname2026-Essay/Entry/PDF/Subject Line	
<b>90%</b>	1	Paper takes a stand and position on the essay topic.	
	2	Paper discusses pros and cons or takes one position and defends it.	
	3	Position taken is well defended throughout paper.	
	4	Position is related to national security based on topic.	
	5	Paper is engaging and expressed ideas makes reader think about topic.	
<b>Ranking</b>			