

PROFESSOR JOHN ADE AJAYI ANNUAL ESSAY COMPETITION 2026

Engr. Prof. John Ade Ajayi was Nigeria's foremost Professor of Metallurgical and Minerals Engineering, a prolific scholar whose contributions to the nation's mining and minerals sector spanned practice, teaching, research, mentorship, and policy contribution. A three-fold Engineer (Mechanical, Metallurgical and Minerals Engineer) and Fellow of six distinguished professional engineering bodies including Nigeria Academy of Engineering where he was the pioneer Chairman of NAE Mining, Minerals and Metallurgy Committee. He authored over 150 published works throughout his lifetime, including peer-reviewed journal articles and books. His body of scholarship stands as an enduring insignia to a career defined by intellectual rigour and professional excellence. Prof. John Ade Ajayi was deeply passionate about the advancement of Nigeria's mining and minerals sector and held a firm conviction in its capacity to drive the nation's economic growth and long-term sustainable development. Through every dimension of his career, he devoted himself to unlocking that potential, shaping the minds of future engineers in the sector while influencing the policies that would chart the sector's course.



In honour of the enduring legacy of Prof. John Ade Ajayi and his contributions to academia, research, mentorship and national development, the organizing committee is pleased to announce the maiden edition of the Prof. John Ade Ajayi Annual Essay Competition. The competition invites students and young scholars of Nigeria's tertiary institutions to critically examine Nigeria's opportunities, challenges, and strategic positioning within the evolving global critical minerals and mining economy.

ESSAY THEME

**Global Scenario in Sustainable Precious and Critical Mineral Resources Development:
Quo Vadis Nigeria in Minerals, Mining, and Metals Value Chain?**

**SUBMISSION
DEADLINE**

**11:59 PM,
25th July, 2026**

SUBTHEMES

- **Geopolitics of Criticality**
Analyzing Nigeria's role in the global race for energy transition minerals (lithium, cobalt, and rare earths) as major powers seek to diversify supply chains away from current concentrations.
- **From Extraction to Beneficiation**
Exploring the policy shift toward local mineral processing; moving beyond "raw" exports to battery-grade materials to capture more domestic value.
- **Technological Leapfrogging & Data**
The impact of AI-based exploration and the Nigerian Minerals Decision Support System (NMDSS) in overcoming historical "blind spots" in geological data.
- **The "Green Resource Curse"**
Strategies for building transparent legal frameworks to ensure equitable wealth distribution and avoid the social and environmental pitfalls of the oil era.
- **Circular Economy & Urban Mining**
Opportunities for developing a recycling infrastructure for critical minerals within Nigeria to reduce environmental strain and secure secondary supplies.
- **Security and Formalization**
Addressing the nexus between illegal mining, regional insecurity, and the formalization of artisanal mining as a prerequisite for attracting high-quality foreign direct investment

The challenge invites thought-provoking essays that answer "Quo Vadis?" (Whither goest thou?). How can Nigeria balance its 44+ exploitable minerals with global sustainability standards? Authors are encouraged to explore how the country can transition from a passive supplier to an active player in the mining and metals value chain.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Submitted essays must be original and unpublished work relevant to the competition theme and subthemes. Essay containing plagiarism, or undisclosed AI-generated content may be disqualified.
- **Word count:** 1,500–2,000 words (excluding references and appendices)
- **Font:** Times New Roman or Aptos, 12pt, double line spacing with standard margins
- **Citation Style:** Recognized citation style including APA, Chicago or Harvard referencing formats
- Entries should include Essay title, author(s) name(s), institutional/professional affiliation (with a valid means of identification), contact email and phone number, abstract (not more than 250 words) and 3–5 keywords
- Manuscript should be submitted in doc, docx or pdf format

Judging Criteria

Criteria	Weight
Relevance to theme	20%
Critical Analysis & Originality	25%
Research & Evidence	20%
Policy Recommendations & Practicality	20%
Structure, Clarity & Presentation	15%

Eligibility Criteria

Open to undergraduate students (300 level and above) and postgraduate students in an accredited tertiary institution in Nigeria.

PRIZES AND AWARDS

1st

₦500k

2nd

₦300k

3rd

₦200k

Important Notes

- Submissions should target audiences such as academics, policymakers, industry investors, and the general public
- Late submissions will not be accepted
- Essays should offer actionable strategies for sustainable development, technological adoption, or policy reform.

Submission Mode

Essay should be uploaded to the Google form

<https://forms.gle/FDfjr1DRmk9h88RbA>