

WSST & Wisconsin Water Week



Brought to you by WSST

2025 Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention

March 26-28 ~ Stevens Point



Working for Our Waters

Brought to you by the
Extension Lakes Program
at UW-Stevens Point

Present the 2025 Writing Contest

Deadline: March 7, 2025

Write an essay on the topic given for your grade level

- ❑ Essays are required to be typed, 12 point font, and double spaced.
- ❑ Text to speech and other adaptations may be made at any grade level based on a student's Individualized Education Program.

K-1	<p>Why is water important to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the different ways we use water every day? (drinking, showering, cooking, laundry but also for recreation and relaxation)• What would happen if we didn't have clean water?• Use pictures, words, and labels to teach others how using kind and helpful words can make people want to protect our water and keep it clean. <p>Your entry must include an essay of 150 words or less. In addition to the essay, applicants may include accompanying materials such as art (poster, poem, collage, trifold, etc.) videos, or digital expressions. K-1 teachers can help with the conversion of spoken essay to text.</p>
2-3	<p>Why is water important to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the different ways we use water every day? (drinking, showering, cooking, laundry but also for recreation and relaxation)• What would happen if we didn't have clean water?• How can our words and communication protect waterways?• What message do you have for the world about keeping our waterways clean? <p>Your entry must include an essay of 500 words or less. In addition to the essay, applicants may include accompanying materials such as art (poster, poem, collage, trifold, etc.) videos, or digital expressions.</p>

Upper Levels next page



<p>4-5</p>	<p>Why is water important to you and your community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is it important to protect our waterways? • How can our words and communication protect waterways? • What message do you have for the world about keeping our waterways clean? • Why is using the power of words important for protecting our water resources now and for future generations? <p>Your entry must include an essay of 500 words or less. In addition to the essay, applicants may include accompanying materials such as art (poster, poem, collage, trifold, etc.) videos, or digital expressions.</p>
<p>6-8</p>	<p>Why is water important to Wisconsin?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can our words and communication protect waterways? • What negative environmental impacts have humans had on Wisconsin waterways? • What positive environmental impacts and conservation efforts have humans had on Wisconsin waterways? • How can you inspire others to change or take action to protect our waterways? <p>Your entry must include an essay of 500 words or less. In addition to the essay, applicants may include accompanying materials such as art (poster, poem, collage, trifold, etc.) videos, or digital expressions.</p>
<p>9-12</p>	<p>Why is water important to Wisconsin?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can our words and communication protect waterways? • What negative environmental impacts have humans had on Wisconsin waterways? • What positive environmental impacts and conservation efforts have humans had on Wisconsin waterways? • How can you inspire others to change or take action to protect our waterways? • What Wisconsin water advocacy project is most important to you? How could you continue that advocacy through your own words/actions? <p>Your entry must include an essay of 500 words or less. In addition to the essay, applicants may include accompanying materials such as art (poster, poem, collage, trifold, etc.) videos, or digital expressions.</p>



*Wisconsin
Lakes
Partnership*

Writing Resources to Reference:

- <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/environment>
- <https://www3.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/default.aspx>
- https://intotheoutdoors.org/explore-episodes-lessons/?el_video_type=full-episode



Awards

The winning essay in each category will receive a \$100 prize and publication in the WSST newsletter and website. The teacher of the winning submission will also receive a \$100 prize. Honorable mention in each category will receive \$50 prize.

Additional highly rated essays may be published to the WSST website at the discretion of the contest organizers, as well as shared with the water community through the Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Partnership's Lake Tides publication

(<https://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/UWEXLakes/Pages/resources/newsletter/default.aspx>). Results will be shared at the 2025 WSST Conference in Oshkosh, the 2025 Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention in Stevens Point, and on the Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers Website, www.wsst.org. The events and postings will be held in March and April of 2025.

Eligibility

Any current WSST member can submit one or two student essays for each science course they teach. Student essays must be original work and be submitted in one of five categories: K-1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8, and 9-12.

*No student self-submitted entries will be accepted. Essays must be submitted by a current WSST member.

Submission

Submissions should be emailed as **ONE** file that includes both the essay and release form in .pdf format to essay@wsst.org. All submissions must be received by 5:00 pm (CST) on March 7, 2025. All WSST communications in regards to essays will be made with the submitting teacher.

Writing submissions from non-WSST members, turned in after 5:00 pm (CST) on March 7, 2025, are longer than 500 words, or do not include a signed release form may be disqualified. Submissions that cannot be read will not be judged. The decisions of the judges are final.

Judging Criteria*

Adherence to Topic (30%)

The essay clearly addresses the theme of the competition and answers the question specified for each grade level. In addition to answering the question, the essay provides a clear understanding of the process of science and is scientifically accurate.

Critical Thinking (30%)

This essay demonstrates depth, clarity, originality, and relevance of critical thinking in relation to the essay prompt. It encourages writers to present well-thought-out, original arguments that are clear and focused, while ensuring their analysis and conclusions are supported by evidence and analysis.

Structures (20%)

The essay is organized in a way that makes it easy for the reader to follow. In addition, the essay shows grade level appropriate use of grammar, vocabulary, and writing conventions. The essay must be typed using 12-point font, double spaced and less than 500 words. Teachers of students in the K-1 category can help with conversion of spoken essays to text.

Creativity (20%)

Points in this category are awarded to essays that provoke a lot of thought by the reader, express ideas in novel ways, make clever use of vocabulary, or use interesting metaphors or poignant stories.

*Text to speech and other adaptations may be made at any grade level based on a student's Individualized Education Program.

WSST will notify the submitting teachers of winning essay prior to the conference to obtain student and teacher photos to create displays for the conferences.

Rubric for Writing Contest

Entry Number: _____ Reader: _____

Criteria	Exemplary (8)	Proficient (6)	Basic (4)	Not Demonstrated (Less than or equal to 2)	Points
Adherence to Topic (Development of Ideas & Content)	<p>Well-developed ideas; introduces ideas, and responds to Essay prompts connecting with core content of the topic.</p> <p>The essay provides a clear understanding of the process of science and is scientifically accurate.</p>	<p>Developing ideas, sometimes connecting with core content of the Essay topic.</p> <p>The essay provides some understanding of the process of science and is mostly scientifically accurate.</p>	<p>Ideas are there but not fully developed; does not connect with core content of the Essay topic.</p> <p>The essay provides limited understanding of the process of science and is barely scientifically accurate.</p>	<p>Poorly developed ideas, which do not add to or connect with core content of topic.</p> <p>The essay does not provide an understanding of the process of science and is not scientifically accurate.</p>	<p>Score: ____ x 30 =</p>
Critical Thinking	<p>Clear evidence of critical thinking application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Essay entry characterized by clarity of argument, depth of insight into issues, originality of treatment, and relevance. Sometimes include unusual insights. Arguments well supported.</p> <p>Essay entry has clever use of vocabulary, or uses interesting metaphors or uses poignant stories.</p>	<p>Beginning of critical thinking, Essay entry tends to address peripheral issues. Generally accurate, but could be improved with more analysis and creative thought. Tendency to recite facts or textual information rather than address issues.</p> <p>Essay entry is articulate and understandable, but there are minor errors in clever use of vocabulary or, interesting metaphors or, poignant stories.</p>	<p>Critical thinking evidence not fully formed in Essay entry. Several tangential issues addressed. Some accuracy, but much more analysis and thought needed. Almost exclusively repeating information from the text's materials rather than addressing issues.</p> <p>Essay entry is well written but does not include clever use of vocabulary or use interesting metaphors or use poignant stories.</p>	<p>Poorly developed critical thinking.</p> <p>Essay is poorly written and does not include clever use of vocabulary or use interesting metaphors or use poignant stories.</p>	<p>Score: ____ x 30 =</p>
Structures (Writing Mechanics, Clarity, Format & layout, timeliness)	<p>Essay entry is well articulated and understandable; flawless grammar, punctuation, and usage.</p> <p>Follows the format and layout according to guidelines provided.</p> <p>Essay entry completed and submitted on time.</p>	<p>Essay entry is articulate and understandable, but there are minor errors in grammar, punctuation, and/or usage.</p> <p>Follows the format and layout according to guidelines provided but there are minor errors.</p>	<p>Essay entry is occasionally difficult to understand with several errors in grammar, punctuation, and/or usage.</p> <p>Follows the format and layout according to the guidelines but there are several errors.</p>	<p>Essay entry is difficult to understand with many errors.</p> <p>Follows the format and layout according to guidelines, but has many errors.</p>	<p>Score: ____ x 20 =</p>
Creativity (Any accompanying materials will be taken into consideration here)	<p>The essay is highly engaging and demonstrates exceptional creativity. It incorporates original metaphors, stories, or perspectives that captivate the reader. The language is vibrant and imaginative, and the writer uses creativity to enhance the core message, adding depth to the work.</p>	<p>The essay is engaging and shows some creativity, with interesting ideas or metaphors that support the main points. While the creativity adds to the message, it could be pushed further to make the writing even more compelling.</p>	<p>The essay lacks strong creative elements. While it may still be engaging, it uses simple language or lacks the imaginative flourishes that could elevate the writing. The creativity is minimal and does not significantly enhance the message.</p>	<p>The essay lacks creativity. The writing is straightforward or overly simplistic, and there is little attempt to engage the reader through creative language or unique perspectives.</p>	<p>Score: ____ x 20 =</p>
Total Points					<p>____ /800</p>

Writing Contest Participant Release Form

Your essay may be published and/or displayed on a public internet website (www.wsst.org) as well as in other formats, including the WSST newsletter. By signing this release form you and/or your parent or legal guardian acknowledge that the essay may be made publicly available and you and/or your parent or legal guardian consent to this use of your essay. The scanned release must be received by WSST as part of your essay submission by 5:00 pm (CST) on March 7, 2025.

I agree that my essay may be used, edited, reproduced, distributed, and presented in any non-commercial educational way deemed proper by the contest organizers without any additional consent, or payment to me or anyone else. There is no time limit on the validity of this release nor is there any geographic limitation on where my essay may be used, distributed or presented.

Entrant photos may be collected to be used at both the WSST Conference and the Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention in Stevens Point. Winning entrant names and schools may be published on our website and Facebook page.

In addition, I certify that the essay submitted for this contest is my own work.

Student Name (printed): _____ Grade Level: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (printed): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Teacher Name (printed): _____

School Name & District: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____