



2016 Essay Contest

Climate Superheroes

Saving Planet Earth

Contest Prizes

1st Prize - \$50 cash

2nd Prize - \$30 cash

3rd Prize - \$20 cash

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Open to 6th-grade public, private, and home school students in SD
Submissions must be emailed or postmarked by February 28, 2016

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Optional Writing Workshop

Saturday, January 9, 2016 1:30pm - 3:30pm

Ronning Branch Library Meeting Room

3100 E. 49th St. Sioux Falls, SD 605-367-8140

This free, optional writing workshop will be held to assist students in jump-starting their research and writing processes. Students should bring their own writing paper and writing utensils. Personal laptops and iPads would also be useful.

To register contact Sherry @ 605-254-6729 or sdsierraclubcontest@gmail.com

Registration deadline: Monday January 4, 2016

Essay packets may be downloaded from the Youth page of our website
www.sierraclub.org/south-dakota/youth

CONTENTS

Contest Guidelines and Important Dates

Writing Guidelines

What is Global Climate Change?

Persuasive Essay Prompt

Student Instructions for Writing
the 5-Paragraph Essay

Essay Rubric

Contest Guidelines & Important Dates

Open to 6th-grade public, private, and home school students in SD

Writing Workshop registration deadline is January 4, 2016

Writing Workshop will be held on January 9, 2016

Completed essays must be emailed or postmarked by February 28, 2016

Winners will be notified on April 22, 2016

Writing Guidelines

Standard 5-paragraph persuasive essay format

500-750 word limit, typed or neatly handwritten

All submissions must be the original work of the student

All submissions must include at least three research source citations

All submissions must include a completed cover sheet

**Complete writing guidelines and instructions may be downloaded from
the Youth page of our website**

www.sierraclub.org/south-dakota/youth

What is Global Climate Change?

Global climate change is one of the most important and pressing issues currently facing humanity. Climate change affects every human, animal, and plant species that lives on Earth. When scientists talk about global climate change, they are talking about trends in the changes of temperature, precipitation, wind patterns, and other atmospheric conditions that occur over long periods of time.

The most significant of these trends is global warming, which refers to the rise in average temperatures near the Earth's surface. Global warming is largely caused by increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane in the Earth's atmosphere, and 97 percent of climate scientists agree that it is very likely due to human activity. Over the past century, large amounts of greenhouse gases have been released into the atmosphere by humans burning fossil fuels like coal, oil, and natural gas to power their homes, vehicles, and factories.

As a result of these human activities, atmospheric concentration of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide has increased by more than 30 percent since the Industrial Revolution (1760-1850). There is now more carbon dioxide in the air than at any other time in the past 650,000 years! Global average temperatures are the highest they have ever been on the planet, and the past decade (2005-2014) was the warmest Earth has experienced since scientists began recording thermometer-based temperatures.

Rising temperatures are responsible for many global climate changes. Ice sheets in Greenland and the Antarctic have decreased in mass, and glaciers have retreated around the planet due to global warming. Global sea level has risen nearly seven inches in the last century, and the acidity of the oceans' surface waters has increased by nearly 30 percent as a result of rising temperatures. The numbers of extreme weather and intense rainfall events has also risen. In the 1990s alone, approximately 600,000 deaths occurred worldwide as a result of weather extremes such as heavy rains, floods, and hurricanes. Increased global warming is also expected to reduce agricultural crop yields and to compromise Earth's supply of fresh water, causing increased water scarcity, malnutrition, and vulnerability to infectious diseases.

Persuasive Essay Prompt

To successfully control global climate change, humans will have to reduce their use of the fossil fuels largely responsible for the rapidly rising greenhouse gas emissions that are driving global warming.

The good news is that everyone uses energy, so everyone can be a significant part of the climate change solution!

Your task is to **research** modern renewable energy sources and other technologies that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, **choose** the one you think would provide the best solution, and then **write** a persuasive essay identifying and discussing the benefits of this renewable energy source or technology and explaining why global citizens and governments should implement this solution to create a sustainable and healthy climate on planet Earth.

Sources

US ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

www3.epa.gov/climatechange/basics/

NASA

www.climate.nasa.gov/evidence/

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

www.who.int/features/factfiles/climate_change/facts/en/

[Student Instructions for Writing the](#)

5-Paragraph Essay

1

Your task is to **research** modern renewable energy sources and other technologies that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, **choose** the one you think would provide the best solution, and then **write** a persuasive essay identifying and discussing the benefits of this renewable energy source or technology and explaining why global citizens and governments should implement this solution to create a sustainable and healthy climate on planet Earth.

CRITICAL COMPONENTS

Paragraph One: Introduction

This paragraph should include a clear thesis statement that establishes your purpose for writing (the main idea). It should also provide basic information on climate change and global warming AND clearly identify the specific renewable energy source or technology that you have decided would provide the best solution to the global climate change crisis.

Paragraph Two: Body Paragraph

This paragraph should clearly identify and discuss the **first benefit** of the renewable energy source or technology you have chosen. It should also explain why this benefit is important and the way(s) it contributes to the solution. Be sure to include supporting facts and/or examples in your discussion of this benefit.

Paragraph Three: Body Paragraph

This paragraph should clearly identify and discuss a **second benefit** of the renewable energy source or technology you have chosen. It should also explain why this benefit is important and the way(s) it contributes to the solution. Be sure to include supporting facts and/or examples in your discussion of this benefit.

Paragraph Four: Body Paragraph

This paragraph should clearly identify and discuss a **third benefit** of the renewable energy source or technology you have chosen. It should also explain why this benefit is important and the way(s) it contributes to the solution. Be sure to include supporting facts and/or examples in your discussion of this benefit.

Paragraph Five: Conclusion

This paragraph should summarize the three benefits you wrote about in the body of your essay. It should also provide a final strong reason for implementing your solution--a solution that inspires global citizens and governments to take action to create a sustainable and healthy climate on planet Earth.

Student Instructions

2

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Persuasive Components

Your essay should include scientific facts from your research. It should also offer persuasive reasons that inspire global citizens and governments to take action and implement your solution to create a sustainable and healthy climate on planet Earth. Persuasive transition words and phrases should be used throughout the essay to develop your main idea.

6+1 Writing Traits

These seven key qualities define strong writing. You should do your best to use all of them as you write your essay.

--Ideas

Sound research content, development of main idea, use of correct details, focused writing

--Organization

5-paragraph essay structure, attention-grabbing introduction, main idea proceeds logically, compelling conclusion

--Voice

Originality, tone, style, writer engaged personally with topic

-Word Choice

Use of expressive and descriptive words, use of precise language and phrasing that communicates main idea effectively

--Sentence Fluency

Rhythm and flow of phrases, interesting sound and word patterns, varying sentence structure used, effective use of transition words and phrases

--Conventions

Correct spelling and grammar, proper use of words and phrases, paragraphing, capitalization, punctuation

--Presentation

Correct formatting, layout, neat handwriting (if applicable), cover sheet and research citations follow outlined standards

Student Instructions for Writing the 5-Paragraph Essay

3

COMPLETING YOUR COVER SHEET

Every submission must include a cover sheet that includes the following:

- *Title of Essay
- *Student's First and Last Name
- *Teacher's First and Last Name
- *Name of School Student Attends
- * Accurate Essay Word Count
 - This count only includes the words in the five paragraphs of your essay.

CITING YOUR RESEARCH SOURCES

All essays must include at least three research sources (the books, magazines, and internet websites you use when researching your topic), and these sources must be cited at the end of your essay. You are not expected to use footnotes within the body of your essay, but a list of your research sources must be included at the end of your essay. **PLEASE NOTE: This list is not part of your final word count.**

Please use the following examples when writing out the list of your research sources:

--To cite an internet source:

Online Site Administrator

Webpage Address

US Environmental Protection Agency
<http://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/basics/>

NASA
<http://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/>

--To cite a book:

Author's or Editor's Name. Book Title. Place: Publisher, Copyright Date.

Birch, Robin. Climate Change. NY: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2009.

Royston, Angela. Global Warming. Chicago, IL: Heinemann Library, 2008.

--To cite an article in a magazine:

Author's Name. "Title of Article." Magazine Name Edition # & Date: page #.

Calendar, Jim. "Biomass Technology Solutions." EcoNation 72 March 2012: 27-31.

Green, Nora. "Benefits of Solar." Solar Energy Times 11 January 2010: 44.

