



2024 Spirit of the Water Essay Contest
Scholarship Opportunity for High School Students

The Iowa Water Center (IWC) invites students from around the state to participate in the 2024 IWC "Spirit of the Water" Essay Contest.

This year, we challenge Iowa High School students to write an essay that relates to the following theme: **Life Depends on Water. Water Depends on You.** Submissions should also include a photo taken by the student to support their essay related to this topic.

There are two options for submissions — a Creative Writing Track or a Research Track. Applications should select one of the following:

- **Creative Writing Track:** A written work that displays imagination or invention. Written works can be in the form of storytelling with the use of literary themes, character development, and expresses thoughts and emotions related to theme. Creative writing can be fiction or non-fiction.
- **Research Track:** An essay written with clarity and organization that synthesizes what is learned from written material and scientific discovery as related to the theme. Research essays require a minimum of three resources.

Essay winners will receive a monetary prize and a course scholarship to the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory. Winning essays will be published online on the IWC website and will be distributed at the Iowa Water Conference in the fall of 2024. In addition, prize recipients will connect to those who impact water resource management in Iowa.

Essay prizes include the following:

- **First Place:** \$500 cash and one full college course scholarship or 4 credit hours total at the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory (\$1700 value)
- **Second Place:** \$300 cash and a 2-credit hour course scholarship at the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory (\$900 value)
- **Third Place:** \$300 cash

Educators in English, creative writing, and the sciences are encouraged to promote this contest to their students. We recognize the positive impact of diversity and welcome applications from all students meeting eligibility guidelines. Persons with documented disabilities are encouraged to contact IWC staff to make timely requests for reasonable accommodations.

The contest closes on April 12, 2024, 5 p.m. Central Time.

Submission Guidelines

Students enrolled in grades 9-12 in public, private, and home schools in the State of Iowa are eligible to submit an essay.

A **qualifying submission** for judging must include the following:

1. Written essay with the theme of **“Life Depends on Water. Water Depends on You.”**
An emphasis should be placed on water resource management within the essay.
All essays must be 500 to 1000 words (approximately 4 pages typed in 12-point font, double-spaced). For the research track, please use in-text citations for references. The reference list does not count towards the required essay length and must use MLA formatting.
2. Photo taken by student to support the essay
3. [Application form](#) - This form must be completed and sent with the essay to qualify for the contest.

Submissions should be sent via email to: iowawatercenter@iastate.edu.

Confirmations will be sent to recipients upon submission. Submissions will be evaluated by a three-person panel representing the Iowa water community. The creative writing track and the research track will be evaluated within the same competition (i.e. there will be one 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prize winner across all essays).

Essays will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Creativity/Originality
2. Focus/Main Point
3. Organization/Format
4. Language/Style
5. Grammar

Questions regarding the contest can be directed to Zita Quade, zquade@iastate.edu.

About the prizes

The Iowa Lakeside Laboratory located in West Okoboji Lake is owned by the state of Iowa and operated through the Board of Regents. Its mission is: 1) to provide science classes and research opportunities for university students, and 2) to offer Outreach Programs and provide services through the state universities.

Scholarship winners may choose any summer academic course at the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory. For an example course offering list, please visit <https://iowalakesidelab.org/courses/summer-2024>.

In general, one semester hour is equivalent to one week of a residential course. Credits earned at the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory transfer to the Regent Universities within Iowa as well as other colleges. To transfer to other universities and colleges, students are encouraged to contact those respective institutions regarding credit transfer. The scholarship amount for credit hours is only available to the

Iowa Lakeside Laboratory and the cash value will not transfer to other college and universities to take courses.

Students with prize-winning essays will receive cash prizes via personal check. Students receiving scholarships will receive a certificate to submit to the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory when registering for courses. The certificate for coursework will expire four years after high school graduation and students are encouraged to enroll in a course when they are academically prepared and can fit it in their schedule.

For more information, please contact Mary Skopec, Director of the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory, mary-skopec@uiowa.edu or 712-337-3669 ext 5.