



# 2026 MIDDLE SCHOOL WATER ESSAY CONTEST WHEN IN DROUGHT

District-wide Winner: \$500 | County Winners: \$100

**Deadline: October 23, 2026**

Sixth, seventh, and eighth graders in Bartow, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Paulding and Rockdale counties are invited to participate in the Metro Water District's annual essay contest.

## Essay Topic

For the 2026 Middle School Water Essay Contest, we ask middle school students to think about drought. Even though we have had some rain, all of Georgia is still in a Level-1 declared drought. Please answer one or both of the questions.

1. Research Georgia droughts using the resources provided. You might consider interviewing someone who experienced the 2007 or 2016 drought, like a family member or employee of your local water utility. How do droughts affect metro Atlanta/ the north Georgia region, and what are some things we can do to work together to help during a drought?
2. Use the resources below to answer the following questions. Why is water conservation especially important during a drought? How can you save water at home and at school?

## Guidelines

- Essays must be typed. If there are any special circumstances requiring a hand-written essay, please contact [education@northgeorgiawater.org](mailto:education@northgeorgiawater.org).
- Each essay must be submitted with an entry form.
- Essays must be each student's original work. Plagiarized essays will not be considered. Essays written using AI or similar programs will not be considered.
- All essays must be received no later than: Friday, October 23, 2026
- Essays must be submitted online at [www.northgeorgiawater.org/essay](http://www.northgeorgiawater.org/essay). If there are any special circumstances requiring essays be submitted by mail, please contact [education@northgeorgiawater.org](mailto:education@northgeorgiawater.org).

## For more information

- The [Georgia Water Virtual Learning Journey](#), created in partnership with Georgia Public Broadcasting, includes a toolkit of curriculum guides for teachers and students—scroll to the bottom of the page for links. In particular, the [Develop and Use a Model of the Hydrologic Cycle](#) activity is written to correlate with Georgia Standards S6E3 and S6E4 (6th grade), S7L4 (7th grade), and S8P1 (8th grade).
- You could reference [GPB's explanation of droughts and floods](#).
- You could utilize the [University of Nebraska's "Drought for Kids"](#) resources online for definitions, data, and examples.
- The Environmental Protection Agency has many resources for students, including "[A Student's Guide to Global Climate Change: Drought](#)".

- We also encourage you to perform the "What's Your Standard" activity from Georgia Project WET's Urban Watershed (visit [www.northgeorgiawater.org/essay](http://www.northgeorgiawater.org/essay)) with your class to help them gain a better understanding of the natural and manmade infrastructure that keeps our water flowing. You can also check out <https://www.discoverwater.org/> for nine activities (in English and Spanish) that cover topics such as conservation, hygiene, fresh/salt water, watersheds and more.

## Prizes

One winner from each of the 15 counties as well as the City of Atlanta will receive \$100. The District-wide winner will be selected from among the county and city winners to receive an additional \$400 for a total prize of \$500.

## Judging

Entries will be judged on their creativity, clarity and content. Essays without complete name and contact information will be disqualified. A judging committee will be comprised of staff from the Metro Water District and its partner organizations.

## Awards Reception

County and City of Atlanta winners will be notified in November. An awards and recognition ceremony is planned for December 2026. District staff will notify winners about the ceremony, as details are still being finalized.



Explore the support materials for more information.