

2026 Middle School Water Essay Contest Grading Rubric

Criterion	4 — Excellent	3 — Good	2 — Developing	1 — Beginning	Score
Content	Clearly answers the drought question, uses accurate research, and shows strong understanding of drought and water conservation.	Answers the question and includes accurate research and understanding.	Partly answers the question; research or understanding is limited.	Does not clearly answer the question; little research or understanding is shown.	____ / 50
Creativity	Presents original ideas, a unique perspective, and an engaging approach.	Includes some original ideas and an interesting perspective.	Includes few original ideas; the essay is somewhat predictable.	Shows little originality or personal perspective.	____ / 25
Clarity	Ideas are well organized, easy to follow, and written with few or no errors.	Ideas are organized and understandable; minor errors are present.	Organization or writing errors sometimes make the essay difficult to follow.	Ideas are disorganized or difficult to understand; frequent errors are present.	____ / 25