

The Living Soil

YOUR SOIL
IS ALIVE!

Contest Handbook - Abridged Version

NC Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts Annual Educational Contests

Sponsored locally by the Yadkin Soil & Water Conservation District

Contest Rules and Tips

The theme for the 2023 – 2024 school year is “*The Living Soil*”.

The Yadkin Soil & Water Conservation District is proud to offer the following educational contest opportunities to area students in the 4th - 12th grades.

<u>Contest</u>	<u>Eligibility</u>
Poster	4 th and 5 th Grade
Essay	6 th , 7 th , and 8 th Grade
Computer-Designed Slideshow	9 th – 12 th Grade

All contest submissions become the property of the Yadkin Soil & Water Conservation District office, to be displayed and/or used for the promotion of the District programs.

General Definitions

"Conservation" -- the wise use and management of natural resources (soil, water, air, plants, and animals) to fulfill human needs now and in the future.

"Soil Conservation" -- to protect soil from erosion, to keep it productive and out of waterways; to use and manage soil wisely now to ensure a rich soil resource for future generations.

"Water Conservation" -- to protect water quality by keeping water clean from sediment, chemicals, oil and animal wastes; to protect water quantity by using smaller amounts of harmful elements; to use and manage water wisely now to ensure good water quality for future generations.

"Best Management Practices" (BMPs) -- agricultural practices that are suitable for reducing or minimizing the amount of water pollution generated by non-point sources; an engineered structure or management activity, or combination of these, that eliminates or reduces adverse environmental effects of pollutants. Often called Best Management Practices.

"Copyright" -- A protection by U.S. laws for the authors and creators of original work. A copyright protects the manner of expression of ideas, but not the ideas themselves. Original work includes illustrations, computer-generated drawings, photographs, or other artwork created solely by the individual submitting the work. Example: You can make a poster using cartoon characters that talk about soil and water conservation in comic-strip fashion if the ideas are yours (this main idea cannot be copyrighted); If classmates recognize your characters as popular characters, then your work is copied from the original artists. Remember to use your imagination because your ideas are the BEST!

POSTER CONTEST

Eligibility: Open to all 4th and 5th grade students. One winner *per grade level* will be selected from all entries to advance to the Area contest.

Specifications:

- Poster must be no larger than 24 X 36 inches.
- Pictures or other materials may be mounted on posters if mounted securely. **Mounted materials cannot stick out more than 1/8 of an inch from the paper.** Only materials that are flat or create a two-dimensional effect may be used.
- Any coloring materials available to students and suitable for poster work may be used.
- Poster must be the **original work** of the **individual** student. Original work is created by the student and shows a fresh, new idea. See **copyright** definition. Hand-drawn pictures qualify for extra points.
- Must be submitted flat (not rolled).
- Must be properly identified on the back using the following format:

Student's Name:

Grade:

Student's Address/Parents' Email, Phone:

Teacher's Name:

School:

County:

District:

Judging Criteria: The Association has adopted a standard score sheet (see attached) to be used for all contest levels. Posters will be judged on the following points:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----|
| • Conservation message | 50% |
| • Visual effectiveness | 25% |
| • Universal appeal | 10% |
| • Originality | 10% |
| • Hand-drawn elements | 5% |

Infractions: Points will be deducted for the following infractions:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| • Copyright violation | - 5 points |
| • Exceeding the paper size | - 5 points |

REMINDER "Copyright" -- A protection by U.S. laws for the authors and creators of original work.

A copyright protects the manner of expression of ideas, but not the ideas themselves. Original work includes illustrations, computer-generated drawings, photographs, or other artwork created solely by the individual submitting the work. Example: You can make a poster using cartoon characters that talk about soil and water conservation in comic-strip fashion if the ideas are yours (this main idea cannot be copyrighted); If classmates recognize your characters as popular characters, then your work is copied from the original artists.

POSTER POINTERS

What makes a good poster?

- A brief, catchy message; one theme that can be read in 10 seconds or less.
- A slogan telling viewers to do something and making them want to do it.
- Use of color and white space to get and hold attention.
- Letters large enough to be easily read and words separated enough to make them quickly grasped.

Avoid these poster faults:

- More than one theme.
- Too busy -- too many and/or too scattered pictures or words.
- Material not relevant to the topic.
- Message becomes lost.

Other tips to remember:

- Margins should be larger at the bottom and equal on the other three sides.
- Illustrations add emphasis and attract attention.
- Small lettering is hard to read at a distance. Consider the following lettering heights for readability from 10 feet:

Easiest to read	1 inch
Easy to read	$\frac{3}{4}$ inch
Fairly easy to read	$\frac{1}{2}$ inch

- **Boldness** makes a difference.
- Plain lettering is more readable than *fancy lettering*.
- R e m e m b e r s p a c i n g Rememberspacing.

REMINDER “Copyright” -- A protection by U.S. laws for the authors and creators of original work.

A copyright protects the manner of expression of ideas, but not the ideas themselves. Original work includes illustrations, computer-generated drawings, photographs, or other artwork created solely by the individual submitting the work. Example: You can make a poster using cartoon characters that talk about soil and water conservation in comic-strip fashion if the ideas are yours (this main idea cannot be copyrighted); If classmates recognize your characters as popular characters, then your work is copied from the original artists.

ESSAY CONTEST

Eligibility: Open to all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. One winner *per grade level* will be selected from all entries to advance to the Area contest.

Specifications:

- Essay must bear the current title of the contest.
- Must be between 300 – 500 words. All words will be counted to reach the limit.
- Must be presented on a standard 8 ½ X 11 inch sheet of paper.
- Must be properly identified on the back using the following format:

Student's Name:

Grade:

Student's Address/Parents' Email, Phone:

Teacher's Name:

School:

County:

District:

Judging Criteria: The Association has adopted a standard score sheet (see attached) to be used for all contest levels. Essays will be judged on content and writing skills as described on the score sheet.

- Essays must be the **original work** of the **individual** student.
- Essays may be either handwritten or typed on the computer.

Infractions: Points will be deducted for the following infractions:

- Incorrect length - 5 points
- Current title missing - 5 points
- Wrong paper size - 2 points

For clarification, the difference between an essay and a report, as applied to this contest, is:

Essay - A short composition dealing with a single subject from a *personal* point of view; facts may be interwoven into the essay, which stimulates thinking.

Report - A formal presentation of facts in a report style.

COMPUTER-GENERATED SLIDESHOW CONTEST

Eligibility: Open to all 9th through 12th grade students. One winner will be selected *from all entries* to advance to the Area contest.

Specifications:

- Computer-generated slideshow must be no more than 15 slides of information.
- The slide immediately following the last slide of information must be blank, followed by a slide that contains the identifying information listed below.
- May be created using any software of the student's choice, but must be viewable as either a PowerPoint or Google Slides slideshow.
- The use of audio and slide animation is allowed.
- The use of video is prohibited. Slideshows using videos will be disqualified.
- Slideshows shall not exceed a maximum of 5 minutes in length.
- Entries must be submitted electronically. Please do not print them.
- Must be the **original work** of the **individual** student. Original work is created by the student and shows a fresh, new idea. See **copyright** definition.
- Must be identified with the following information on the last slide of the presentation:

Student's Name:

Grade:

Poster Title:

Poster File Name:

Student's Address/Parents' Email, Phone:

Teacher's Name:

School:

County:

District:

Judging Criteria: The Association has adopted a standard score sheet (see attached) to be used for all contest levels. Computer-generated slideshows will be judged on the following points:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----|
| • Conservation message | 50% |
| • Visual effectiveness | 30% |
| • Universal appeal | 10% |
| • Originality | 10% |

Infractions: Points will be deducted for the following infractions:

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| • Copyright violation | - 5 points |
| • Exceeding the maximum number of slides | - 5 points |
| • Exceeding the time limit (5 minutes) | -5 points |
| • Use of video | Disqualification |

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COMPUTER-GENERATED SLIDESHOW POINTERS

What makes a good slideshow?

- Follow a logical order - Introduction, Body, and Conclusion.
- A catchy message; use one theme.
- A slogan telling viewers to do something and making them want to do it.
- Good use of colors and backgrounds to get and hold attention.
- Letters large enough to be easily read and words separated enough to make them quickly grasped.
- Good use of pictures and illustrations.

Avoid these slideshow faults:

- More than one theme.
- Too busy -- too many and/or too scattered pictures or words.
- Text too small or difficult to read over the background.
- Material not relevant to the topic.
- Message becomes lost.

Other tips to remember:

- Balance the placement of text and photos/illustrations.
- Illustrations add emphasis and attract attention.
- Small lettering is hard to read at a distance. Consider the following lettering heights for readability from 20 feet:

Easiest to read	36 – 44 font size
Easy to read	28 – 34 font size
Fairly easy to read	24 – 26 font size
- **Boldness** makes a difference.
- Plain lettering is more readable than *fancy lettering*.
- R e m e m b e r s p a c i n g Rememberspacing.

REMINDER “Copyright” -- A protection by U.S. laws for the authors and creators of original work.

A copyright protects the manner of expression of ideas, but not the ideas themselves. Original work includes illustrations, computer-generated drawings, photographs, or other artwork created solely by the individual submitting the work. Example: You can make a poster using cartoon characters that talk about soil and water conservation in comic-strip fashion if the ideas are yours (this main idea cannot be copyrighted); If classmates recognize your characters as popular characters, then your work is copied from the original artists.

POSTER CONTEST

N.C. ASSOCIATION OF SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS



JUDGE: _____

GRADE: 4 5 (circle one)

DATE: _____

Essay Entry Number:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
CONSERVATION MESSAGE & ORIGINALITY: 50 points Message shows clear understanding of why this natural resource is important and explains how people can and should conserve this natural resource.								
VISUAL EFFECTIVENESS: 20 points Readability (use of white space, type choice, neatness); originality; effect on the audience (which poster will you remember next year?).								
UNIVERSAL APPEAL: 20 points Easily understood by the general population.								
ORIGINALITY: 10 points Entry expresses the contest theme in a fresh, inventive, or novel way of using independent thought and creative imagination and using the unexpected to full advantage.								
HAND-DRAWN ELEMENTS: 5 points Shows good skill with original hand-drawn elements.								
SUBTOTAL:								
INFRACTIONS:								
PERFECT SCORE: 100 points <div style="text-align: right;">TOTAL:</div>								
INFRACTIONS:	VIOLATES COPYRIGHT: - 5 POINTS			EXCEEDS PAPER SIZE: - 5 POINTS				

ESSAY CONTEST

N.C. ASSOCIATION OF SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS



JUDGE: _____

GRADE: 6 7 8 (circle one)

DATE: _____

Essay Entry Number:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
CONSERVATION MESSAGE & ORIGINALITY: 50 points Message shows clear understanding of why this natural resource is important and explains how people can and should conserve this natural resource. Entry expresses the contest theme in a fresh, inventive, or novel way of using independent thought and creative imagination and using the unexpected to full advantage.									
WRITING STYLE: 20 points Innovative style (keeps your interest); correct use of grammar, spelling, punctuation; readability (clear message, easily understood by reader).									
ORGANIZATION: 20 points Proper paragraph transitions; opening-closing tie-in; sticks to the theme.									
NEATNESS: 10 points									
SUBTOTAL:									
INFRACTIONS:									
PERFECT SCORE: 100 points <div style="text-align: right;">TOTAL:</div>									
INFRACTIONS:	INCORRECT LENGTH: - 5 POINTS			CURRENT TITLE NOT USED: - 5 POINTS			INCORRECT PAPER SIZE: - 2 POINTS		

COMPUTER GENERATED SLIDESHOW CONTEST

N.C. ASSOCIATION OF SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS



JUDGE: _____

GRADE: 9 – 12

DATE: _____

Essay Entry Number:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
CONSERVATION MESSAGE & ORIGINALITY: 50 points Message shows clear understanding of why this natural resource is important and explains how people can and should conserve this natural resource.								
VISUAL EFFECTIVENESS: 30 points Readability (use of white space, type choice, neatness); originality; effect on the audience (which poster will you remember next year?).								
UNIVERSAL APPEAL: 10 points Easily understood by the general population.								
ORIGINALITY: 10 points Entry expresses the contest theme in a fresh, inventive, or novel way of using independent thought and creative imagination and using the unexpected to full advantage.								
SUBTOTAL:								
INFRACTIONS:								
PERFECT SCORE: 100 points <div style="text-align: right;">TOTAL:</div>								
INFRACTIONS:	VIOLATES COPYRIGHT: - 5 POINTS				EXCEEDS SIZE LIMIT: - 5 POINTS			