



14.024
12/24

Essay Contest

Purpose

The purpose of the New Jersey FFA Essay Contest is to develop writing skills in members. By incorporating this event as part of the Agricultural Education Curriculum, all students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purpose, which is one of the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards. The essay will be graded on content, grammar, and mechanics.

Event Rules

General

- Contestants may choose any current subject which is of an agricultural nature and of general interest to the public for their essays. Any essay not written on an agricultural issue will be disqualified. The essay is to be written in a technical or factual manner; opinionated papers will not be accepted. The purpose of each essay is to enlighten, explain or instruct.
- There will be three divisions to separate the age and possible writing experience of the contestants.
 - Division I: The three to five page essay is open to all 9th and 10th grade FFA members.
 - Division II: The six to eight page essay is open to all members in 12th grade or lower.
 - Division III: The three to five page essay is open to all special needs members.

NOTE: A first place winner may not compete in that division again.
- Each contestant's essay will be the result of the student's own efforts. The attached sheet declares the effort is the sole work of the student. It must be signed by the student, chapter advisor, and parent/guardian in an effort to ensure honesty and must be submitted with the essay. This sheet will also declare Special Needs Division Certification with a signature from the child study team.
- All contestants should give credit to others where any direct quotes, phrases, or special data are used in the essay, in order to not be guilty of plagiarism. Footnotes are not necessary, but may be used, and references may be made in the content of the essay.
- Essays must include a bibliography or references (regardless of content or length), and a title page including Title of Essay, Division, Name of Student, Grade level, Teacher name, and Chapter name. **(Title page and Bibliography are not counted in length of essay.)** Essays without a bibliography and title page will be disqualified.
- The essay must have 1" margins, be double spaced, and be typed in 12-point font. The pages must also be numbered, along with the contestant's name and chapter at the top of each page.
- The contest is only open to students who are enrolled in Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Education for the current calendar year, or who are still in high school but have completed all Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Education courses offered. When selected, contestants must be active members of a chartered FFA Chapter, who is in good standing with the New Jersey State FFA Association and the National FFA Organization.

Event Format

Essay

Essays (with title page, bibliography, verification signature page) are to be uploaded to the State FFA Essay Event Application (via Jotform: <https://www.jotform.com/NJFFA/state-essay-event>). Essays are due April 1, or as outline in the calendar of events.

Requirements

- Formatted to 8 1/2" x 11" double spaced with a 1" margin
- Title page including:
 - Title of Essay
 - Division
 - Name of Student
 - Grade level
 - Teacher name
 - Chapter name
- Font size must be 12 point using a serif (Times New Roman, Cambria, etc.) or sans serif font (Ariel, Calibri, etc.)
- Follow most current APA style guide for developing a bibliography and in text citations
- Essays not meeting these guidelines will be penalized.

A complete and accurate bibliography should be included on a separate page, at the end of the essay. All participants in the New Jersey FFA Essay Contest should give credit to others where any direct quotes, phrases or special dates are used in the essay, in order not to be guilty of plagiarism.

Subjects

- Participants may choose any current subject of an agricultural nature for their essay.
- This may include the areas of agribusiness, animal systems, plant systems, environmental services, food products and processing, natural resource systems and power, structural and technical systems.

Awards

Awards will be presented to individuals based upon their rankings at the 5th general session of the New Jersey State FFA Convention. Awards are sponsored by the New Jersey FFA Foundation.

Individuals in each division will receive a plaque sponsored by the New Jersey FFA Foundation.

There will be no competition above the state level in the Essay Contest.

References

This list is not intended to be all inclusive.

- *APA Style Guide (most current edition)* – www.apastyle.org
- *Purdue's Online Writing Lab – APA Formatting Guide*: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- *United States Department of Agriculture* – <https://www.usda.gov/>
- *New Jersey Farm Bureau* – <https://njfb.org/>
- *First Pioneer Farm Credit East* – <https://www.farmcrediteast.com/>
- *Rutgers Cooperative Extension* – <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/extension/>

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy and Guidelines

The standard operative procedures allow FFA members to use AI tools to assist them in their learning. Appropriate uses of AI may include generating ideas for any FFA-related assignment, project, contest and award application; checking facts of a phenomenon; or checking for and correcting grammatical errors in a paper written by a member. Specific guidelines for appropriate use, including examples, is provided in the policy. To ensure clarity, a statement outlining ethical AI utilization will be added to program handbooks. Non-compliance with this policy represents plagiarism and will automatically disqualify a member.

Please visit the State Activity Guide, [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Policy 1.007](#) to view the full guidelines and best practices.

[NEW JERSEY FFA

State FFA Essay Event Verification

Must be completed and attached to essay

NAME

CHAPTER

ESSAY TITLE

I, _____, do hereby swear that the attached essay is solely my work. I received no help in the research, planning, or writing of this essay. I have given credit where it is due throughout the essay and have attached a complete bibliography. I realize that if I am found guilty of having plagiarized materials in my essay, I am subject to the appropriate laws.

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE

As Chapter Advisor, I have read the essay and agree that it appears free of plagiarism and is solely the work of the participant.

ADVISOR SIGNATURE

DATE

As the parent/guardian of _____, I am aware of my child's participation in this contest. I have read the attached essay and agree that it appears free of plagiarism and is solely the work of my child.

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE

As a member of the school's Child Study Team, I certify that _____ is a Special Needs Student and can qualify for the Special Needs Division of this contest.

CHILD STUDY TEAM SIGNATURE

DATE

Essay Contest Score Sheet

600 points

Name _____

Chapter _____

Part I – Content	Points Allowed	Points Earned	Comments
Effective Title	25		
Sticks to Topic	75		
Maintains Interest	75		
Logical Organization	75		
Satisfying Conclusion	50		
Part I Total	300		
Part II – Mechanics	Points Allowed	Points Earned	Comments
Title Page	25		
Punctuation (-5 each)	25		
Capitals (-5 each)	50		
Paragraph Formation (-5 each)	50		
Spelling (-5 each)	50		
Sentence Formation & Clarity (-5 each)	50		
Word Usage (-5 each)	50		
Part II Total	300		

Part I	300	
Part II	300	
Grand Total	600	

Judge's Name: _____

Rank: _____