



Climate Storytelling Contest - How to Enter, Guidelines, and Resources

Prizes:

Winners will be selected from each medium. \$300 for 1st place winners, \$200 for 2nd place winners, and \$100 for 3rd place winners. You may enter as an individual or a group, but one prize will be offered per winning entry.

How to Enter:

If you choose to do the podcast or photo essay, you can enter on your own, or **as a group of no more than three students**. If working as a group, submit only one entry. All group member names must be listed in the entry form. **If you choose to write a narrative essay**, it must be done on your own.

If entering as a group (podcast or photo essay), decide which student will be the main contact to answer any questions and receive the contest prize on behalf of the others if your podcast or photo essay is chosen as a finalist. Pick a student who's good at responding promptly to email, and **be sure to use an email you will check during the summer!** (It's recommended that you *not* use a school email.) We'll also need a mailing address for that person, to mail the prize if your podcast or photo essay is chosen as a finalist. Participants must be middle school or high school level students in California, in school or homeschooled. You may enter as part of a class project or independently. Winners will be announced by the end of the summer, so keep the contact information of your group members after school ends if you are entering as part of a group.

Note to teachers: If you would like to submit the podcasts, photo essays, and/or narrative essays from your class as a group instead of having your students submit them individually, please [contact us](#) in advance to discuss how to do that. Participating students and their parent or guardian will still need to complete a waiver form.

For podcasts:

Upload your finished podcast, no more than 7 minutes long, to [SoundCloud](#), and be prepared to submit your podcast sound file directly to us if your entry is selected as a finalist. Make sure to give your podcast a title that's relevant to your creation. (Please don't name it "Climate

Storytelling Contest.") *Don't* mark your podcast "Private," because we won't be able to listen to it if you do. (The minimum age for a SoundCloud account is 13. Podcasts can be uploaded to an account owned by the student or by a teacher or other adult. Your SoundCloud account will only be seen by the contest judges and will not be publicly shared. If uploading to SoundCloud presents a problem for you, please [contact us](#) for an alternative method to submit your podcast.

When you're ready, fill out this Entry Form with your parent or guardian:

<https://woobox.com/gix8fs>

For photo essays:

Compile 8-10 photos along with an introduction paragraph, caption for each photo, and each photo's location in a power point presentation (examples: Google Slide, Powerpoint, etc.) or other document. If choosing a power point format, download it as a PDF and upload it in the Entry Form. See [here](#) for a format example. Photos must be the original work of the student(s). Photos must not be manipulated beyond the reality of when it was taken. Images should accurately represent the subjects depicted and those that appear overly processed can be disqualified at the judges' discretion. **Be prepared to submit your photo files directly to us if your entry is selected as a finalist. When you're ready, fill out this Entry Form with your parent or guardian:** <https://woobox.com/sxad45>

For narrative essays:

Write a narrative essay up to 650 words, double-spaced. **When you're ready, fill out this Entry Form with your parent or guardian:** <https://woobox.com/gr47ch>

When you enter the contest, you and your parent or guardian will agree to the [Consent, Waiver of Liability, and Release](#). (If you need paper copies of this form mailed to you, [contact us](#).) By entering the Climate Storytelling Contest, you grant the California Coastal Commission non-exclusive ownership of your podcast, photo essay, and narrative essay, meaning that we can use it on our website, social media, and elsewhere, but you can also continue to use it. **Students may enter only one submission in this year's contest.**

Guidelines

- **Entries must be student's original work.** AI generated writing and images violate contest rules and will be disqualified. If using a piece of writing or photograph as inspiration for your entry, your entry must be significantly different to avoid plagiarism. If you include music in your podcast, **only use music that is your own composition or that is copyright free** (Public Domain or Creative Commons). Some sources of available music include

the [Youtube Audio Library](#) (you must be logged in to access), the [Free Music Archive](#), and [Musopen](#). **Include all required credits at the end of your podcast and podcast script.**

- **Avoid focusing on brand names in your chosen medium.**
- If your chosen medium includes language other than English, please provide English translations. Note: translations do not have to be 100% perfect, but should be accurate enough to understand in English. Google Translate is fine to use.
- Entries must be uploaded by 5:00pm (PST) on May 28, 2026. A parent or guardian must approve and sign the Entry Form. Winners will be contacted directly and announced on this website by the end of summer. [Sign up to receive an email announcement.](#)

Podcast resources:

- [Writing for Podcasts - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)
- [Audio Storytelling in the Classroom: Rachel Hansen \(nationalgeographic.org\)](#)
- [Storytelling Through Audio: Meghana Kakubal \(nationalgeographic.org\)](#)
- [Podcastle: All-in-One Podcast Software](#)

Photo Essay resources:

- [Storytelling Through Photography: Hannah Reyes Morales \(nationalgeographic.org\)](#)
- [Photographic Storytelling in the Classroom: Allison Fuisz \(nationalgeographic.org\)](#)
- [Advice for an Unforgettable Photo Essay \(format.com\)](#)

Narrative Essay resources:

- [How to Write a Personal Narrative: Steps and Examples \(prowritingaid.com\)](#)
- [Powerful Personal Narrative Writing Guide for Students and Teachers \(literacyideas.com\)](#)