



Frequently Asked Contest Questions

General Questions about the Poster & Writing Contests:

Q. What is the topic for this year's contest?

A. Students are asked to use their creative skills to create a poster, video and/or write an essay, story or poem explaining what should or should not be flushed down toilets or put down drains.

Q. What are the categories?

A. In the poster contest there are (4) categories: Gr. K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12. In the writing contest there are (2) categories: Gr. 3-5 and 6-8. In the Video contest there is (1) category: Gr. 9-12.

Q. What are the prizes?

A. First prize in each category is a \$100.00 gift card, 2nd prize is a \$50.00 gift card, and 3rd prize is a \$25.00 gift card. In each of the (7) categories there is a 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and (4) honorable mention winners. All winners, including honorable mention winners, are invited with their families to an **Awards Ceremony** at Deer Island on **Friday, May 22, 2026**. Everyone who enters the contest will receive a Certificate of Participation – suitable for framing!

Q. What information needs to be included with my poster, writing or video entry?

A. All poster and writing entries: must have a completed Student Label attached to the back of the entry. Labels should be securely taped or glued to the back of the entry. Please **DO NOT** use staples or paper clips to attach the student label. Please **DO NOT** attach labels to the front of the entries. You may create your own label or neatly write information on the back of your entry as long as all the information requested on the student label is included. **All Video entries:** must include the information on the Student label at the beginning of their video. This can be either stated by the student(s) verbally, written out in the intro of the video. Please make sure the information is clear and legible.

Q. Where do I get a Student Label?

A. You can find labels to download on our website: www.mwra.com > Projects, Programs & Permitting > Public Affairs > School Education Program

Q. May I submit more than one entry?

A. You may only submit one entry in each contest. If you are in Grade 3-8, you may participate in both the poster and writing contests. If you are in Grade 9-12 you may participate in both the poster and video contests.

Q. Can groups of students work together?

A. Only individual work will be accepted for posters and writing entries. Group entries are accepted for the video contest, however the group shall collectively be treated as a single entrant and only one (1) prize will be awarded to the group.



Frequently Asked Contest Questions

Q. Will my entry be returned?

A. Posters will only be returned if requested. Writing entries will not be returned.

Q. What is the contest deadline?

A. The contest deadline is **Wednesday, March 11, 2026**. Entries must be postmarked by this date and early entries are encouraged. Entries should be mailed to:

**MWRA School Contest
2 Griffin Way
Chelsea, MA 02150**

Q. How will I be notified if I win?

A. If you are a winner, your teacher will be notified via email sometime in April, 2026.

Questions about the Poster Contest:

Q. What makes a good poster?

A. Make sure your poster is on topic. Don't try to include too many ideas or activities on your poster. A single message, clearly illustrated, is more effective. If you use lettering, make sure it can be read from across the room. And, please check your spelling!

Q. Do posters have to be drawings?

A. No, posters can be any form of art you choose to express the topic. You can create a collage with pictures cut out of a magazine, you can use pieces of fabric or you can create a drawing using markers, crayons, paints, or charcoal. We are looking for unique and creative works of art.

Q. Are there size requirements for the posters?

A. **YES** - Posters must be no smaller than **8.5" X 11"** and no bigger than **18" X 24"**. Posters smaller or bigger than these requirements will **NOT** be judged. Be sure to attach a Student Label to the back of your poster.

Q. How will my poster be judged?

A. MWRA staff will select the strongest posters from the entries in each category. Then a panel of judges will score the posters on originality, clarity of message, creative and artistic use of materials, and quality of work.

Questions about the Writing Contest:

Q. What makes a good writing entry?

A. First, be sure your entry addresses the question. As good as a piece might be, if it isn't on topic, it can't win a prize. Then, use your creativity to make your entry stand out. The reader should remember your work because there was something unique about it. An essay can be just as creative as a poem or dialogue, if it has a clear theme and develops it cleverly.



Frequently Asked Contest Questions

Q. How long should my writing entry be?

A. Writing entries are limited to two pages. Entries may be written neatly in ink or done on the computer. Please use only one side of the paper and be sure to attach a Student Label securely to the back of your entry.

Q. How will my writing entry be judged?

A. MWRA staff will select the best entries in each category. Copies will be given to a judging panel, which will first read and rate them and then meet to decide the winners. Writing entries will be judged on factual accuracy, creativity, originality and persuasiveness.

Questions about the Video contest:

Q. Can entries be submitted individually or as a group?

A. Entries can be submitted either individually or as a group. Please note that if a group places 1st, 2nd or 3rd place only one prize will be given to the group entirely.

Q. How long can my video be?

A. Videos must be a minimum of 1 minute long but no longer than 2 minutes long.

Q. How do I submit my video entry?

A. You can upload videos to our share file by visiting: <https://bit.ly/MWRAvideoentry>. You can also visit our website and click on the link to directly upload the file. Files MUST be uploaded with the student's name who is submitting the video, school name and grade.
(Example: JohnSmith_MWRAHighSchool_Grade10).

Teacher Specific Questions:

Q. Does the entire class have to participate?

A. While some teachers have their entire class participate, others make it optional or offer it as a means of extra credit. If you only have a few entries, we do ask that you still complete the Contest Registration Form and make sure the students fill out the Student Label and attach it securely to the back of the entry. Please **DO NOT** attach the student label to the front of the entry.

Q. Where do I get the Registration Form and Student Labels?

A. You can download all the forms from our website. If you would prefer a mailed packet and be added to the database, please contact Jacqueline Collins at Jacqueline.Collins@mwra.com.

Q. If the entire class participates, should I sort through and only send in the best?

A. No, please send them all. This helps us to know how many students took part in the contest and enables us to send a Certificate of Participation to every entrant.

Please note: we send blank certificates of participation for you, the teacher, to fill in the names.



Frequently Asked Contest Questions

Q. May I assist my students in any way?

A. We encourage class discussion to make sure the students stay on topic, but we ask that all work be done by the students themselves. We do allow teachers to assist students in grade K-2 with labeling and mounting of posters.

Still have questions? Feel free to reach out! Email Kelly Curtis at Kelly.Curtis@mwra.com for more information.