

2026/GROUND RULES: THE STORY BENEATH YOUR FEET

Conservation Writing and Jim Claypool Art Contest / RULES

STATE WINNERS:

First: \$250; Second: \$150; Third: \$50

REGIONAL WINNERS: \$50

COUNTY LEVEL WINNERS: \$25

* State/Regional winners will receive a personalized certificate. County winners that win regional or state awards will only receive one check for the top prize.

RULES

1. Kentucky students grades 6-12 are eligible to compete in the writing contest. Students up to grade 5 may compete in the art contest.
2. A student may not enter both the art contest and the writing contest during the same year.
3. An entry must be created by one and only one student. Any entry submitted by more than one student will be disqualified.
4. All entries become the property of the contest sponsors. The decisions of the judges at all levels of competition are final.
5. Top three writing entries and/or artworks from your school must be submitted to your local county conservation district by Dec. 1, 2026.
6. **ARTWORK:** Student entries shall be 8 1/2" X 11". Entries may be digital or submitted on any color or thickness of paper, such as cardstock, art paper, or printer paper. All artwork must be two-dimensional (2-D). Three-dimensional (3-D) artwork will not be accepted. Artwork may be rendered in any medium: pencil, ink, charcoal, pastel, crayon, paint, photography, etc. Mixed media and collage work is acceptable as long as all pieces are securely glued to the surface of the work. All entries must convey at a glance an accurate understanding of the information provided in the tabloid, the theme of the competition, and persuade the viewers of the need for good soil conservation practices. All entries must be the original work of the student.
7. **WRITING:** Entry may not exceed 1,000 words and must be written in ink or typed on one side of paper only. No photographs or artwork may be included with the written work. The written entry should demonstrate an accurate understanding of the information provided in the tabloid and inform the reader about soil conservation. Students should write from the perspective of an informed writer to a less informed reader and may be in the form of a letter, article, editorial or speech. The work should be from the student author and avoid plagiarism from this source or other sources. ALL sources should be reputable and cited appropriately.
8. The entry form to the right must be completed and attached to your entry.

HELPFUL HINTS

- Keep entry simple and sincere.
- Be creative and original. Avoid plagiarism by using original words and ideas. Plagiarism is defined as the act of stealing and passing off the words of another as your own without crediting the source.
- Consider an area of soil conservation that is important to you, your family and your community.
- Draw from your personal interests or experiences.
- Writing entry should take the form of informational.
- Think about conservation issues in your community, farm, subdivision or city.
- DO NOT use this tabloid as your only source.
- Interview people in your community about changes in soil uses and soil health.
- Find ways to improve soil health issues in your community. TAKE ACTION!

POINT SYSTEM FOR ART

- **50 points** - Purpose/Audience. (Appropriate communication style to reach audience, establishes and maintains a purpose; and holds to subject in community. Theme clearly conveyed at a glance.)
- **30 points** - Composition/creativity/craftsmanship. (Layout, originality, and quality of work, such as neatness.)
- **20 points** - Language/correctness. (Word choice, usage, spelling, punctuation, capitalization.)

POINT SYSTEM FOR WRITING

- **30 points:** Purpose/Audience (establishes and maintains a purpose, communicates with audience, employs a suitable tone)
- **20 points:** Organization (logical order, coherence, transition organizational signals)
- **20 points:** Idea Development/Support and Evidence of Research (student's original work shows sources of research, sources are cited)
- **30 points:** Correctness (spelling, punctuation, capitalization), Language (word choice, usage), Sentences (varied in structure and length, constructed effectively, complete and correct)

ENTRY FORM

Conservation Writing and Jim Claypool Art Contest

Name (Miss, Mr) _____

Parent's Name _____

Home Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Home Phone () _____

Age _____ Grade _____ Teacher _____

County _____

School _____

School Phone () _____

☐ I hereby certify that I have read the rules and helpful hints and this entry is the original work of:

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature (required)

Teacher or Principal Signature (required)

GROUND RULES:

THE STORY BENEATH YOUR FEET

