



# Georgia River of Words

Connecting kids to their watersheds  
and imaginations through poetry & art



## 2024 River of Words Poetry Contest

**Howard High Contest Sponsor: Ms. Johnson, Media Specialist**

### **About River of Words**

The River of Words Project (ROW) is a FREE program designed to help preK-12 students understand their sense of place by studying the natural world in their own environment then expressing what they discover through poetry and art. The art and poetry can then be entered into a state-wide contest.

Georgia entries are judged by the Georgia Center for the Book and by the GA Environmental Protection Division.

Approximately 50 poems and artworks are selected as winners each year in Georgia. We celebrate with the student winners, their families and teachers in an awards ceremony held in Decatur each spring. All original artwork and poetry from Georgia participants is returned to the students.

### **Contest Guidelines**

River of Words is looking for poetry that...

- Thoughtfully considers ideas, images and language. Be specific!
- Shows the reader something. Paint a picture (with words)!
- Creates an experience for the reader/viewer: use images that take us on a journey or make us feel something.
- Has fun: with form, images. Surprise yourself by trying something new!
- Features a specific aspect, formation, ecosystem, or organism of nature that resonates with you.
- Exhibits scientific knowledge of a particular subject learned in the classroom.

- Invites us into your backyard: go outside, what do you see? What do you hear?
- What do you smell? What do you feel?
- Shows what no one else sees: a poem that reveals your own unique observations or personal experiences.
- Speaks to an awareness of a global community or collective consciousness: a poem can reflect the experiences of a culture or natural world surrounding you.

Students may want to ask themselves, what do the ideas above mean to me? The answers will be different for everyone, though we hope to give you some idea of what we are looking for. We want students to follow their creativity to its fullest extent by exploring and trying things they have not done before while they create poetry of environment and place.

### **2024 ROW Poetry Guidelines: Poetry Submissions**

All poems must be original work and will be judged based on the following components:

1. Consistency: What is the poem's form or style and does it remain consistent throughout?
2. Qualities: Does the poem rhyme, does it have a rhythm to it? If it does not rhyme, does it have a rhythm that ties it together? If it does rhyme is there a pattern that is followed?
3. Craft: Does the poem use poetic devices?
4. Voice: Does the poem retain comprehension or a sense of coherence? Is the purpose realized?
5. Content: Does the meaning of the poem go along with the prompt provided by the River of Words?
6. Length: Poems should not exceed 32 lines in length.

### **2024 Contest Rules**

Please read the contest guidelines below as there are some changes from previous years.

1. **All Georgia online submissions are due by February 1, 2024 at 11:59pm EST after which the submission portal will close and no late submissions will be accepted for any reason. Winners will be announced in April 2024.**

2. The contest is open to PreK–12th grade students, ages 5–19. Students must be enrolled in a school or homeschool program to be eligible. All entries must be submitted by a parent, guardian, educator, or facilitator unless the student is 18 years old or older.

3. Participants may submit up to 5 entries for poetry. If more than 5 entries are submitted, we will only accept the first 5 as is. If multiple poems are being submitted, then this form must be filled out once per submission.

4. All poems must be original work.

5. Poems should not exceed 32 lines in length.

6. Revisions will not be accepted. Please make sure your work is completed before submitting to the portal.

7. By submitting work of any kind to River of Words, you are granting, on behalf of yourself and the student, to River of Words all rights in the work, including but not limited to the right to publish, reproduce, perform, distribute and to include the work in the River of Words annual anthology, on River of Words websites, or in any other publications deemed appropriate by River of Words. **Works submitted to River of Words cannot be submitted for other publications or competitions.**

\*\*You are submitting as part of a group—Howard High School. Ms. Johnson is the teacher sponsor. Here are the directions:

Group entries are completed through group activities or under the guidance of a facilitator. These include school groups, after-school groups, scout troops, 4-H clubs, and others.

- Students must complete the [Online Entry Form](#) and complete the School/Organization Section towards the bottom of the form. Upload a digital copy of the artwork or poetry entry to the online form before submitting. Files must be PDF, JPG, JPEG, or PNG and less than 10MB. Please submit one entry per form.

8. Questions and concerns can be emailed to [projectwet@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:projectwet@dnr.ga.gov)  
Please review the River of Words Privacy Policy: <https://www.stmarys-ca.edu/center-for-environmental-literacy/river-of-w...>