

Archived Information



Center for Collaborative Research & Education

K-12 Science Initiative Brief Secretary's Summit Goal 2: Engaging the Public

DuPont Challenge Science Essay Contest

Initiated: 1986

Grade Levels: 7-12

Location: United States & Canada

Primary Partners: DuPont, General Learning Communications

Number Affected: ~11,000 each year

Project Purpose

Goals: To promote the importance of the role of effective communication in documenting, interpreting, and disseminating scientific knowledge, especially the role of written communication.

To engage science teachers and English language arts teachers in a cross-disciplinary exercise that emulates real world practices in scientific reporting.

Primary Activities: Library Research; Literature Review; Research Analysis; Expository Writing; Scientific Reporting.

Project Summary

The DuPont Challenge Science Essay Contest recognizes the important role of the language arts in the scientific method by inviting students to write a 700-1000-word original essay on a science topic of their choice. Students can choose a topic related to a scientific or technological development, a scientific event, or a scientific theory. Like the journal reports and research essays of working scientists, students' essays are expected to exemplify careful thought; insight; objective research; clear writing— including use of appropriate format and citation; and genuine concern and enthusiasm for an important topic in science. Essays are judged at four levels in two divisions, the Junior Division (grades 7-9) and the Senior Division (grades 10-12). Top winners receive a recognition award and a scholarship award, with the First Place Winner of each division also earning a three-day trip (with his or her parent and science teacher) to the Johnson Space Center in Houston, TX for a tour of NASA facilities, a meeting with an astronaut, and an awards luncheon.

Project Accomplishments/ Results

2002: More than **110,000 entries** received since inception.

2002: Assisted by CCRE, **DuPont India** implemented a **Science Essay Contest** for Indian students modeled on the DuPont Challenge in the U.S.

Forward Plans

Expected to continue annually.