



2025 POSTER, POETRY, AND PROSE CONTEST

Theme

How Can You Slash Your Trash?

Use your creative abilities to explore and communicate ways to create less trash by buying less, reusing, composting, learning, and more!

Participants

Illinois 5th and 6th grade students



Awards

You could win statewide recognition, an environmental reference book for your school library, and an invitation to the awards ceremony in Springfield!

New this year is a classroom video contest! More information to come!

Entry Guidelines

- Electronic entries must be submitted by **February 3, 2025**
- Include Entry ID and Release forms
- Visit epa.illinois.gov for more information and materials

CONTACT

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2025 Poster, Poetry, and Prose Contest

Contest Rules, Information, and Timetable

How Can You Slash Your Trash?

Theme: Thinking creatively on how to reduce the amount of trash you produce. This could include buying fewer single-use products; composting food waste; repairing broken items instead of replacing or buying new; and recycling items that cannot be re-used or repaired.

Participants: Illinois fifth and sixth grade students

Art guidelines:

- Art paper or poster board no smaller than 8-1/2" x 11" and no larger than 12" x 18"
- Markers, crayons, pens, pencils, paints, or graphics software (two-dimensional media only)
- **Must be participant's own work**

Poetry/Prose guidelines:

- One page maximum length, one-sided (no larger than 8-1/2" x 11" sheet)
- Neatly handwritten or typed; minimum 10-point font (must be readable)

Entries must be submitted electronically (word, pdf, jpeg, or tiff files). Please make sure to include the entire work in the photo with appropriate lighting to enhance the quality of the work.

The maximum number of entries per school is eight.

NOTE: Each student must submit a release form and entry ID with his or her work. Only one person per entry (no group projects).

Each student's work will be judged on:

- Understanding of the concept
- Originality of execution -- no magazine articles, commercial slogans or copyrighted characters or figures
- Clear, accurate message
- Emphasis on the theme
- Neatness/attractiveness, legibility/readability, correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar
- Effort put into the work

Submission Process for Teachers:

- Choose **eight entries** (four art and four written works) to represent your school
- Make sure completed identification forms are included
- Each entry must include a release form filled out and signed at the time of submission
- Entries must be emailed no later than **February 3, 2025**
- Email entries, ID and release forms (word, pdf, jpeg or tiff files) to: EPA.contest@illinois.gov

All entries become the property of the Illinois EPA and will be distributed for judging.

Awards:

Each participating student whose work meets the guidelines and requirements will receive a certificate. Finalists will receive a certificate, a ribbon, and an invitation to the awards ceremony in Springfield (subject to change). If needed, awards will be mailed to the teacher for distribution. Finalists include top winners, honorable mention, and special recognition. Twelve top winners (six in each category) will have their work displayed as such and receive an environmental reference book for their school's library.

Contest Timeline and Resources

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|---------------|--|
| January 2025 | Educators introduce one or both of the Illinois EPA's curricula units on waste management (see below). Discuss the amount of garbage thrown away individually and collectively, why that causes problems, and how students can reduce the amount of trash thrown away. |
| January 13-24 | Students create posters or written works relating to the theme: How can you slash your trash? |
| January 27-31 | Teachers display posters and poems/prose at their schools. Students and faculty vote to select four posters and four written entries to submit to the Illinois EPA for further judging. |
| February 3 | Teachers submit up to eight entries per school to the Illinois EPA for judging Entries must be submitted electronically no later than February 3, 2025. |
| February 2025 | Judging |
| April 5, 2025 | Awards Ceremony held in Springfield |

If you have any questions, please contact: Kristi Morris, at: kristi.morris@illinois.gov or Eli Dollarhide at eli.dollarhide@illinois.gov. For more information or to download the participation packet, please visit the website at: <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/education/contest/elementary.html>

Informational resources can be found on the following websites:

- Illinois EPA curricula units
 - *What Should I Do with This Trash?* <https://pathways.mste.illinois.edu/curriculum/waste-management>
 - *Where Does My Food Go?* <https://pathways.mste.illinois.edu/curriculum/food-waste>
- Illinois EPA Curbside Recycling Guide: <https://dataservices.epa.illinois.gov/recycle/curbside-bin-recycling-guide.html>
- US EPA Teaching Resources: <https://www.epa.gov/students/lesson-plans-teacher-guides-and-online-environmental-resources-educators-waste-and>
- Seven Generations Ahead, Zero Waste Schools: <https://sevengenerationsahead.org/our-work/zero-waste-schools/>
- SCARCE's 3 R's Video Series: <https://www.scarce.org/elearning/3rs-and-waste/>
- Cafeteria Culture: <https://www.cafeteriaculture.org/>
- Illinois Food Scraps Coalition: Compost 101 <https://illinoiscomposts.org/resources/>
- World Wildlife Fund, Be a Food Waste Warrior: <https://www.worldwildlife.org/teaching-resources/toolkits/be-a-food-waste-warrior>
- Project Learning Tree: <https://www.plt.org/educator-tips/reduce-reuse-recycle-lesson-ideas>
- Recycling Lesson Activities: <https://www.weareteachers.com/21-ideas-big-and-small-to-bring-recycling-into-the-classroom/>

Art/Poster Entry Identification

PLEASE FILL OUT THIS FORM AND RETURN IT WITH THE 2025 ART/POSTER ENTRY.

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Parent's Email: _____

School: _____ County: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Educator: _____ Educator's Email: _____

Student's statement about work: _____

Written Entry Identification

PLEASE FILL OUT THIS FORM AND RETURN IT WITH THE 2025 WRITTEN ENTRY.

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Parent's Email: _____

School: _____ County: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Educator: _____ Educator's Email: _____

Student's statement about work: _____

Appearance and Material Release Form 2025

In consideration that (student name), _____,
has entered the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's *How Can You Slash Your Trash?*
contest and said works are the property of the Illinois EPA, I hereby give my consent to the
Illinois EPA to publish my **child's name, school, city, photo, and creative works** on the Illinois
EPA's Internet site, publications and social media for educational, informational, marketing or
other purposes deemed necessary.

I hereby waive any right that I may otherwise have to inspect or approve the finished
product, or the manner of its use chosen by the Illinois EPA. I also release, discharge and agree
to hold harmless the Illinois EPA to whom this consent and waiver is given from any liability by
virtue of any blurring, distortion, alteration, or use in composite form, whether intentional or
otherwise, that may occur or be produced in the taking of said pictures or in any processing, or
in the publication and distribution. I understand that I shall receive no compensation
whatsoever in connection with the foregoing, beyond my child's opportunity to participate. I
hereby waive all rights of privacy in connection with the use of my child's name, school, city,
photo, or creative works. I also waive any and all rights, whether explicit or implied, in the
material and consent without reservation to the Illinois EPA using, distributing or otherwise
making available the material to other parties as it sees fit.

Parent or legal guardian must sign below (unless student is 18 years of age or older):

Parent/Guardian Name

Contact number or email

Address

Parent or Student (*if 18 or older*)

Signature _____ **Date** _____

