SECME Essay Competition – Grades: 3 – 5

Competition Description

The Essay Competition allows SECME coordinators to reinforce STEM (**S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering, and **M**athematics) skills through writing. Students will choose between a non-fiction or science-fiction topic to write an original essay.

Students will write an original **essay** and provide a **reference page**.

Non-Fiction Topics

1. **Digital Citizenship**

   What is digital citizenship? How do you practice good digital citizenship? Write about three rules that you and your classmates should follow when you are online.

2. **The Importance of the Scientific Method**

   What is the scientific method? Why is it important? Describe an example of a time you have used the scientific method.

3. **STEM Role Model**

   Who do you consider to be your STEM role model? It could be an inventor, an engineer, an architect, an artist, or anyone who has succeeded in the STEM industry. Why do you admire this individual? How did their story impact or inspire you on your journey in STEM?
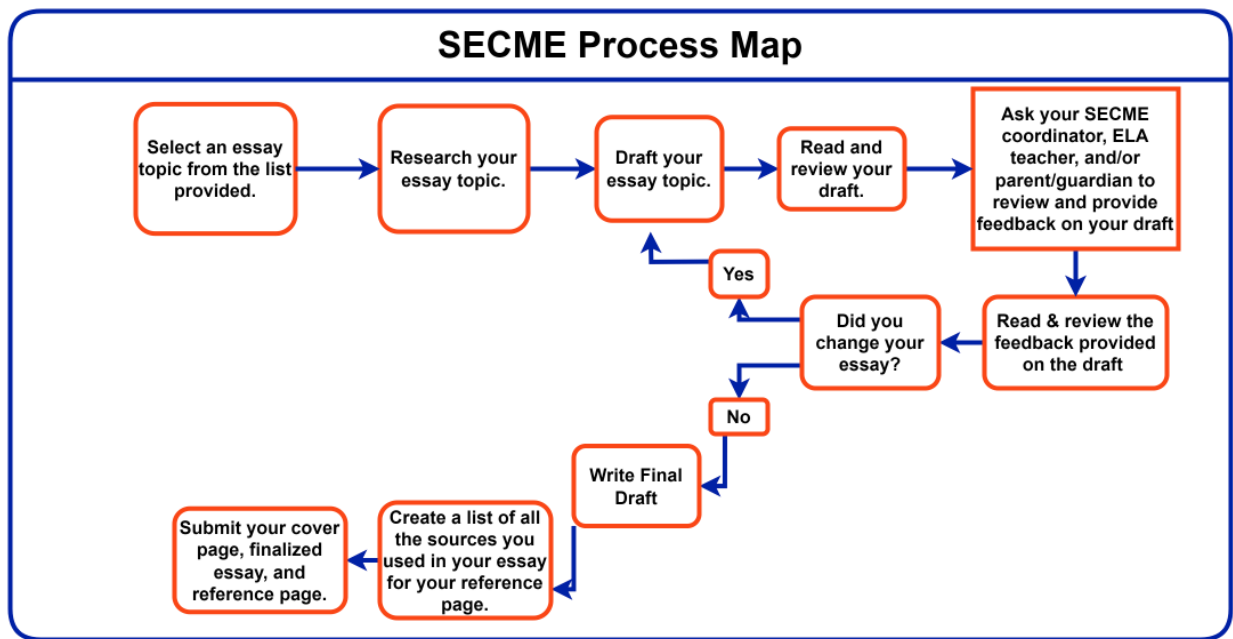
Science-Fiction Topics

1. **Technology**

   Cellphones, tablets, and computers have not been around forever. What would the world be like if they were never invented?

2. **Earth and Space**

   i. An alien just landed in your backyard. How would you describe Earth to an alien from another planet?

   ii. Your parents just told you that you will be moving to the moon. Describe how your life would be different on the moon. What would you need to survive?

Process Map

1. Choose a topic from either the non-fiction or science-fiction list.
2. Research the topic.
3. Draft the essay, read, and review.
4. Ask your SECME Coordinator, ELA teacher, and/or parent/guardian for feedback.
5. Revise based on the feedback, and if necessary, repeat, by going back to step 3 and repeat with changes.
6. Finalize your essay.
7. Create a reference page and list of all the sources you used in your essay.
8. Submit your cover page, finalized essay, and reference page.

SECME Process Map

Select an essay topic from the list provided. → Research your essay topic. → Draft your essay topic. → Read and review your draft. → Ask your SECME coordinator, ELA teacher, and/or parent/guardian to review and provide feedback on your draft

Read & review the feedback provided on the draft → Did you change your essay? → Yes → (back to Draft your essay topic)

Did you change your essay? → No → Write Final Draft → Create a list of all the sources you used in your essay for your reference page. → Submit your cover page, finalized essay, and reference page.

Essay Competition Submission Requirements and Scoring

Submit a PDF file that includes your cover page, finalize essay, reference page with the file name "SECME_Essay_Elementary_ Your School Name."

1. **Organization – 30 %**
   - Cover Page – The student's cover page is required to have the following:
     - the SECME Student's Name and Grade
     - Competition Type
     - School Division
     - the SECME Student Chosen Topic
     - Official School Name
     - Official School District Name
     - School City and State
     - SECME Coordinator's Name and Email
   - Reference Page
   - Student includes a reference page listing all sources used to support the chosen topic.
     - Books/Magazines/Newspapers: Provides the title of the reference and author's last and first name.
     - Websites: Provides the website link.
   - Grammer, spelling, and formatting
     - Is the student's writing free of spelling errors, punctuation errors, and sentence errors (e.g., misplaced sentence parts, subject/verb agreement issues, sentence fragments, run-ons)?
     - Is the essay double-spaced with 1-inch margins and written in a 12-point font?
     - Does the essay include an introduction, well-structured body paragraphs, and a conclusion?

2. **Essay – 70%**
   - Adherence to Topic
     - Does the student's writing address the chosen topic effectively?
     - Does the student's writing maintain focus and relevance throughout the essay?
   - Originality and Coherence
     Does the student's writing present an original perspective?
     Is the essay age-appropriate, logical, and cohesive?
     Does the student maintain a strong and convincing voice?
     Does the student maintain a well-organized and logically structured essay with appropriate transitions?
   - Creativity
     - Does the student's writing show creativity and imagination?
   - Analysis and Use of Evidence:
     - Does the student demonstrate a deep understanding of their chosen essay topic?

- o Does the student utilize credible sources effectively to support arguments made in their essay?
- o Does the student ensure ideas are fully developed and well-supported by the sources in their Works Cited page?
- o Does the student integrate sources into their essay content in a way that enhances their argument?
- o Does the student ensure that the evidence from their sources is relevant, accurate, and convincing?
- o Word Count
    - o Does the student's essay meet the required word count of 350 – 500 words?

SECME Essay Competition Scoring

30%

70%

■ **Organization**   ■ **Essay**