

# SECME Essay Competition – Grades: 6 – 8

## Competition Description

The Essay Competition allows SECME coordinators to reinforce STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) 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 **Works Cited 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. Provide personal examples of how good digital citizenship has impacted your online interactions.

### 2. Technology

Advanced AI technology is everywhere, and it requires a lot of resources, like electricity and water. Write about the advantages and disadvantages of using this technology. What are some ways you can be a good steward of the environment when utilizing this advanced technology?

### 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 inspired you on your journey in STEM?

## Science- Fiction Topics

### 1. New technologies

Imagine new technologies that could be used to solve global or environmental issues. For example, they could imagine a new type of solar panel that is more efficient and affordable, or a new type of desalination plant that can turn seawater into drinking water.

### 2. Time travel

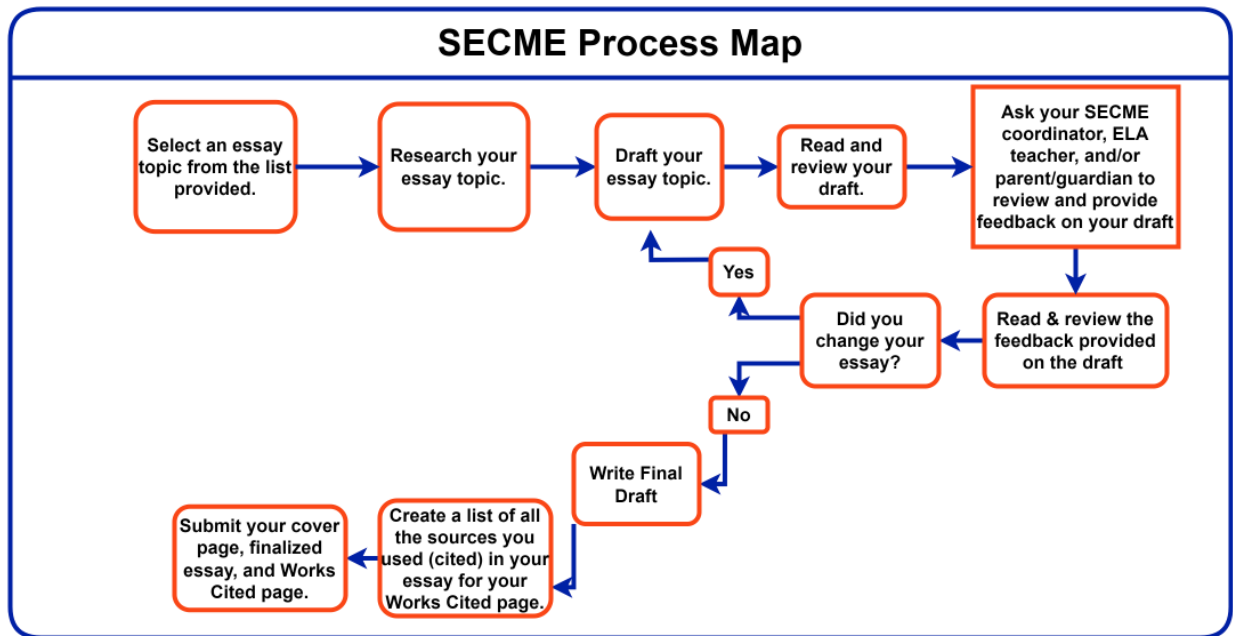
Imagine what it would be like to travel through time, and how this could impact STEM fields. For example, imagine going back in time to prevent a disaster, or going forward in time to see how your work has impacted the world.

### 3. Parallel universes

Imagine what it would be like to travel to a parallel universe, and how this could impact STEM fields. For example, imagine finding that a parallel universe has developed a new type of physics that could revolutionize our understanding of the universe, or a parallel universe where humans have already solved environmental problems.

## 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 Works Cited page and list of all the sources you used (and cited) in your essay.
8. Submit your cover page, finalized essay, and Works Cited page.



## Essay Competition Submission Requirements and Scoring

Submit a PDF file that includes your cover page, finalized essay, and Works Cited page with the file name "SECME\_Essay\_Middle\_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
- Works Cited Page (MLA format)
  - Does the student have a Works Cited page listing all sources used to support their chosen essay topic?
  - Does the student have a Works Cited page in MLA format?

For a guide on MLA formatting, please use the following:

- [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html)
- Grammar, 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, and sentence fragments, run-ons)?
  - Is the student's essay double-spaced with 1-inch margins and written in a 12-point font?
  - Does the student's 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?
- Does the student utilize credible sources effectively to support arguments made in their essay?
- Does the student ensure ideas are fully developed and well-supported by the sources in their Works Cited page?
- Does the student integrate sources into their essay content in a way that enhances their argument?
- Does the student ensure that the evidence from their sources is relevant, accurate, and convincing?
- Word Count
  - Does the student's essay meet the required word count of 500 – 750 words?

**SECME Essay Competition Scoring**

