



Marine Advisory Service  
Delaware Sea Grant College Program  
University of Delaware  
Hugh R. Sharp Campus  
700 Pilottown Road  
Lewes, DE 19958 USA

August 16, 2024

Dear Fifth Grade Teachers and Parents:

On behalf of the Delaware Sea Grant College Program and the University of Delaware's College of Earth, Ocean and Environment, I am pleased to extend an invitation to 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to participate in the Coast Day 2024 essay contest. Coast Day offers students and teachers a unique opportunity to learn more about ocean and coastal environments. **This year, Coast Day will be held in-person on the University of Delaware's Lewes Campus on Sunday, October 6, 2024.**

Our Coast Day essay contest follows the Coast Day theme: **Ecosystems for Everyone**. In this year's essay contest, students are asked to **describe their favorite Delaware ecosystem or habitat, what types of animals and plants live there, why the ecosystem or habitat is important and what people can do to protect the ecosystem or habitat**. The enclosed materials are designed to help guide classroom discussion of the topic. Our intent is to create awareness about coastal issues in Delaware and to help teachers meet state standards through teaching about coastal ecosystems and local weather and the roles they play in our lives.

Student essays must be postmarked or emailed, by 5:00 pm on **Friday, October 11, 2024**. **Essay submissions can be sent to David Christopher, Delaware Sea Grant, 700 Pilottown Rd., Lewes, DE 19958 or emailed to [dmchrist@udel.edu](mailto:dmchrist@udel.edu)**. Essays may also be dropped off to the Delaware Sea Grant tent during Coast Day on October 6. Essay Contest winners and students receiving honorable mention will be recognized in a special online ceremony tentatively scheduled on or around Friday, November 1.

While this essay topic does require some thought, the judges also will be looking for accurate descriptions that show students have researched the topic. A reminder that because this is a contest measuring students' aptitude for writing, parents should provide only limited help/guidance. A copy of the judges' scoring sheet is included in this packet so you can see how different areas are weighted. If you have any questions, please contact me by e-mail at [dmchrist@udel.edu](mailto:dmchrist@udel.edu). Visit [www.udel.edu/coastday](http://www.udel.edu/coastday) for more information.

Sincerely,

David Christopher  
Marine Education Specialist

## UD Coast Day 2024

### **Theme:** Ecosystems for Everyone

This year's Coast Day theme is **Ecosystems for Everyone** and to go along with this theme, this year's essay contest focuses on the various ecosystems and habitats in Delaware.

#### **Students should include in their essay:**

- **A description of their favorite Delaware ecosystem or habitat**
- **What types of animals and plants live in the ecosystem or habitat**
- **Why this ecosystem or habitat is important**
- **What people can do to protect the ecosystem or habitat**

**\*Note:** Please include student's name, teacher's name, school name, and word count on each entry.

**Word Count:** Up to 400 words. Please include the word count at the bottom of the essay.

**Deadline:** Submission must be postmarked or emailed by 5:00pm on Friday, October 11, 2024.

Submissions may be mailed or emailed to:

David Christopher  
Delaware Sea Grant  
700 Pilottown Rd.  
Lewes, DE 19958  
[dmchrist@udel.edu](mailto:dmchrist@udel.edu)

Essays may also be dropped off to the Delaware Sea Grant tent during the Coast Day event on October 6.

#### **Prizes will be awarded to the winning essayists:**

Winners and students receiving honorable mention will be recognized in an online ceremony in late October/early November.

- First prize: \$100 bookstore gift card
- Second prize: \$75 bookstore gift card
- Third prize: \$50 bookstore gift card

**Questions?** Contact David Christopher at [dmchrist@UDel.edu](mailto:dmchrist@UDel.edu)

## Teacher's Aids

This contest can also be used to meet Delaware Science, Social Studies, and English/Language Arts standards. A few examples of standards related to this essay theme are highlighted below.

### Definitions

Ecosystem: all the living (biotic) and nonliving (abiotic) things in an area

Habitat: a place where an animal lives

### Sample Vocabulary

Abiotic, Aquatic, Biotic, Biodiversity, Breeding ground, Community, Conservation, Diverse, Dune, Ecosystem, Endangered, Estuary, Forest, Freshwater, Habitat, Marine, Marsh, Meadow, Native, Niche, Nursery, Organism, Population, Protected, Species, Sustainability, Terrestrial, Tidal pool, Wetland, Wildlife

### Web Resources

#### Delaware Naturally

<https://delawarenaturally.org/habitats-ecosystems/>

#### Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC)

<https://dnrec.delaware.gov/fish-wildlife/>

<https://dnrec.delaware.gov/outdoor-delaware/endangered-species/>

<https://dnrec.delaware.gov/fish-wildlife/conservation/shorebirds/bay-ecology/>

#### Chesapeake Bay Foundation

<https://www.cbf.org/about-the-bay/chesapeake-habitats/index.html>

#### Chesapeake Bay Program

<https://www.chesapeakebay.net/news/blog/what-habitats-are-found-in-the-chesapeake-bay-watershed>

#### Britannica Kids

<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/ecosystem/433377#:~:text=An%20ecosystem%20is%20made%20up,rocks%2C%20soil%2C%20and%20sand>

<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/habitat/399492#:~:text=A%20habitat%20is%20the%20home,soil%20or%20sand%2C%20and%20rocks>

#### National Geographic

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/geography/states/article/delaware>

#### USDA

[https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r6/learning/kids/?cid=fsbdev2\\_027480](https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r6/learning/kids/?cid=fsbdev2_027480)

#### Delaware Nature Society

<https://www.delawarenaturesociety.org/what-we-do/protecting-habitats-wildlife/>

**Delaware River Keeper**

<https://delawariverkeeper.org/estuary/>

**Partnership for the Delaware Estuary**

<https://delawareestuary.org/kids-and-teachers/>

**Video**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6PBtCfgcHo&ab\\_channel=SmileandLearn-English](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6PBtCfgcHo&ab_channel=SmileandLearn-English)

**Additional Resources/Activities**

<https://www.exploringnature.org/db/view/Delaware-Habitats-Mammals-Birds-Amphibians-Reptiles>

<https://www.doe.k12.de.us/cms/lib/DE01922744/Centricity/domain/66/grade%205/Student%20Workbook%20Ecosystems.pdf>

## **Delaware Social Studies Standards, Next Generation Science Standards & Common Core Content Standards**

Reprinted in part from: <http://www.nextgenscience.org> and <http://www.doe.k12.de.us/commoncore/ela/teachertoolkit/geninfo.shtml>.

### **Next Generation Science Standards**

5-ESS3-1 Earth and Human Activity: Obtain and combine information about ways individual communities use science ideas to protect the Earth's resources and environment.

### **Delaware Social Studies Standards**

Geography Anchor Standard Two: Students will apply a knowledge of topography, climate, soils, and vegetation of Delaware and the United States to understand how human society alters, and is affected by, the physical environment.

### **Common Core English Language Arts Standards – Writing – Grade 5**

#### *Text Types and Purposes*

- CC.5.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- CC.5.W.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

#### *Production and Distribution of Writing*

- CC.5.W.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CC.5.W.5. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

#### *Research to Build and Present Knowledge*

- CC.5.W.7. Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
- CC.5.W.8. Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.

### **Common Core English Language Arts Standards – Language – Grade 5**

#### *Conventions of Standard English*

- CC.5.L.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- CC.5.L.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

#### *Knowledge of Language*

- CC.5.L.3.a. Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.

#### *Vocabulary Acquisition and Use*

- CC.5.L.6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships (e.g., *however, although, nevertheless, similarly, moreover, in addition*).

Coast Day 2024  
Delaware Student Essay Contest

Name:  
School:  
Teacher:

5 = Excellent  
2 = Below average

4 = Above average  
1 = Poor

3 = Average  
0 = Did not attempt/show

**Content (25 points)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Essay shows overall understanding of subject matter and clearly and accurately addresses the topic. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Main idea is clear, focused, and well supported. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student has met and followed requirements and criteria of the writing prompt. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student has included information from suggested/relevant resources and sample vocabulary. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Essay includes only factual, accurate information—scientific, historic, etc. (5)

\_\_\_\_\_ Total

**Organization (15 points)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Essay has a strong beginning that draws the reader into the text. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paragraphs are focused, idea-centered, and transition smoothly, connecting ideas and creating a sense of flow. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Essay has a logical order and leads the reader through the text, including a clear beginning, middle, and end. (5)

\_\_\_\_\_ Total

**Grammar and Spelling (10 points)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Essay demonstrates correct use of sentence structure and punctuation. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student uses correct spelling and capitalization. (5)

\_\_\_\_\_ Total

**Originality & Creativity (15 points)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Student creates a meaningful connection to the reader. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student takes fresh approach to subject, addressing topic in a creative way. (5)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student uses interesting organization or storytelling techniques to examine topic in an original manner. (5)

\_\_\_\_\_ Total

\_\_\_\_\_ **Final Score (65 points possible)**