



ENERGIZE THE FUTURE 2026

Student Competition Guidebook

High School Energy Essay Competition

Presented by SPE Dallas Section in partnership with The University of Texas at Arlington

Contents

Contents	1
Competition at a Glance.....	2
Welcome to the Competition	3
1. Why Participate?	4
2. Eligibility	5
3. Choose Your Energy Challenge	6
TOPIC 1 — POWERING TOMORROW	6
TOPIC 2 — THE ENERGY CHALLENGE	6
TOPIC 3 — AI & THE FUTURE OF ENERGY.....	7
TOPIC 4 — INNOVATION IS THE KEY	8
4. Submission Requirements	10
5. Competition Timeline	11
6. Finalist Experience and Awards	12
💰 CASH PRIZES	12
🎓 UNIVERSITY PRESENTATION OPPORTUNITY	12
🎤 PRESENTATION FORMAT	12
7. Your Research Journey.....	13
8. How to Research and Write a Strong Energy Essay	14
1. Start with a Question, Not Just a Topic	14
2. Use Reliable and Authentic Research Sources	14
A. Energy data and international reports	14

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



B. Scientific and technical research.....	15
C. Finding scientific papers and original studies	16
3. Choose Sources That Support Your Research.....	17
4. Sources and Research Practices to Avoid	18
Wikipedia is not a suitable source to cite in your essay.....	18
Do not treat ChatGPT, Claude, or other AI tools as research references	18
Be cautious with commercial websites and promotional material	18
Do not rely on social media, anonymous blogs, or unsupported claims.....	19
5. What If a Research Paper Requires Payment?	19
6. Turn Research into Your Own Analysis	19
7. Use Evidence Correctly and Cite Your Sources	20
8. Final Research Checklist	21
The Most Important Principle.....	21
9. Judging Criteria	22
10. What Makes a Great Entry?.....	23
11. Final Presentation Event.....	24
Recognition for Finalists.....	25
12. Organizers and Partners	26
SPE DALLAS SECTION	26
13. Contact and Submission	26
14. Rules and Requirements	27
Appendix: Student and Parent/Guardian Agreements	28
<i>Student declaration to sign</i>	28
<i>PARENT / GUARDIAN CONSENT</i>	32

Competition at a Glance

Who may enter	Students in Grades 9–12 during the 2026–2027 academic year; individual entries only.
---------------	--

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



What to submit	One PDF containing a title, a 200–300-word abstract, a 1,500–2,000-word essay, and references.
Deadline	November 30, 2026.
Topics	Select one of the four approved energy challenges in this guide.
Awards	Five finalists will each receive a \$500 cash prize and an invitation to present at UTA.
Submit	Use the competition submission link shown in the footer and the Contact & Submission section.

Welcome to the Competition

The world needs new ideas about energy—and those ideas can come from anywhere.

Energize the Future 2026 is a high school essay competition designed to introduce students to the exciting world of energy, engineering, science, technology, and innovation.

Students in Grades 9–12 are invited to research a real energy challenge, develop their own perspective, and communicate their ideas through a well-researched essay.

The Top 5 students will receive cash prizes and an opportunity to present their work at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) before a panel of university professors, researchers, and energy-industry professionals.

This isn't just an essay contest.

It is your opportunity to experience what it is like to be a researcher.

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



1. Why Participate?

Energy is one of the world's greatest challenges—and opportunities.

From powering cities and transportation to developing renewable energy, improving energy efficiency, producing affordable energy, and using artificial intelligence, the energy industry needs creative thinkers from the next generation.

By participating, students will have the opportunity to:

-  Develop real-world research skills
 -  Strengthen critical thinking and problem-solving
 -  Practice professional technical writing
 -  Explore the challenges shaping the world's energy future
 -  Experience a university research environment
 -  Present their ideas to professors and industry experts
 -  Earn recognition from the SPE Dallas Section
 -  Compete for cash prizes
 -  Explore potential careers in energy, engineering, science, and technology
-

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



2. Eligibility

The competition is open to:

- Students currently enrolled in LISD Grades 9–12 (for academic year 2026-2027)

One student. One essay. One opportunity.

Each student may submit only one entry.

No team entries are permitted.



3. Choose Your Energy Challenge

Students must select one of the following four topics.

TOPIC 1 — POWERING TOMORROW

What Should the World's Energy System Look Like in 2050?

Imagine the energy system of the future.

How should society produce, store, transport, and consume energy?

Students may explore topics such as:

- Renewable energy
- Nuclear energy
- Natural gas
- Hydrogen
- Energy storage
- Electricity grids
- Energy access
- Emerging technologies
- Energy security
- Future transportation

The goal is not to predict the future—it is to develop a thoughtful vision for it.

TOPIC 2 — THE ENERGY CHALLENGE

How Can We Provide More Energy While Protecting Our Planet?

The world needs reliable and affordable energy while also addressing environmental challenges.

How should we balance these competing needs?

Students may explore:

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



- Energy demand
- Climate and environmental considerations
- Renewable and conventional energy
- Energy efficiency
- Carbon management
- Economic development
- Energy affordability
- Energy access
- Technology and innovation

Students should present their own analysis and recommendations.

TOPIC 3 — AI & THE FUTURE OF ENERGY

Can Artificial Intelligence Help Build a Smarter Energy System?

Artificial intelligence is rapidly changing how energy is produced, managed, and consumed.

How could AI transform the energy industry?

Students may investigate applications in:

- Energy exploration
- Oil and gas
- Renewable energy
- Electricity grids
- Energy storage
- Predictive maintenance
- Energy efficiency
- Carbon management

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



- Energy forecasting

Students should consider both the potential benefits and limitations of AI.

TOPIC 4 — INNOVATION IS THE KEY

If you could solve one energy problem, what would you solve—and how?

Identify one real-world energy problem that you believe deserves a better solution.

Then propose a new idea, technology, process, or approach to address it.

Your idea could relate to:

- Producing energy
- Storing energy
- Transporting energy
- Making energy more affordable
- Improving energy efficiency
- Reducing emissions
- Making energy infrastructure safer
- Improving energy access
- Reducing waste
- Recycling or reusing energy-related materials
- Improving the reliability of energy systems
- Using AI, robotics, or other emerging technologies

Your solution does not have to be something that can be implemented today. What matters is your ability to identify a meaningful problem, understand why it exists, research what has already been tried, and develop a thoughtful new approach.

Students should explain:

- What is the problem?

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



- Why is it important?
- What solutions already exist?
- What is missing or could be improved?
- What is your proposed solution?
- How could your idea work?
- What challenges or limitations might it face?
- What impact could your solution have?

This topic is intentionally broad. Think like an inventor, engineer, scientist, or entrepreneur.



4. Submission Requirements

There is one submission deadline for the entire competition.

Students do not need to submit a topic proposal before writing their essay.

Each student submits one complete entry containing:

1. Essay Title: Create a title that captures the central idea of your essay.

2. Abstract: 200–300 words

Briefly explain:

- The energy challenge you investigated
- Why it matters
- Your main argument or idea
- Your key conclusions

3. Essay: 1,500–2,000 words

Your essay should demonstrate:

- Research
- Critical thinking
- Evidence-based reasoning
- Original ideas
- Clear communication
- A strong conclusion

4. References: List the sources used in your research.



5. Competition Timeline

Competition Opens: October 1, 2026

Students begin researching and preparing their essays.

FINAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE: November 30, 2026

All materials must be submitted by this deadline in PDF format.

There is only one student submission deadline.

Judging:

Dec 1- Dec 15: Initial Screening with AI

Dec 16- Jan 15: Judging & Evaluation

Judges Meeting#1: January 16, 2027

Judges Meeting#2: January 23, 2027

Top 5 Announced: Jan 31, 2027

The five winning students are notified and invited to the final event.

🎓 Final Presentation at UTA: February, Final Date TBD

The Top 5 students present their research at the University of Texas at Arlington.

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



6. Finalist Experience and Awards

The five highest-ranked entries will receive:



CASH PRIZES

5 cash prizes — \$500 each for the Top 5 finalists.



UNIVERSITY PRESENTATION OPPORTUNITY

The Top 5 students will be invited to The University of Texas at Arlington to present their research.

Students will have the opportunity to:

- Present in a university environment
- Meet university professors and researchers
- Meet energy-industry professionals
- Answer questions about their research
- Experience an academic-style technical presentation
- Receive feedback from experts



PRESENTATION FORMAT

Each finalist will have:

10 minutes — Presentation

followed by

5 minutes — Q&A

The final event is intentionally designed to resemble a professional academic or technical conference.



7. Your Research Journey

Your journey will look something like this:

1. ASK

Choose an energy challenge that interests you.



2. RESEARCH

Explore scientific literature, credible sources, data, and expert perspectives.



3. THINK

Develop your own analysis and point of view.



4. WRITE

Build an evidence-based argument.



5. PRESENT

Explain your research to university professors and energy professionals.



6. ANSWER

Defend your ideas and respond to questions from experts.

This is what researchers and engineers do.



8. How to Research and Write a Strong Energy Essay

1. Start with a Question, Not Just a Topic

Good research begins with curiosity. Your essay should not simply describe an energy technology or explain why energy is important. It should answer a meaningful question, examine evidence, and develop your own conclusions.

Whether you choose *Powering Tomorrow*, *The Energy Challenge*, *AI & the Future of Energy*, or *Innovation Is the Key*, begin by identifying the central problem you want to investigate.

For example:

- Instead of writing about renewable energy, ask: How can a community maintain reliable electricity when solar and wind power fluctuate?
- Instead of writing about climate change, ask: How can we increase energy production while limiting environmental damage and keeping electricity affordable?
- Instead of writing about artificial intelligence, ask: Can AI reduce energy waste in electricity grids, and what limitations might prevent it from doing so?
- Instead of writing about battery technology, ask: How could affordable, long-duration energy storage make electricity more reliable?

A focused question will help you find relevant research, compare possible solutions, and build a clear argument.

2. Use Reliable and Authentic Research Sources

Not everything published online is accurate, and not every source is suitable for a research essay. Prioritize original research, scientific publications, government data, national laboratories, universities, and established international organizations.

The following resources provide excellent starting points. Many offer free reports, datasets, and technical publications.

A. Energy data and international reports

International Energy Agency (IEA)

Website: <https://www.iea.org/>

The IEA publishes research on global energy demand, electricity, renewable energy, nuclear power, energy security, emissions, and future energy scenarios. It is especially useful for understanding possible energy-system developments through 2050.

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA)

Website: <https://www.eia.gov/>

Energy explanations: <https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/>

Energy outlooks: <https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/>

The EIA provides energy statistics, charts, historical data, and projections for the United States. Use it when you need evidence about energy consumption, production, electricity generation, prices, or transportation.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Website: <https://www.ipcc.ch/reports/>

The IPCC assesses scientific evidence on climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, and mitigation strategies. Its reports are useful when discussing the environmental implications of energy choices.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Website: <https://www.epa.gov/energy>

The EPA provides information, data, and tools about energy and the environment, including electricity generation, greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency, air quality, and the environmental effects of energy choices.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 7

Website: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal7>

This resource explores affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for everyone. It is particularly useful for essays about energy access, affordability, and economic development.

B. Scientific and technical research

National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)

Website: <https://www.nrel.gov/>

NREL conducts research on solar and wind power, energy storage, hydrogen, electricity grids, transportation, and energy efficiency. Its publications can help you understand how technologies work, their potential, and their limitations.

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)

Website: <https://www.energy.gov/>

The DOE supports research across nuclear energy, batteries, hydrogen, carbon management, advanced materials, manufacturing, and other energy technologies. Explore its research programs and technical publications to learn about emerging solutions.

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



Oak Ridge National Laboratory

Website: <https://www.ornl.gov/>

Useful for research on advanced materials, manufacturing, transportation, computing, and energy systems.

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

Website: <https://www.lbl.gov/>

Useful for research on buildings, batteries, electricity grids, energy efficiency, and environmental technologies.

National Science Foundation (NSF)

Website: <https://www.nsf.gov/>

The NSF supports scientific and engineering research at universities and research institutions. Its resources can help you discover emerging technologies and fundamental research addressing energy challenges.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

Website: <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/>

The National Academies publishes expert assessments of scientific and technical questions. These reports can help you understand competing approaches, research gaps, risks, and policy considerations.

C. Finding scientific papers and original studies

Google Scholar

Website: <https://scholar.google.com/>

Google Scholar is a search tool for scholarly literature, including journal articles, conference papers, theses, and technical reports. It is useful for finding research on a specific problem or technology. Not every result is freely available or peer-reviewed, so evaluate each publication carefully.

OSTI.GOV — U.S. Department of Energy Office of Scientific and Technical Information

Website: <https://www.osti.gov/>

OSTI provides access to scientific and technical information from DOE-funded research, including journal articles, technical reports, conference papers, datasets, and other research outputs. Look for records that provide full text or links to accessible manuscripts.

ScienceDirect

Website: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/>

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



ScienceDirect hosts scientific and technical publications, including energy research. Some articles are available for free, while others require payment or an institutional subscription. Look for open-access versions.

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)

Website: <https://www.uspto.gov/>

Patent searches are particularly useful for the *Innovation Is the Key* topic. They can help you discover existing inventions, understand how technologies work, and identify areas where improvements may be possible. A patent demonstrates that an invention has been documented or granted legal protection; it does not automatically prove that the invention is practical, economical, or commercially successful.

3. Choose Sources That Support Your Research

You do not need to read every report published about your topic. Begin with a few authoritative sources, then follow their references to more detailed research.

For a typical high-school essay, aim for approximately five to eight credible references. This is a suggested guideline, not a strict requirement.

Your research should ideally include:

- At least two authoritative sources, such as government agencies, national laboratories, or international organizations.
- At least one technical study or peer-reviewed research paper relevant to your main argument.
- Quantitative evidence, such as energy demand, efficiency, emissions, cost, reliability, or performance data.
- Evidence that helps you evaluate limitations, risks, or alternative solutions.

When evaluating a source, ask yourself:

1. Who produced it? Is the author a researcher, technical expert, recognized institution, or organization with relevant expertise?
2. What evidence does it provide? Does it include data, experiments, documented methods, or references to other studies?
3. When was it published? Is the information recent enough for your question? Older research may still be valuable for fundamental scientific principles.
4. What is its purpose? Is it intended to inform, persuade, advertise, or promote a particular technology?
5. Can the claims be verified? Can you trace important facts and statistics to their original sources?

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



6. Does it consider limitations? Does it acknowledge uncertainty, assumptions, costs, or competing explanations?

A source does not become reliable simply because it appears professional or contains impressive charts. Evaluate the evidence behind its claims.

4. Sources and Research Practices to Avoid

Wikipedia is not a suitable source to cite in your essay

Wikipedia can provide a quick introduction to an unfamiliar topic, and its references may help you discover useful publications. However, it should not be used as an authoritative reference in your essay.

Instead, follow the references listed in the article and locate the original research, official report, or recognized publication. Read and cite that source directly.

Do not treat ChatGPT, Claude, or other AI tools as research references

Large language models can be useful research assistants, but they are not substitutes for original research.

They can help you:

- Understand difficult scientific concepts in simpler language.
- Generate research questions and identify relevant keywords.
- Compare technologies and develop an outline.
- Summarize a paper you provide.
- Identify possible counterarguments and limitations.
- Improve the clarity and organization of your writing.

However, these tools can make mistakes, provide outdated information, misinterpret studies, or generate citations that do not exist. Even when a paper or URL appears genuine, it may not support the claim attributed to it.

Use AI to help you find and understand sources, but never rely on AI-generated references without independently verifying them. Open the actual publication, check the relevant passage or data, and make sure it supports the claim you intend to use.

Your final argument and recommendations must be your own. Do not submit AI-generated analysis as though it were your independent research, and follow any additional AI-use rules issued by the competition organizers.

Be cautious with commercial websites and promotional material

Companies may publish useful technical information, product specifications, and examples of real-world applications. These sources can be valuable, especially when investigating new technology.

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



However, a company has an interest in presenting its own products or services favorably. Do not rely solely on a company's claims to establish that its technology is the best, cheapest, safest, or most effective solution.

Whenever possible, compare commercial claims with independent studies, government reports, university research, or data from actual deployments.

Do not rely on social media, anonymous blogs, or unsupported claims
Social media posts, discussion forums, personal blogs, and short online videos can introduce you to an idea, but they usually do not provide enough evidence for an academic essay.

Avoid using unsupported claims, sensational headlines, unattributed statistics, or statements such as “scientists have proved” without identifying the relevant study.

News articles can help explain current developments, but when they report a scientific finding, try to locate and read the original study or official announcement.

5. What If a Research Paper Requires Payment?

Some excellent scientific journals and technical publications require a subscription or charge for individual articles. Do not assume that you must pay to access a useful paper.

If you find a relevant article that is behind a paywall, follow these steps:

1. Record the paper's title, authors, publication, year, and DOI or article link.
2. Look for a free version through Google Scholar, the author's university webpage, an institutional repository, or OSTI.GOV.
3. Check whether the publisher provides an open-access version or an accepted manuscript.
4. If you still cannot access the paper, contact the SPE Dallas Energize the Future essay competition organizers and provide the article details.

The organizers may be able to help obtain certain papers through subscriptions or institutional access available to them. However, access cannot be guaranteed for every publication.

Please do not purchase an article or subscription before asking the organizers whether assistance is available.

6. Turn Research into Your Own Analysis

Research is not simply collecting facts and repeating what experts have written. The purpose is to understand a problem well enough to evaluate possible solutions and develop a reasoned recommendation.

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



For each important claim in your essay, consider the following sequence:

Problem → Evidence → Analysis → Recommendation

For example, suppose you are investigating whether battery storage can improve the reliability of renewable electricity.

- Problem: Solar and wind generation vary with weather and time of day.
- Evidence: Find data on generation variability, electricity demand, storage costs, and battery performance.
- Analysis: Consider whether batteries can meet the required duration and scale, what they cost, and what other options may be available.
- Recommendation: Explain where batteries should be deployed, what additional technologies may be needed, and why your approach is appropriate.

This structure encourages you to make an argument rather than simply describe a technology.

For every solution, consider its practical limitations. A technology may be technically possible but too expensive, difficult to scale, resource-intensive, unsafe in certain applications, or unsuitable for a particular location. Recognizing these trade-offs strengthens your essay.

7. Use Evidence Correctly and Cite Your Sources

Whenever you use a statistic, scientific finding, quotation, or idea from another author, acknowledge the source. Keep a record of references as you research rather than trying to reconstruct them after writing the essay.

For every source, record:

- Author or responsible organization.
- Title of the article, report, or paper.
- Publication date or year.
- Journal or publisher, where applicable.
- DOI or working URL.
- The specific fact, finding, or idea you intend to use.

Cite the original source of important information whenever possible. If a report cites another study and you rely on a specific finding from that study, try to locate the original study rather than citing a secondary summary.

Use quotation marks for words copied exactly, and identify the source. For most scientific essays, paraphrasing findings in your own words and explaining their significance is more effective than relying on lengthy quotations.

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



A bibliography should include the sources actually used in the essay, not simply a list of websites visited.

Never invent a reference, alter a research finding, or present another person's work as your own.

8. Final Research Checklist

Before submitting your essay, check that you can answer “yes” to the following questions.

- ☒ Have I identified a clear problem or research question?
- ☒ Have I used credible scientific, technical, or official sources?
- ☒ Have I verified important facts and statistics in the original publications?
- ☒ Have I considered more than one solution or point of view?
- ☒ Have I discussed the limitations and trade-offs of my preferred solution?
- ☒ Have I developed my own analysis and recommendations?
- ☒ Have I cited the sources for facts, data, quotations, and borrowed ideas?
- ☒ Have I checked that every reference exists and supports the claim for which it is cited?
- ☒ Have I followed the competition's rules regarding AI assistance and original work?

The Most Important Principle

A strong energy essay does not have to predict the future or propose a perfect solution. It must demonstrate that you understand a real problem, have investigated it carefully, can evaluate evidence critically, and can defend your recommendations with sound reasoning.

Use reliable research to understand what is already known. Identify what remains uncertain or unsolved. Then use your own thinking to explain what should happen next.



9. Judging Criteria

Each submission will be evaluated by qualified judges from academia and the energy industry.

100-POINT EVALUATION

Evaluation Area	Points
Understanding of the Energy Challenge	20
Research & Use of Evidence	20
Critical Thinking & Analysis	20
Originality & Creativity	15
Strength of Argument	15
Writing & Organization	10
TOTAL	100

Academic Integrity Review

Submissions may be reviewed for plagiarism, improper attribution, or inappropriate AI-generated content. Any action will follow the published competition rules.

Judges will look beyond grammar and writing style.

The most important question is:

Does this student demonstrate curiosity, research, critical thinking, and an ability to develop an original perspective on an important energy challenge?

Students may use digital or generative-AI tools for brainstorming, general research assistance, organization, grammar, or clarity. The submitted essay must still reflect the student's own research, understanding, analysis, conclusions, and writing. Sources must be cited, and students may be asked to explain their work.

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



10. What Makes a Great Entry?

You don't need to be an energy expert.

We are looking for students who are curious, thoughtful, and willing to learn.

A strong essay should:

 Ask a meaningful question

Don't simply describe energy technology. Explore a problem or opportunity.

 Do real research

Use credible scientific, academic, government, industry, and other reliable sources.

 Think critically

Compare different perspectives and explain why you reached your conclusions.

 Bring your own ideas

Your perspective matters. Don't simply repeat what others have said.

 Connect your ideas to the real world

Explain why your ideas could matter to society, industry, or the environment.



11. Final Presentation Event

The final event at The University of Texas at Arlington will bring together:

 UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

Researchers and faculty members who can provide an academic perspective.

 ENERGY INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

Engineers, scientists, researchers, and energy professionals who understand real-world challenges.

 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

The Top 5 finalists who will present their research.

 FAMILIES, FRIENDS & TEACHERS (RSVP Only)

Invited to celebrate the students' achievements.

The event will provide students with a glimpse into the environment they may experience as university students, researchers, engineers, or scientists.

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



Recognition for Finalists

The Top 5 winners will receive:

- 💰 Cash prize \$500, each
 - 📜 Certificate
 - 🎓 Opportunity to present at UTA
 - 🎤 Opportunity to interact with university professors
 - ⚡ Opportunity to interact with energy professionals
 - 📺 Recognition through SPE Dallas Section communications, subject to applicable permissions
-

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



12. Organizers and Partners

SPE DALLAS SECTION

The Society of Petroleum Engineers connects energy professionals around the world and supports the development of the next generation of technical and industry leaders.

Through Energize the Future, SPE Dallas Section aims to introduce high school students to the breadth of the energy industry and encourage them to explore careers in science, engineering, technology, and energy.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH: THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

UTA provides the setting for the final student research presentation, giving finalists an opportunity to experience a university academic environment and interact with faculty and energy professionals.

13. Contact and Submission

Registration and submission: Complete the form at

<https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>. Registration and submission occur at the same time.

For any questions related to the event or the process or the research process please reach out to [INSERT EMAIL]

SPE Dallas Section: <https://connect.spe.org/dallas/home>

University Partner: The University of Texas at Arlington

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



14. Rules and Requirements

1. The competition is open to students in Grades 9–12.
2. Entries must be submitted individually.
3. Each student may submit one essay only.
4. The essay must address one of the four competition topics.
5. The essay must be 1,500–2,000 words.
6. An abstract of 200–300 words is required.
7. References must be included.
8. The essay must be the student's original work.
9. The organizers may review submissions for plagiarism, improper attribution, and inappropriate reliance on AI-generated content.
10. Information, data, quotations, and ideas obtained from other sources must be properly cited.
11. Students may use digital tools and generative AI for research assistance, brainstorming, or editing, but the submitted work must reflect the student's own understanding, analysis, and writing.
12. Students may be asked to explain their research process or ideas if questions regarding originality arise.
13. Late submissions will generally not be accepted.
14. The decisions of the judging panel are final.
15. By participating, students and their parents/guardians agree to the competition's participation, photography, and event requirements as applicable.
16. For any questions related to the event or the process or the research process please reach out to [INSERT EMAIL]



Appendix: Student and Parent/Guardian Agreements

Students and parents/ guardians will sign this at the time of final submission on this link <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>.

Student declaration to sign

1. STUDENT DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

*I certify that the essay and all other materials submitted by me for **Energize the Future 2026** are my own original work.*

I understand and agree that:

- *The ideas, analysis, arguments, and conclusions are my own, except where sources are clearly identified and cited.*
- *I have not copied, substantially reproduced, or submitted another person's work as my own.*
- *I have not asked another person to write or substantially develop my essay.*
- *I have acknowledged all sources and cited third-party data, figures, images, quotations, and ideas where applicable.*
- *I understand that submissions may be reviewed for plagiarism, improper attribution, or other academic-integrity concerns.*
- *If requested, I will explain my research, sources, method, ideas, and conclusions.*

2. USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

I understand that modern digital and artificial-intelligence tools may be used in research and writing.

I agree that:

- *My submission will reflect my own understanding, thinking, analysis, and conclusions.*
- *I may use AI tools for brainstorming, general research assistance, organizing ideas, checking grammar, or improving clarity.*
- *I will not submit an AI-generated essay as my own or misrepresent AI-generated material as entirely my own original thinking.*
- *I understand that I may be asked to explain my work if questions arise about originality or authorship.*

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



- *I will follow any additional AI-use instructions provided by the competition organizers.*

*I understand that the purpose of this competition is to encourage **my own curiosity, research, critical thinking, and communication skills.***

3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COMPETITION RULES

I confirm that I have read and understand the Energize the Future 2026 Competition Guidelines.

I agree to comply with all applicable competition requirements, including:

- *I meet the stated eligibility requirements and am submitting as an individual.*
- *I will submit only one entry addressing one approved competition topic.*
- *My essay will meet the word-count requirements and include the required abstract and references.*
- *I will submit my work by the official deadline and understand that late entries may not be accepted.*
- *I understand that qualified judges will evaluate entries using the published criteria and that judging decisions are final.*
- *If selected as a finalist, I will participate in the presentation and Q&A session at UTA, subject to the confirmed event schedule.*
- *I understand that failure to follow the rules may result in disqualification.*

4. JUDGING & FINALIST SELECTION

I understand that submitted essays will be reviewed by members of the SPE Dallas Section Industry Expert Judging Panel and/or other qualified judges selected by the organizers.

I understand that:

- *Essays will be evaluated using the published competition criteria.*
- *Judges may include energy professionals, engineers, researchers, academics, and other qualified subject-matter experts.*
- *Submissions may be assigned to multiple judges.*
- *The Top 5 finalists will be notified by email and may be announced through official SPE Dallas Section channels, subject to applicable permissions.*

5. FINAL PRESENTATION

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



If selected as one of the Top 5 winners, I agree to participate in the final presentation event at The University of Texas at Arlington, subject to the event schedule and applicable requirements.

I understand that:

- *I will present my submitted research in approximately 10 minutes.*
- *I will participate in an approximately five-minute Q&A.*
- *I will be prepared to answer questions about my research, sources, analysis, and conclusions.*
- *I may be asked to provide presentation materials in advance.*

6. AWARDS

I understand that the Top 5 winners will receive recognition associated with the competition, which may include:

Cash prize, printed certificate, opportunity to present at The University of Texas at Arlington, and recognition through SPE Dallas Section communications

I understand that the specific prize amounts and award details will be communicated by the competition organizers.

7. PUBLICITY & USE OF SUBMISSION

By participating, I understand and agree that SPE Dallas Section may, subject to applicable permissions and policies:

- *Announce finalists' and winners' names and schools.*
- *Publish a student's name, essay title, abstract, or selected excerpts.*
- *Use approved photographs, videos, or quotations for educational, promotional, and informational purposes related to the competition.*

The organizers will not intentionally publish private contact information such as a student's personal email address, home address, or telephone number.

8. SAFETY & EVENT PARTICIPATION

I understand that the final presentation will take place at The University of Texas at Arlington.

I agree to follow:

University rules and policies SPE Dallas Section event rules Instructions provided by event organizers Reasonable safety and conduct requirements

Click here to submit by Nov 30, 2026: <https://forms.gle/JCvNxWELTMMGob2n7>



I understand that students under the age of 18 may require a parent or guardian to accompany or authorize their participation in the final event, depending on applicable SPE and university requirements.

9. STUDENT AGREEMENT

By checking the agreement box during submission, I confirm that:

I have read and understood this Student Originality, Consent & Competition Agreement and the Energize the Future 2026 Competition Guidelines. I certify that the work I am submitting is my own original work, that I have properly acknowledged sources, and that I agree to follow the competition rules and requirements.

FINAL CONFIRMATION Student

I certify that this is my original work and agree to the competition rules.



PARENT / GUARDIAN CONSENT

For participants under 18 years of age:

I confirm that I am the parent or legal guardian of the student named above.

I have reviewed the Energize the Future 2026 Competition Guidelines and the Student Originality, Consent & Competition Agreement.

I understand that my child is participating in an educational competition organized by the SPE Dallas Section, with the final presentation opportunity hosted at or in partnership with The University of Texas at Arlington.

I consent to my child's participation in the competition and, if selected as a finalist, participation in the final presentation event, subject to the applicable event requirements.

I also acknowledge the provisions regarding originality, academic integrity, judging, finalist selection, awards, and appropriate use of photographs, video, and competition-related information.

I have reviewed and consent to my child's participation in the competition.