



2024-2025 High School Essay Contest

Tennessee Concrete Association is once again sponsoring the annual **High School Essay Contest** for Tennessee and your students are invited to participate.

All entries into essay contest will be judged by a panel of industry personnel and TCA will award cash prizes to first, second & third place essays.

First Place - \$750
Second Place - \$500
Third Place - \$250

The TCA contest winners will have their essays published in the spring edition of *Tennessee Concrete* magazine. In addition to the cash prizes the 1st place essay will be on TCA's website.

Guidance Counselors of winning essays will also receive a cash award of \$75.

ESSAY CONTEST RULES:

- Open to all Tennessee high school students ages 16-18 at the beginning of the school term.
- Essay must be typed, double-spaced and limited to 600 words.
- **Complete online form to submit essay at: www.tnconcrete.org.**
- Essay will be judged on content and writing ability (grammar, style, clarity, etc.).
- Essay should demonstrate a student's awareness of concrete's role as a building material in homes, commercial buildings, streets & highways.
(Consider what was left standing after hurricane Michael.)
- The essay should be a short literary composition about concrete, not a report.
- Winning essay authors will be asked to submit a head shot photo to accompany their essay in the *Tennessee Concrete* magazine.

Essay prompt: *How have you or your community been shaped by concrete?*

(Use of prompt is optional)

Tennessee Concrete Association reserves the right to publish the winning entries in whole or in part. All entries become the property of Tennessee Concrete Association.

Submit entries by: *Friday, December 20, 2024* to www.tnconcrete.org.

Tennessee Concrete Association

Dear Guidance Counselor/Teacher,

Judges will be looking for an interesting **essay, not report**, on concrete. The essay should be a short literary composition on the subject of concrete. Below is a copy of a national winner which students might enjoy reading.

Also, enclosed please find a poster to use at your school.

Respectfully,
Darla Sparkman dsparkman@tnconcrete.org
Director of Certifications

Tomorrow's Rocket Science

By: Anne P. Garboczi

They had listened through many dull speeches, they had waited as each valedictorian's name was read, they had stood in line with the other graduates, and now at last they grasped their college diplomas. A tall student and a short stocky one sat in the now deserted auditorium. Mesmerized, they stared at the pieces of paper that represented so much hard work.

The stocky student let out a long satisfied sigh, "Four years of engineering courses over. Now to get jobs, John."

John's thin face broke into a smile. "I'm going into concrete, Will."

"Concrete?" Will rolled his eyes, "Boring!"

John stiffened. "Concrete is fascinating! It's..."

Will laughed, "Mixing grey mud pies with a hand trowel? Fascinating? I'm going into robotics. See you in twenty years and we'll compare notes."

"The concrete order needs to be done by 5:00," said a tall middle-aged man to his colleague in the large structural laboratory. "The virtual test lab results say to add 2.4% less water and 0.17% more water reducer to the concrete for the sections that undergo the most stress," he continued, leaning over a computer screen. "And try the new code to control the robotic filler."

"Sure thing, John." The younger man pushed several buttons in rapid succession. A titanium steel alloy arm swung out from the wall and fastened onto a large pipe suspended from the ceiling. With micrometer precision, the robotic arm maneuvered the pipe towards a row of prefab house forms. A stream of concrete flowed from the tube, filling the forms. A laser beam shot out from the wall to check if they were level. Servomotors whined as the frame made a millimeter adjustment. Then a hydraulic lift lowered from the ceiling. The robotic arm lifted the frames onto it.

"Well, keep up the good work. I have to see a representative from a robotic firm to buy some sub-assemblies," said John. He walked out of the lab into his adjoining office. Inside a short stocky man was sitting on a chair.

"Sorry to be late," said John easily as he eased down into a plump leather chair behind his desk. "Now..." Just then, John happened to glance at the man again. He jumped up from the chair. "Will!"

"John?" asked the robotics salesman.

John rung Will's hand warmly.

"Fancy seeing you," exclaimed Will, "and in this big office too." Will gazed around at the luxuriant office, openmouthed, "I was just trying to sell some of my company's new robotics systems and..."

"Yes, let's get to business," said John. "We want to increase the precision of our concrete handling units and to purchase a device to automate the lasers we used to level the slabs for roads..." Soon the two men were deep into conversation. At last John said, "Well, I think your new robotics system will just suit our needs."

Will entered the order into his handheld computer.

"Thanks, I'll have payment authorized today if possible." John frowned, "the secretaries are always behind this time of year. So many people are applying for jobs, you see. We've had to turn way more MIT graduates this year than ever before."

Just then a young man rushed in to office. "John, the Linex cluster running the hydration model for the high rise construction is down and the Department of Transportation just called with an order to pave an interstate and..."

"In a moment," said John calmly. He turned to Will. "I'd like to stay and talk, but I'm rather busy right now."

Tennessee Concrete Association
High School Essay Contest Entry Form

Entry Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Student Email: _____ Phone #: _____

Parent or Guardian's Name: _____

Parent or Guardian's Phone: _____

Parent or Guardian's Email: _____

Student Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

Student's Birth Date: _____

School Presently Attending: _____

School Address _____

School Contact (Name, email, & phone # of a teacher or school official familiar with the student)

Name _____ email _____ phone _____

I have read the rules of the Tennessee Concrete Association Essay Contest and agree to abide by them:

Student signature *Date*

I have read the rules of the Tennessee Concrete Association Essay Contest and agree to abide by them:

Parent or Guardian signature *Date*

Submit essay & entry form at: www.tnconcrete.org

ENTRIES MUST BE SUBMITTED BY: Friday, December 20, 2024

WINNER!



Ask Your Guidance Counselor about the Concrete Essay Contest

School Contact Person: _____

Deadline: _____

- ◆ Open to Tennessee high school students ages 16 - 18
- ◆ Essays must be: 600 words or less
- ◆ Essays judged on content & writing ability (grammar, style, clarity, etc.)
- ◆ Submit entry at www.tnconcrete.org

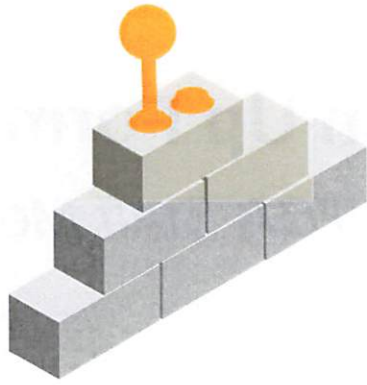
PRIZES

1st place - \$750 2nd place - \$500

3rd place - \$250



Sponsored by:
Tennessee Concrete Association
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www.tnconcrete.org



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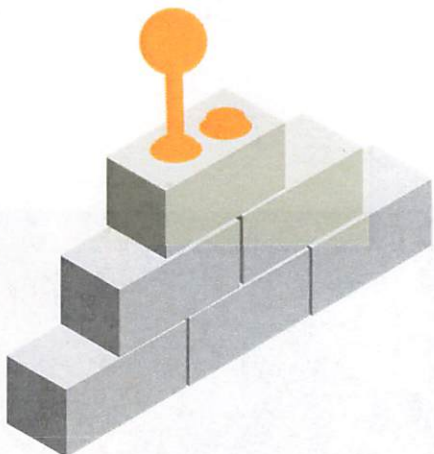
Please sign & return to a TCA Staff Member.

Student Name: _____

Student E-mail: _____

High School: _____

Teacher: _____



CONCRETE
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