Citizens for Nuclear Technology Awareness 20th Annual High School Essay Contest

Citizens for Nuclear Technology Awareness (CNTA), a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, is sponsoring an essay contest for high school juniors and seniors in Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell, Burke, Columbia, Edgefield and Richmond County schools, are invited to submit a 1,000-1,500-word essay on one of the following topics:

- *Many scientific innovations have come from the Savannah River Site, which turns 75 this year. Pick one and explain what the innovation was and how it has improved our lives. What would our world look like without this innovation? Options include: discovery of the neutrino, Pu-238 and other special isotope production, or vitrification of high-level waste.*
- *The need for new energy sources has been in the news frequently. Explain why Plant Vogtle was a vital step in producing clean energy in our region and what the future for clean energy production looks like in the United States. Discussion can include small modular reactors, the reopening of construction at V.C. Summer, AI and data center energy needs in the future, etc.*
- *Combining math, science, medicine and the latest technologies, nuclear medicine technology continues to thrive at the forefront of clinical medicine. Nuclear medicine technologists are qualified to perform nuclear medicine procedures by education, licensure, certification, and continuing education. Explain why a nuclear medicine technologist is a vital part of our current health care system, what their role is, and how one can join this profession.*

The competition will be judged by the Citizens for Nuclear Technology Awareness volunteers.[1]

The winning students will receive up to $1,500. Contest winners will be recognized on our website, in a press release and at one of our many community events.

The purpose of the CNTA Essay Contest is to promote a better understanding of nuclear technology among high school students. It also provides an incentive for the development of written communication skills that are vital to continued success in education and in the workforce.

Contact: **Dr. Allison Hamilton Molnar, (803) 649-3456**

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February 28, 2026: Deadline date for essay submittal. The essay submission must include a completed Official Student Entry Form. **Electronic Submittal is preferred.**

Electrical Submittal:	Mail To:
cnta@bellsouth.net; office@cntaware.org	**CNTA**
	Attention: Dr. Allison Hamilton
	1204 Whiskey Road, Suite B
	Aiken, SC 29803-4318

March-April 2026: Notification of CNTA essay winners will be sent via email. Invitation to be recognized at CNTA event.

[1] See attached "Rules" sheet for additional details

CNTA Annual High School Essay Contest- 2026

Contestant Qualifications and Rules:

1. Participants must be enrolled in a school (including homeschools) within Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell, Burke, Columbia, Edgefield, or Richmond County. CNTA members' families (high school juniors or seniors) are considered eligible regardless of their county of enrollment. **A contestant is allowed to submit only one essay in the competition.**
2. Contestants must be high school students in grades 11 or 12.
3. Each contestant must prepare his or her own essay. The essay is to address one of the following topics:
    1. *Many scientific innovations have come from the Savannah River Site, which turns 75 this year. Pick one and explain what the innovation was and how it has improved our lives. What would our world look like without this innovation? Options include: discovery of the neutrino, Pu-238 and other special isotope production, or vitrification of high-level waste.*
    2. *The need for new energy sources has been in the news frequently. Explain why Plant Vogtle was a vital step in producing clean energy in our region and what the future for clean energy production looks like in the United States. Discussion can include small modular reactors, the reopening of construction at V.C. Summer, AI and data center energy needs in the future, etc.*
    3. *Combining math, science, medicine and the latest technologies, nuclear medicine technology continues to thrive at the forefront of clinical medicine. Nuclear medicine technologists are qualified to perform nuclear medicine procedures by education, licensure, certification, and continuing education. Explain why a nuclear medicine technologist is a vital part of our current health care system, what their role is, and how one can join this profession.*
4. Submit by the due date of February 28, 2026. **Each essay must be accompanied by an Official Student Entry and a signed and initialed checklist for completion**. They must be received by USPS or email before close on the 28th.
5. The Essay Contest Director will verify that the content of the essay relates to one of the nuclear technology topics. Essays not relating to the topic will be returned to the contestant and will be ruled ineligible for competition. Written copies of all competing essays will be held by CNTA for one (1) year.
6. 1st place essays may be submitted to local newspapers for publication consideration. They will also be posted on cntaware.org for the year.
7. Winning students will be expected to provide a photo to accompany their recognition on our website and in press about the scholarship.
8. Essays arriving **after the due date of February 28, 2026** will be ruled ineligible for competition.
9. Contestants may not identify themselves, their city or state, or their schools in the context of their essay.
10. Essays must be limited to 1,000-1,500 words not including citations.
11. Contestants must use quotations and/or copyrighted materials and must identify the original author. The appropriate use of such material is the responsibility of the contestant.
12. **Essays must include proper citation of sources**.
13. The scholarships will be awarded to the student for use towards post-high school education