2025 World Citizen Essay Contest
Resource Guide

For Students, Teachers, & Parents

CONTEST LOGISTICS INSIDE!

- Contest Rules
- 2025 Essay Prompt
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- Examples
- and more!

This year's prompt centers,

CHANGING SOCIETIES

GET STARTED

www.world-affairs.org/programs/global-classroom/

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Find this guide and more at
world-affairs.org/program/global-classroom

GLOBAL CLASSROOM WANTS TO KNOW HOW YOU HAVE USED THIS RESOURCE PACKET IN YOUR CLASSROOM!

The 2025 World Citizen Essay Contest Getting Started Guide for Students

Compiled by: Ryan Hauck and Julianna Patterson

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were agreed upon by the United Nations in 2015 to address global issues by 2030. Their primary purpose is to improve the living standards of everyone and every country alike, with a focus on the longevity or sustainability of these improvements. These ambitious goals are all interconnected, but each focuses on a different field of development. The World Citizen Essay Contest provides the opportunity for youth to examine the SDGs in a meaningful and critical way. The SDGs are relevant to everyone around the world and generates a strong foundation for youth to think about and connect to global issues and the global community.

Prompt:

The world is undergoing major changes that will impact everyone, including you! Climate change is causing people to migrate due to rising sea levels and more extreme weather. At the same time, advancements in AI and automation are transforming the job market, creating new opportunities in fields like technology, medicine, and entrepreneurship. Additionally, as people live longer, resources are being stretched, and the traditional concept of work is being challenged, with many potentially working into their 70s.

2025 World Citizen Essay Contest (WCEC) Prompt

In 1000 words or less, **choose one** of the following global shifts and explain how it is impacting a specific country or region:

- **Climate Change** and the increase in extreme weather events worldwide.
- **The Transformation of Jobs** due to AI and automation replacing traditional roles.
- **Aging Populations** and what it might be like to work in a world where people are living and working longer.
- **Other** – if there is another major change you believe is shaping societies today.

Discuss the challenges and opportunities that come with this change. Provide one example to address how your country of choice can prepare to ensure that its citizens can thrive in the future!

Logistics:

∇ The competition is open to all Washington state **students in the 3rd-12th grades**
∇ Essays must be **1000 words or less**
∇ Judging Rubric can be found on the 2025 World Citizen Essay Contest page.
∇ Essays are due *midnight* on *Monday, March 24th, 2025.*
∇ Submit your essay here.

2025 World Citizen Essay Contest Rules

The World Affairs Council is proud to announce the 27th Annual World Citizen Essay Contest! This year, Washington State students in grades 3-12 are invited to respond to the following prompt:

The world is undergoing major changes that will impact everyone, including you! Climate change is causing people to migrate due to rising sea levels and more extreme weather. At the same time, advancements in AI and automation are transforming the job market, creating new opportunities in fields like technology, medicine, and entrepreneurship. Additionally, as people live longer, resources are being stretched, and the traditional concept of work is being challenged, with many potentially working into their 70s.

In 1000 words or less, *choose one* of the following global shifts and explain how it is impacting a specific country or region:

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Essay Format and Length

Essays must be **1,000 words or less**, typed and double-spaced in Times New Roman 12 pt. font. Works cited pages and essay title do not count toward this limit. Please refrain from the use of pictures in the essay.

Deadline and Submission

The World Affairs Council seeks to be as environmentally friendly as possible, so electronic submissions are required.

Essays are due **Monday, March 24th, 2024 by Midnight**

Please complete the Essay Submission Form to submit your essay today!

Do not include your name or school on your essay.

Essays are judged anonymously, so we ask that no identifying information appear in the essay. The electronic cover form will be used to identify your essay for WAC staff.

IMPORTANT: All essays submitted will be evaluated prior to judging, using AI detection tools. If your essay is found to have over 10% AI-generated content, it will be disqualified from the competition.

Judging and Criteria

A panel of judges will select the winning entries. They will use the criteria established on the rubric to evaluate entries according to three equally-weighted categories: content, word choice & voice, and organization & conventions. In addition, there will be a pass/fail works cited category.

**Please see the judging rubric for detailed information. It is suggested that you use the rubric to evaluate your essay before submitting.

Works Cited

As appropriate to grade level, other's ideas and supporting information must be cited and clearly identified.

Awards

Awards will be granted in each of the three categories: grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Winners will have an opportunity to attend a virtual award ceremony to receive a certificate, be recognized on the World Affairs Council website, and receive additional prizes.

Questions? Email essaycontest@world-affairs.org or call us at 206.441.5910 .

The goal of the World Citizen Essay Contest is to promote discussion among students, teachers, families, and community members about the ways that individuals can effect positive change in the global community. This coincides with the World Affairs Council's mission to promote dialogue and debate about international issues of critical importance to our region and world.

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A Note on Learning Standards Presented in this Packet:

Three sets of standards have been linked to each of the learning objectives in this packet. The **Washington State K-12 Social Studies Learning Standards** and the accompanying Grade Level Requirements are the social studies standards for WA State.

The College, Career,& Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards are the standards published by the National Council for the Social Studies. Guiding the packet as a whole is the Framework for Global Learning created by the Asia Society and the Council of Chief State School Officers titled *Educating for Global Competence: Preparing Our Youth to Engage the World* (2011).

Cross-objective standards are listed at the beginning of the packet, and content-specific standards can be found after each learning objective.

The standards provided have been selected for relevance, but are not exclusive: many other standards, such as Common Core, may be applicable to the resources and learning objectives identified in this packet. The intention for this packet's organization is to provide educators with an idea of resources available and possible uses for resources. Users should feel free to create their own learning objectives and to select resources according to the specific needs of their classrooms.

WASHINGTON STATE K-12 SOCIAL STUDIES LEARNING STANDARDS

There are five EALRs in Social Studies, one for each of the discipline areas: civics, economics, geography, and history, and a fifth for social studies skills.

(1) Social Studies EALR 1: CIVICS

The student understands and applies knowledge of government, law, politics, and the nation's fundamental documents to make decisions about local, national, and international issues and to demonstrate thoughtful, participatory citizenship.

(2) Social Studies EALR 2: ECONOMICS

The student applies understanding of economic concepts and systems to analyze decision-making and the interactions between individuals, households, businesses, governments, and societies.

(3) Social Studies EALR 3: GEOGRAPHY

The student uses a spatial perspective to make reasoned decisions by applying the concepts of location, region, and movement and demonstrating knowledge of how geographic features and human cultures impact environments.

(4) Social Studies EALR 4: HISTORY

The student understands and applies knowledge of historical thinking, chronology, eras, turning points, major ideas, individuals, and themes on local, Washington State, tribal, United States, and world history in order to evaluate how history shapes the present and future.

(5) Social Studies EALR 5: SOCIAL STUDIES SKILLS

The student understands and applies reasoning skills to conduct research, deliberate, and form and evaluate positions through the processes of reading, writing, and communicating.

COLLEGE, CAREER, & CIVIC LIFE C$_3$ FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL STUDIES STATE STANDARDS

The C$_3$ Framework is organized into the four Dimensions, which support a robust social studies program rooted in inquiry.

The four Dimensions are as follows:

(1) **Developing questions and planning inquiries;**

(2) **Applying disciplinary concepts and tools;**

(3) **Evaluating sources and using evidence;**

(4) **Communicating conclusions and taking informed action**

C3 Framework Organization

DIMENSION 1: DEVELOPING QUESTIONS AND PLANNING INQUIRIES	DIMENSION 2: APPLYING DISCIPLINARY TOOLS AND CONCEPTS	DIMENSION 3: EVALUATING SOURCES AND USING EVIDENCE	DIMENSION 4: COMMUNICATING CONCLUSIONS AND TAKING ACTION
Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries	• Civics • Economics • Geography • History	• Gathering and Evaluating Sources • Developing Claims and Using Evidence	• Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions • Taking Informed Action

Dimension 2 has four disciplinary subsections: (**1) Civics; (2) Economics; (3) Geography; (4) History**. Each disciplinary subsection has three to four additional categories, which provide an organizing mechanism for the foundational content and skills within each discipline.

Four Categories within Dimension 2

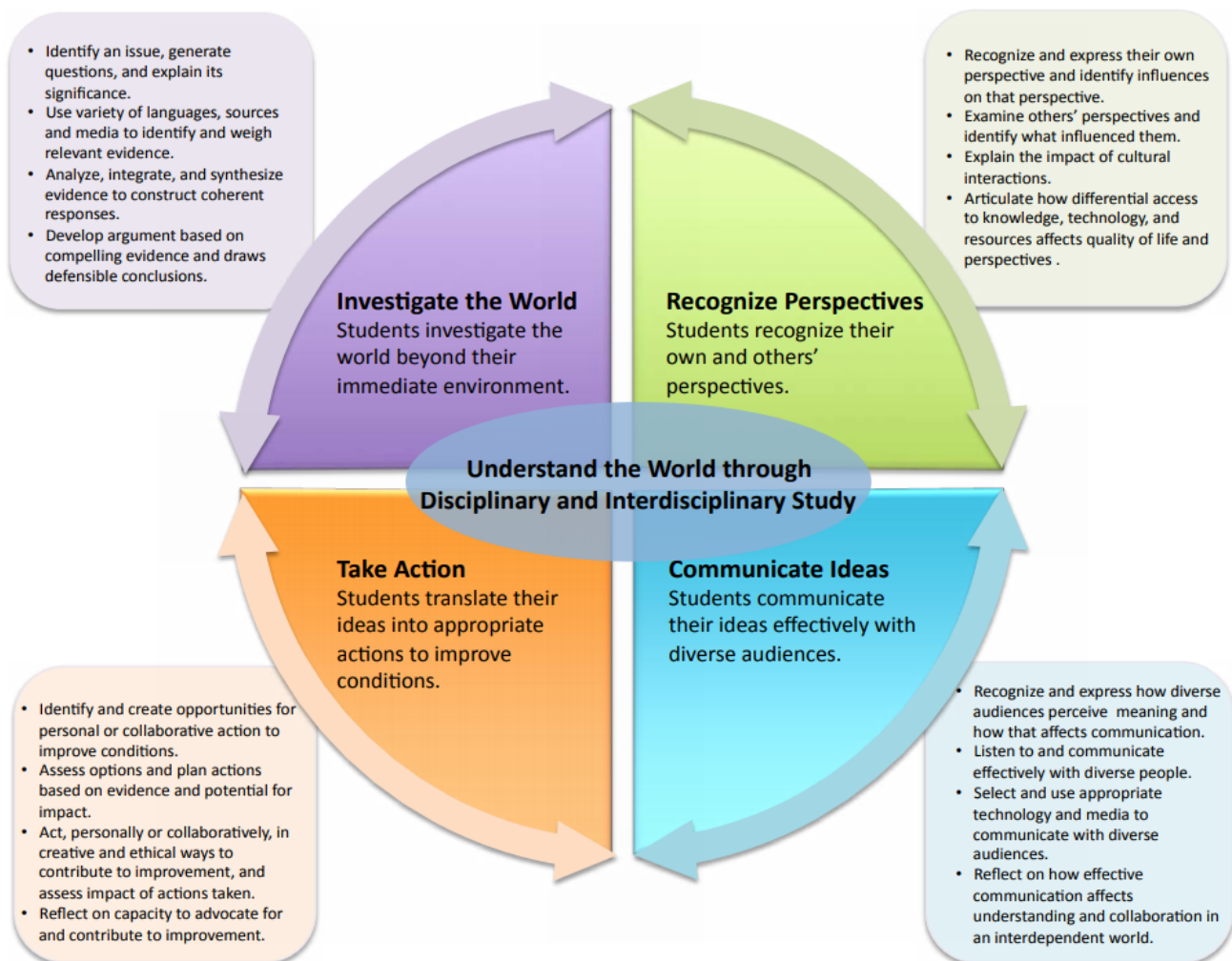| CIVICS	ECONOMICS	GEOGRPAHY	HISTORY
Civic and Political Institutions	Economic Decision Making	Geographic Representations: Special Views of the World	Change, Continuity, and Context
Participation and Deliberation: Applying Civic Virtues and Democratic Principles	Exchange and Markets	Human-Environment Interaction: Place, Religions, and Culture	Perspective
Processes, Rules, and Laws	The National Economy	Human Populations: Spatial Patterns and Movements	Historical Sources and Evidence
	The Global Economy	Global Interconnections: Changing Spatial Patterns	Causation and Argumentation

EDUCATING FOR GLOBAL COMPETENCE

Frameworks taken from *Educating for Global Competence: Preparing Our Youth to Engage the World* (Asia Society and the Council of Chief State School Officers 2011).

"**Global competence is the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance**" (Chapter 2).

Globally competent students are able to perform the following four competences:

1. **Investigate the world** beyond their immediate environment, framing significant problems and conducting well-crafted and age-appropriate research.

2. **Recognize perspectives**, others' and their own, articulating and explaining such perspectives thoughtfully and respectfully.

3. **Communicate ideas** effectively with diverse audiences, bridging geographic, linguistic, ideological, and cultural barriers.

4. **Take action** to improve conditions, viewing themselves as players in the world and participating reflectively.

- Identify an issue, generate questions, and explain its significance.
- Use variety of languages, sources and media to identify and weigh relevant evidence.
- Analyze, integrate, and synthesize evidence to construct coherent responses.
- Develop argument based on compelling evidence and draws defensible conclusions.

- Recognize and express their own perspective and identify influences on that perspective.
- Examine others' perspectives and identify what influenced them.
- Explain the impact of cultural interactions.
- Articulate how differential access to knowledge, technology, and resources affects quality of life and perspectives.

Investigate the World
Students investigate the world beyond their immediate environment.

Recognize Perspectives
Students recognize their own and others' perspectives.

Understand the World through Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Study

Take Action
Students translate their ideas into appropriate actions to improve conditions.

Communicate Ideas
Students communicate their ideas effectively with diverse audiences.

- Identify and create opportunities for personal or collaborative action to improve conditions.
- Assess options and plan actions based on evidence and potential for impact.
- Act, personally or collaboratively, in creative and ethical ways to contribute to improvement, and assess impact of actions taken.
- Reflect on capacity to advocate for and contribute to improvement.

- Recognize and express how diverse audiences perceive meaning and how that affects communication.
- Listen to and communicate effectively with diverse people.
- Select and use appropriate technology and media to communicate with diverse audiences.
- Reflect on how effective communication affects understanding and collaboration in an interdependent world.

2025 World Citizen Essay Contest

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the successors to the Millennium Development Goals, were agreed upon by the United Nations in 2015 to address vital global issues by 2030. They are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and work toward peace and prosperity for all. This is a great place to begin research for your essay.

Although these ambitious goals are interconnected, each emphasizes a different area of development. To learn more about all 17 goals, please visit, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs.

Do You Know All 17 SDGs?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXTBYMfZyrM&feature=emb_title

This short video, provided by the United Nations, introduces all 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

2025 WCEC Essay Prompt:

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Please ensure that your work is original and authentic!

Key Terms

Climate Change: periodic modification of Earth's climate brought about as a result of changes in the atmosphere as well as interactions between the atmosphere and various other geologic, chemical, biological, and geographic factors within the Earth system. https://www.britannica.com/science/climate-change

Climate Action: urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-action/

Climate Migration: the movement of people who are forced to leave their homes due to climate change, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/climate-migration-101-explainer

New Work: is a contemporary concept that encapsulates the changing dynamics of the professional world in the digital age. It emphasizes flexibility, autonomy, purpose-driven tasks, and the integration of technology and human collaboration. This approach challenges traditional work structures and promotes a more inclusive, adaptive, and forward-thinking work environment. https://www.workpath.com/en/magazine/new-work-definition

Ageing Populations: Population ageing is poised to become one of the most significant social transformations of the twenty-first century, with implications for nearly all sectors of society, including labour and financial markets, the demand for goods and services, such as housing, transportation and social protection, as well as family structures and intergenerational ties. https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/ageing

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Artificial intelligence is a technology that enables machines to simulate human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, and making decisions. AI can perform complex tasks that humans traditionally do, like analyzing data, making predictions, and classifying images.

Automation: Automation is the use of technology to make a system, process, or apparatus operate automatically. Automation can be used to reduce human labor, especially for repetitive or predictable tasks. https://www.leapwork.com/blog/ai-and-automation-what-is-the-difference.

A Note on Articles and Paywalls

Some of the resources found within this guide require a subscription or other payment in order to be viewed. If you do not have free access to these resources through your home institution, you may be able to access them through the University of Washington's borrowing program for educators. To find out how to utilize this program, please follow the link below:

http://www.lib.washington.edu/services/borrow/card/eligible

Introduction to the Sustainable Development Goals

Suitable Across Grades

Malala Introducing The Worlds Largest Lesson

https://vimeo.com/138852758

An introductory video for students to learn more about what the 17 SDGs were created to achieve, and why they are so important (6:20)

The World's Largest Lesson 2016

https://vimeo.com/178464378

Sir Ken Robinson, Emma Watson, and Aardman Animations invite children to get involved in the Global Goals for Sustainable Development by inventing, innovating and campaigning. (5:16)

World's Largest Lesson Plan

http://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/introduce-the-global-goals/

Produced in partnership with UNICEF, this particular webpage provides three different lesson plans for students ranging from ages 8– 14. It also provides different types of resources (such as videos or comics) that can help pique a young student's interest in the SDGs.

Grades 3-5

All Aboard for Global Goals

https://www.allaboardforglobalgoals.com/en-us

Thomas and Friends have collaborated with the UN to teach children and parents about several of the Sustainable Development Goals. Each of the goals features a video of Thomas the Tank Engine discussing the goal along with questions and activities for children.

Go Goals! SDG Board Game

http://go-goals.org/

This game can be used in introducing and explaining the 17 sustainable development goals. This website provides a printable board game, game kit, and SDG questions.

Grades 6-8

UN Sustainable Development Goals

http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/

This website provides a basic information about each goals, "Why It matters" pdfs, pictures, and relevant videos.

Measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals

https://sdg-tracker.org/

The Sustainable Development Goal tracker provides up to date data on each of the SDGs. Each SDG has its own tracking page, featuring interactive maps and charts displaying change and progress.

Grades 9-12

Chapter 1: Getting to know the Sustainable Development Goals

https://sdg.guide/chapter-1-getting-to-know-the-sustainable-development-goals-e05b9d17801

A detailed background and agenda for the SDGs, why they are important and a history of sustainable development.

Sustainable Development Goals

http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html

This webpage provides pictures, related articles, how each goal is being addressed in various countries, as well as discussing what other goals are being addressed in that country as well. In addition, additional resources are provided in term of facts, figures, target goals, and what efforts can be made towards the implementation of those goals.

The Global Goals Debate

http://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/introduce-the-global-goals/

This webpage includes a lesson plan for a classroom debate for student ranging from ages 8-18. This will help with conceptualizing the importance of taking action.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The following a brief description of what the Sustainable Development Goals are and can be found at www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment. This site, in addition to providing descriptions of each goal, provides related articles, videos, targets of each goal, and links for further information. This is a wonderful resource to begin your journey!

"The Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. Learn more and take action."

SDG 1 - No poverty

SDG 2 - Zero hunger

SDG 3 - Good health and wellbeing

SDG 4 - Quality education

SDG 5 - Gender equality

SDG 6 - Clean water and sanitation

SDG 7 - Affordable and clean energy

SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth

SDG 9 - Industry, innovation, and infrastructure

SDG 10 - Reduced inequalities

SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and communities

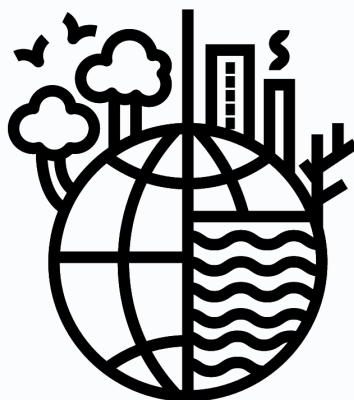**SDG 12** - Responsible consumption and production

SDG 13 - Climate action

SDG 14 - Life below water

SDG 15 - Life on land

SDG 16 - Peace, justice, and strong institutions

SDG 17 - Partnerships

Helpful Resources

Critical Climate Actions

https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/articles/5-critical-climate-actions-you-can-take-right-now

If you're feeling a bit anxious these days, you're not alone. Each week seems to bring a new global crisis—and that's on top of the looming catastrophe we've been worrying about for years: climate change.

Climate Migration

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3AuCQml7IQ

Climate change could force hundreds of millions to flee their homes in the coming years. What can countries do to prepare for this mass migration?

AI and Automation

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_iaKHeCKcq4

The next Industrial Revolution is upon us, and scientists, entrepreneurs, and policymakers are warning of an imminent paradigm shift in the future of work. In partnership with the Council on Foreign Relations, VICE talks to industry leaders and laborers to learn how radical developments in automation and artificial intelligence are set to change the world of work as we know it.

The Future of Work

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUc50N_ffR0

The world of work will be radically different in the future. From hyper-surveillance of staff to digital nomadism to robots taking jobs—how, where and why we work is changing beyond all recognition. Film supported by Mishcon de Reya.

Aging Populations

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNhx9ZLJmN0

From the United States and Europe to Japan and China, the world's population is growing older. By 2050, the number of people aged 65 and above is set to rise to 1.6 billion globally. The rapid ageing of societies is raising concerns about the future of the global economy. So, is our world set for slow economic growth? Or can an ageing workforce help keep economies churning? China's steel exports are set to reach an eight-year high. We explore the global implications.

Helpful Resources

The Aging World (Infographic)

https://www.visualcapitalist.com/demographic-timebomb-rapidly-aging-population/

This infographic comes to us from Aperion Care, and it highlights how demographics are shifting as well as the economic challenges of a rapidly aging global population.

Astounding Artificial Intelligence Statistics & Infographics (2024)

https://analyzingalpha.com/artificial-intelligence-statistics

Artificial intelligence plays a crucial role in optimizing and transforming businesses worldwide. This disruptive technology has recently gained a lot of traction and is changing the entire business landscape.

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8

Progress towards SDG 8 faces challenges from COVID-19 aftermath, trade tensions, rising debts in developing nations, conflicts, and geopolitical strains, collectively threatening global economic growth. While labour markets have shown resilience, uneven pandemic recovery, the declining protection of labor rights and emerging vulnerabilities erode social justice prospects. The report foresees a worsening labour market outlook, with higher unemployment and sluggish growth in 2024, exacerbating income inequality and jeopardizing equitable pay for women and decent work for young people. Achieving SDG 8 mandates policies fostering economic growth with a focus on social justice and inclusive employment.

Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal11

More than half the world's population currently reside in cities. However, cities are grappling with a multitude of complex issues, made more difficult by rising global urban poverty levels in the wake of COVID-19. From rising slum populations, insufficient public transport, city expansion outpacing population growth to threats to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services by disasters, it is essential that cities are equipped to adequately handle these challenges. As the world turns more urban, with nearly 70% of the global population projected to reside in cities by 2050, critical infrastructure, affordable housing, efficient transport and essential social services are crucial for creating resilient, sustainable cities for all.

A Reminder of The Prompt:

The world is undergoing major changes that will impact everyone, including you! Climate change is causing people to migrate due to rising sea levels and more extreme weather. At the same time, advancements in AI and automation are transforming the job market, creating new opportunities in fields like technology, medicine, and entrepreneurship. Additionally, as people live longer, resources are being stretched, and the traditional concept of work is being challenged, with many potentially working into their 70s.

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Grammarly
GPTzero

Judging will take place throughout the month of April 2025! Winners will be notified the first week of May, and honored at an awards celebration taking place on *Thursday, May 22nd, 2025*. **SAVE THE DATE!** Stay tuned to learn more about our 2025 WCEC prizes and sponsors!

Good Luck 2025 World Citizen Essay Contest Participants!

For examples of successful submissions? Check out our past World Citizen Essay Contests and winners, here! We are excited to have youth across Washington State participate and speak on issues important to them and to the world. Again, the judging rubric for the competition can be found on the 2025 World Citizen Essay Contest Page.