



“Water is Life: Youth Voices for a Healthier Future”

An Art Challenge on Safe Drinking Water in Our Community

Core Concept

Students become community storytellers through art. In this art challenge, they will create a drawing that answers positive, solution-oriented questions about safe drinking water and groundwater protection.

Their artwork will:

- Showcase personal connections to water.
 - Highlight hope, stewardship, and community pride.
 - Serve as educational tools in outreach (social media, website, posters).
 - Potentially draw local media attention by framing youth as change-makers and community leaders.
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Framing for Students

This project avoids doom-and-gloom conversations about water contamination; instead, it focuses on imagination, self-determination, and solutions:

- *“You have the power to inspire change through your art.”*
 - *“Your work could be featured in a public exhibition, on social media, and in local newspapers.”*
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Student Prompt Questions



The following are open-ended questions to encourage creative freedom, but students are welcome to explore other concepts as well:

Community & Solutions

- How do you think people can protect drinking water for future generations?
- What does “safe water” look like to you?
- Imagine our community 20 years from now—what does our water situation look like if we take care of it now?

Imaginative & Symbolic

- If safe water were a superhero, what would it look like?
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Competition Structure

- 1. Classroom Launch (30–45 min): VWC or the teacher will introduce the Art Contest to the students with the following structure:**
 - Valley Water Collaborative will provide a short PowerPoint presentation with contextual information around groundwater and Nitrate contamination. Valley Water staff may be available to deliver this presentation if desired. The presentation will be short and engaging and focus on safe drinking water & local groundwater with a positive tone.
 - As part of the presentation, VWC will provide an example of contaminated water and safe drinking water by providing nitrate test strips that can be used as a demonstration in class.
 - Announce rules, deadlines, and prizes.
 - The classroom receives up to \$300 for art supplies for participating students. Markers and drawing paper or other preferred medium of choice will be available. See Order Form.
- 2. Creation Period (1–2 weeks)**
 - Students create their art piece and artist statement (2–4 sentences answering: “*What does this piece say about safe drinking water?*”).



- Teachers provide light guidance. Teachers may choose to provide in-class reflection time if schedule allows.

3. Submission

- The teacher will submit the art piece to VWC staff, who will drive to the school to pick up the submissions.
- Include artist's name (first and last), grade or age, teacher's contact information.

4. Judging

- The panel may include members of the Valley Water Staff, Board of Directors and community leaders, as schedule allows.
- Judging criteria: Creativity (40%), Message (40%), Effort (20%).

5. Celebration & Media Event

- VWC staff will help to arrange a pop-up gallery in a school gym, library, or community hall.
- VWC will invite local media, parents, and community leaders to showcase the art and winner.
- Announce winners and photograph the event for further promotion.

Prizes

- **Classroom Supplies:** \$300 cash to classroom for art supplies + public display of the work.
- **First Place Student:** \$200, **Second Place:** \$100, **Third Place:** \$50