

# An Earth in the Making: A Writing Contest

## Middle School Cover Sheet

Please complete this form and submit it along with your essay, analysis, poem, or personal account that explores your thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about this planet and how life lives on it—your own “theory of the Earth”—in a maximum of **750 words**. For drawings or images, you may attach a PDF/jpeg. If your files are too large to be sent by email, we recommend using an online solution such as [Google Docs](#), [Dropbox](#), or a similar application. Applicants who are unable to submit electronically should contact Joey Orr at 785.864.7686 **in advance of the deadline** to work out alternate arrangements.

The winning submission will receive a cash prize of **\$150** and be featured as part of artist Andrew Yang’s project in the exhibition *knowledges* at the Spencer Museum of Art.

**Submit:** Submissions should be sent to [iarigrad@ku.edu](mailto:iarigrad@ku.edu) with “An Earth in the Making Writing Contest” in the subject line.

**Eligibility:** Currently enrolled middle-school students in USD 497

**Deadline:** October 1, 2019, by midnight

Student’s name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student’s age: \_\_\_\_\_

School name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade level: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student/parent/guardian email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Student/parent/guardian phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred method of contact:  email  phone

Date submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge that my parent/guardian is aware that I am submitting my writing to this contest.

## What is our planet now, and what might it become?

In 1795, a Scottish scientist named James Hutton published *Theory of the Earth, Volumes 1 & 2 (of 4)*. Intended as the first in a series of books, they proposed a radical idea for that time: that the Earth was a dynamic and ever-changing place where mountains rose and fell, continents collided, and the grasslands of Kansas were born from the depths of an ancient inland sea.

Modern science tells us Hutton was right about landscapes changing slowly over millions of years. However, the human forces of intensive agriculture, fossil-fueled industrialization, and population growth have profoundly transformed the face of our planet in just a few centuries. While *Theory of the Earth, Volume 3* was published after Hutton's death, *Volume 4* was never written. But maybe, thinking about it another way, we are all writing that book together right now, with transformations such as global warming being one of the latest chapters.

Greta Thunberg, a 15-year-old high school student and activist, speaking to world leaders at a 2018 global warming conference, said: "*You are not mature enough to tell it like it is.*" She feels that adults aren't doing enough to confront climate change that will affect her generation far more than their own.

As a student (and earthling) yourself, what does the Earth mean to you? How might the Earth change us, and how might we continue to change it into the future? We invite you to write an essay, an analysis, a poem, or a personal account that explores your thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about this planet and how life lives on it—your own "theory of the Earth" in a maximum of 750 words. You are also welcome to include drawing or —the possibilities are endless. You are invited to visit the Museum of for inspiration.

The winning submission will receive a cash prize and be featured as part of artist Andrew S. Yang's project in the exhibition *knowledges* at the Spencer Museum of Art in late fall 2019. All currently enrolled sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students in Lawrence Public Schools (USD 497) are welcome to submit.

**\$150 prize for the winning submission**

**Submissions are due by midnight October 1, 2019**

**For more information on how to submit, please visit: [www.spencerart.ku.edu/earth-writing-contest](http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/earth-writing-contest)**

# An Earth in the Making A Writing Contest