



2026

WRITING CONTEST

THE LEOPOLD WRITING PROGRAM

invites New Mexico students in grades 6-12 to submit original essays for our 2026 Writing Contest. **Please consider the following quotations and then respond to the essay prompt below.**



“It’s possible to understand the world from studying a leaf. You can comprehend the laws of aerodynamics, mathematics, poetry and biology through the complex beauty of such a perfect structure. It’s also possible to travel the whole globe and learn nothing.”

—**Joy Harjo, *The Woman Who Fell from The Sky: Poems***

“The last word in ignorance is the [person] who says of an animal or plant, “What good is it?”

—**Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac***

Cash prizes will be awarded to the winning essayists in three categories: grades 6-7, 8-9, and 10-12.

ESSAY PROMPT

Using examples from your own experience, write about how we can learn important lessons by paying attention to the natural world. Be sure to reference both quotations in your essay.

Submissions are accepted through Friday, February 13th, 2026 at midnight.

For complete instructions and entry form, please visit www.leopoldwritingprogram.org and follow *Writing Contest* links.

