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Week of December 14, 2009

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DuPont Challenge© Science Essay Competition

The 24th annual DuPont Challenge© Science Essay Competition is underway and is accepting entries now through **January 31, 2010**. Designed to inspire young people to excel in scientific writing, the competition invites students in 7th through 12th grade to research and write a 700- to 1,000-word essay about a scientific discovery, theory, event or technological application that has captured their interest. Essays are judged on mechanics and conventions; ideas and content; organization; style and creativity; and voice. Winners receive savings bonds up to \$5,000 and an expenses paid trip to Walt Disney World and the Kennedy Space Center. The program also rewards the unique contributions of the teachers of the winning students with trips with winners, \$500 education grants, and sponsorship to attend the 2011 NSTA National Conference on Science Education in San Francisco. Created to honor the Challenger astronauts, this competition is a great way to get students to push the limits of imagination and discovery. For more information on classroom use and the competition, visit the [DuPont Challenge website](#).

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NAEP Math Scores Show Mixed Results in Urban Schools

National Assessment of Educational Progress math test scores released last week showed that few urban school districts have made much headway in improving achievement in the subject. New York City schools, which have been making progress on state math tests, showed no significant improvement. In Washington, D.C., scores are still below the national average but improved significantly. Detroit was ranked the worst, with 69% of fourth-graders and 77% of eighth-graders scoring below the standard for basic math proficiency.

Read articles about the NAEP math scores:

- [New York Times](#)
- [Washington Post](#)
- [Detroit Free Press](#)

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From the NSTA Calendar: A Chance to Learn From an Astronaut

Educator and NASA Mission Specialist Dottie Metcalf-Lindenburger is preparing for her Spring 2010 spaceflight aboard space shuttle Discovery, destined for the International Space Station. Educational themes for her live, in-flight education downlinks during mission STS-131 will include robotics and attracting and retaining girls in STEM disciplines. During the downlink, to be broadcast live on NASA TV, educators and students will be able to ask questions and receive answers from her and selected crew members about what it is like to live and work in space. (Read more about the mission and related education activities at www.nasa.gov/education/robotics.)

U.S. formal and informal education institutions and organizations—individually or as a group—can apply to host downlinks. NASA will give preference to organizations capable of attracting large numbers of participants. To learn more, e-mail JSC-TFS-STIS-131@mail.nasa.gov. The deadline for submitting a proposal is **January 6, 2010**.

Visit the [NSTA online calendar](#) regularly for more science education opportunities.

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NSTA Issues New Position Statement—*Science for English Language Learners*

In a new position statement adopted recently by the NSTA Board of Directors, NSTA asserts that “all students, including those identified as English language learners (ELL), can and should have every opportunity to learn and succeed in science.” To support this position, the statement sets forth a number of declarations focusing on teacher preparation and professional development, science instruction, curriculum materials, educational policies, and research.

NSTA would like to thank the members of the [position statement panel](#) who developed the statement, as well as the NSTA members who submitted feedback during the public review process.

To view the new statement, [click here](#). For additional resources on science and English language learners, see the books [Science for English Language Learners: K–12 Classroom Strategies](#) and [Teaching Science to English Language Learners: Building on Students' Strengths](#), which both have free chapters available.

To view all NSTA position statements, go to www.nsta.org/position.

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Three Top Biology Books for Educators

NSTA's new titles will round out any teacher's professional development library. [Hard-to-Teach Biology Concepts](#) for high school teachers is a well-researched text that offers five case studies on tough topics—Meiosis and Variation, Photosynthesis, Natural Selection, Proteins and Genes, and



Environmental Systems and Human Impact.

Every biology teacher should have a copy of the new edition of [The Biology Teacher's Handbook](#). This title will guide you through teaching inquiry at varying levels, provide tactics for handling controversial subjects, offer ways to promote scientific discussion, and suggest appropriate materials.

Just for college biology teachers, [40 Inquiry Exercises for the College Biology Lab](#) has classroom-ready exercises for students; the instructor and preparatory notes for each of the 16 units can be revised to fit a range of course formats and class levels. Every unit has summaries that indicate the intended audience, model, questions, major concepts, and prior skills and knowledge needed.

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'Tis the Season ... for Recommending Great Books

Your children and peers are making lists and checking them twice. Now there's a way you can do some checking of your own on the books they might be asking for! NSTA Recommends reviews science teaching-related materials to see what's appropriate for educators. To see what experts are saying about new materials, or perhaps for gift ideas, go to the searchable [NSTA Recommends website](#), with nearly 4000 product reviews.

Looking for a great gift for your child or student? NSTA partners with the Children's Book Council to pick a yearly list of [Outstanding Science Trade Books for Students K-12](#). Lists from 1996 through 2009 are available, and the 2010 list will be available in March. Highlights from the [2009 list](#) include [Moon Landing](#), [Wangari's Trees of Peace: A True Story From Africa](#), [Dr. Frankenstein's Human Body Book](#), and [Cool Stuff Exploded](#).

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Montana State University Offers Free Lesson Plans and Alternative Energy Interactives

Science teachers can access free lesson plans and download alternative energy interactives through Montana State University's National Teachers Enhancement Network (NTEN). Lesson plans cover all grade levels with topics in Earth science, physical science, life science and space science, including multicultural science lessons developed by Native American teachers, and lessons on rocketry and physics written by a science teacher working with NSF-EPSCoR faculty at MSU.

The "Hydrogen and the Environment" website explains the connection between Yellowstone National Park and the quest for alternative fuels, including videos, student profiles and images, along with free downloads: an interactive map of Yellowstone microbes and an animation of how hydrogen is produced. Visit eu.montana.edu/nten and click on Professional Resources.

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And Don't Forget...

Visit our [member services web page](#) to ensure that NSTA has your current [contact information](#). And when the time comes to renew—select the "Autorenew" option!

Visit the [NSTA Science Store](#) for an outstanding array of bestselling books and teaching resources. Receive 30% off the price of

the December featured book, [Science Beyond the Classroom](#).

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National Science Teachers Association
1840 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201-3000
Phone: 703-243-7100

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