

Category	5 - Exceptional	4 - Excellent	3 - Proficient	2 - Developing	1 - Beginning
Research, Data & Analysis / 5	Research is thorough and original. Data was clearly collected firsthand (audit, survey, observation, etc.) and analyzed with strong insight. Patterns and causes are identified with specificity.	Research is solid and data collection is evident. Analysis identifies clear patterns and likely causes of the issue.	Some original research or data collection is present. Analysis is basic but shows understanding of the issue.	Research is limited or relies mostly on general knowledge. Little evidence of original data collection or analysis.	No original research or data collection is evident. The issue is described but not investigated.
Solution & Feasibility / 5	Proposed solution is creative, specific, and directly tied to the data collected. It is realistic and well-reasoned, with clear steps or logic for how it would work.	Proposed solution is clearly connected to the issue and feasible. Students explain why they believe it would work.	A solution is proposed and is generally realistic. The connection to the investigation could be stronger.	A solution is proposed but is vague, overly broad, or not well connected to the data or issue identified.	No solution is proposed, or the solution is unrealistic and disconnected from the investigation.
Presentation & Communication / 5	Entry is exceptionally clear, organized, and polished. The environmental message is compelling and the format — whether poster, video, presentation, or invention — is used with real skill.	Entry is clear and well-organized. The message is easy to follow and the chosen format is used effectively.	Entry communicates the main ideas. Organization is adequate though some parts may be unclear or underdeveloped.	Entry is difficult to follow in places. Organization or clarity needs improvement. The message is not always clear.	Entry is unclear, incomplete, or very difficult to follow. The format does not effectively communicate the investigation.
Essay Quality / 5	Essay is insightful, well-written, and fully addresses all parts of the prompt. Students articulate their findings, solution, and call to action with confidence and clarity.	Essay addresses the prompt well. Findings and proposed solution are explained clearly. Writing is organized and strong.	Essay addresses most parts of the prompt. Key ideas are present but some lack depth. Writing is mostly clear.	Essay partially addresses the prompt. Ideas are present but underdeveloped or loosely connected to the investigation.	Essay is missing, does not address the prompt, or is too brief to evaluate meaningfully.