

Mechanics and FAQs of the Eco-blog Contest

1) What is the Eco-blog Contest?

The Eco-blog Contest is an online writing contest that calls for active participation among young people through insightful blogs that promote the uniqueness and beauty of the Philippines and ways to protect its natural environment. In this contest, bloggers are encouraged to discover and explore the natural environment of different sites or destinations in the Philippines. They are further encouraged to research about the most effective ways they can protect the areas they have visited and blog about their experiences, insights and calls to action.

The Eco-blog Contest has four main objectives: 1) to recognize the value of the unique skills and resources of today's youth and help them put their resources into good use, 2) to empower young people and give them a significant voice in environmental forums and policies, 3) to raise awareness of the role and responsibility of today's young people in online communication, and 4) to hone their creativity and writing skills through blogging.

As a joint-project of ORC and the Department of English of the University of Asia and the Pacific, the Eco-blog contest supports UA&P's English Week's theme: "Civic Responsibility in a Threatened Environment."

2) Who are qualified to join?

This contest is open to UA&P college students only. All UA&P students enrolled in the previous school year (AY 2008-2009) and who plan to enroll in the next school year (AY 2009-2010) are eligible contestants.

Incoming freshmen for AY 2009-2010 are not qualified to join.

3) How do I join?

Sign up in the ORC website's contest page and create a blog account using your student number.

4) How long will the contest run?

The contest will run from April 1 to July 3, 2009.

5) How many blog entries can I make?

You are free to blog as many times as you want.

6) Do all my blog entries automatically qualify for the contest?

While you are free to blog as many times as you want in the ORC web site, your blogs do not automatically qualify for the contest.

Only *one* blog entry will qualify for the contest. To qualify, you need to pick **one** blog entry and email the link of your chosen blog entry to the online judge (ecoblogjudge@gmail.com).

The blog entry you have chosen to qualify in the contest will be considered your *eco-blog*.

7) When is the deadline of the submission of my eco-blog?

You need to submit your eco-blog link to the online judge (ecoblogjudge@gmail.com) on or before July 3, 2009. You may, however, start blogging in the ORC website as early as April 1, 2009.

8) What are the requirements of *eco-blog*?

- An eco-blog is composed of one blog entry only.
- An eco-blog must have a minimum of 700 words and a maximum of 1500 (This excludes blogger's comments).

- The eco-blog must be written in English (This excludes blogger's comments). You may use Filipino words (or any local language) only when necessary—for example, when English words can not fully capture the cultural milieu or impression of a particular place or experience. Non-English words must be italicized.
- It must contain at least one photograph of the place you have visited. However, if you want to further qualify for the Best Photo Eco-blog Award, you need to post a minimum of four photos and a maximum of eight in your eco-blog. (*For more details on photography requirements, see # 10*)

9) What type of information must my eco-blog contain?

Your eco-blog must aim to do the following: 1) inspire readers to appreciate the natural environment of Philippine sites and destinations, and 2) provoke readers to actively seek and contribute solutions to the protection and stewardship of the natural resources of the Philippines.

Thus, your eco-blog must contain **TWO** kinds of information:

- 1) basic information about the place you have visited—e.g what, where, when, and what-to-do, and other insights you have gathered about the place (e.g.the environmental condition or some the projects that have been done in the area) and
- 2) suggestions or calls to action that indicate concrete ways and means to protect the environment, preferably ways that are practical, doable and encouraging involvement among your own peers and network.

Thus, you are encouraged to explore, discover, research about the place you visit, its environment and its community.

You may check these links that can give you a framework to work with as you travel and blog:

<http://www.ytrip.org.ph/resources.html>

<http://www.responsibletraveller.blogspot.com>

10) What kind of photos do I post in my eco-blog?

The purpose of the photography in this contest is two-fold: to make viewers appreciate the natural environment of Philippine sites and destinations and to inspire action towards environmental protection and stewardship.

Naturally, the subject of this kind photography is the natural environment, but you are not limited to such a subject. You may choose to photograph, for example, people participating in beach clean-ups or man-made structures such as solar panels. The subject of your photos may vary as long as they intend to achieve the purpose of this contest.

It is necessary, however, to keep photo editing to a minimum. Photographs that are candid and natural are preferred.

Take note that ORC website reserves the right to immediately take down any blog that contains indecent or offensive photos.

11) Can I submit photos that are taken by someone other than myself?

Do not submit any photo taken by someone else. **ALL** photos in your eco-blog must be originally yours. It is automatically assumed that you are the author and copyright holder of all photos you have posted in your eco-blog.

12) Will my eco-blog be viewed publicly?

Your eco-blog will be automatically displayed in the ORC website for public viewing. For all other blog entries, you have the option to use a private display setting.

Your eco-blog will also be open to public comments. Eco-blog judges will monitor blogs and comments but will not ban negative comments as long as they are not abusive, indecent or malicious.

13) How many destinations or areas can I write about in my eco-blog?

Write about just *one* specific destination site (for example, a particular beach in Cebu or a mountain in Batad) within the Philippines. It can either be marine or terrestrial. It does not have to be a popular destination or a tourist spot. In fact, you are encouraged to explore undiscovered or alternative travel destinations and sites. Also, it does not have to be far from where you live.

Check www.ytrip.org.ph for more ideas on destinations and travel activities.

14) What are the award categories?

Best Eco-blog

Best in Photography

Best Destination Pick

Best Environmental Promotion

People's Choice Award

(More details about the criteria for each award categories to be posted soon)

15) Can I blog about trips that I made before April 1, 2009?

You may blog about trips you made two weeks before April 1, 2009--since March 21, 2009 onwards.

16) Can I blog about other concerns besides travel and environmental protection?

It is highly encouraged that the blogs must be about the related topics (see # 9). While unrelated blogs will be allowed, they will not be considered as entries for the contest.

Be aware that ORC reserves the right to immediately take down any blog that contains indecent, malicious, or offensive material.

17) What are the prizes?

The winning blogs will be promoted in major websites that support responsible tourism and environmental protection such as www.ytrip.org.ph. Also, the winners will earn extra special credit in their English classes and receive prizes like travel gear, freebies and trip certificates.

(More details about prizes to be posted soon)

19) While I get extra credit in my English class if I blog even if I don't win?

Yes. You will automatically get extra credit in your English class by submitting your eco-blog entry.

20) When and where is awarding ceremony?

The awarding ceremony will be held during the UA&P's English Week on July 31, 2009 in the University of Asia and the Pacific, Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

For more details, email ecoblogjudge@gmail.com .