

Power to Explore Challenge FAQs

<https://www.futureengineers.org/powertoexplore>

What is the Power to Explore Challenge?

- If you are a K-12 student in the United States, your challenge is first to research [Radioisotope Power Systems \(RPS\)](#) and dream up a new RPS-powered mission to a destination with limited or obstructed access to light. RPS is a type of nuclear “battery” that, for over 60 years, has enabled many spacecraft to explore some of the harshest, darkest environments and farthest reaches of our solar system. In your entry, describe where your RPS-powered mission will go and describe your mission goal(s). Explain the importance and advantages of using RPS for mission. Also, describe what you think your unique power is and how your special power will help you achieve mission success. In total, your submission should be a maximum of 250 words.

Who can enter?

- Individual K-12 students in U.S. public, private, and home schools (including U.S. territories & possessions and schools operated by the U.S. for the children of American personnel overseas). No team entries are allowed! Children and students who live in the same household as NASA employees are not eligible to enter.

Can homeschool or after school program students participate?

- Yes. Any K-12 student in the U.S. can participate in this contest.

What’s the Timeline for the NASA RPS Power to Explore Challenge?

- Contest Launch: November 8, 2023
- Entries Due: February 9, 2024
- Virtual Event & Semifinalists Announced: March 15, 2024
- Finalists Announced: April 8, 2024
- Winners Announced: April 17, 2024

Are entries divided into age groups?

- Yes. Entries will be separated into three categories grades — K-4, 5-8, and grades 9-12, — to be judged. Fifteen semifinalists (45 total), three finalists (9 total), and one winner (3 total) will be selected in each grade category.

What are the prizes?

- Fifteen national semifinalists in each grade category (45 semifinalists total) will receive a NASA RPS Prize Pack. Three national finalists in each grade category (9 finalists total) will receive an exclusive virtual session with a NASA expert and a finalist space themed prize pack. One grand prize winner from each grade category (3 total) will receive a trip for two to NASA’s Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio, to learn about the people and technologies that power NASA missions.

Can I send my entry via U.S. Mail?

- No. Only entries submitted online at www.futureengineers.org are accepted. No exceptions.

I'm a minor. Can I enter the contest on my own?

- Entrants in class must be linked to their teacher's account to enter— either by entering a teacher's class code during registration or by your teacher registering for you. If you are not participating with a teacher and are a minor, you must get a parent's or legal guardian's permission to enter.

Can one entry be submitted by a team of students?

- No. This is an individual contest.

Can I submit more than one entry?

- No. You may only submit one entry for the Power to Explore Challenge; however, you are welcome to edit your entry until the contest deadline on February 9, 2024. Your last submitted entry is the one that will be considered the final entry.

How and when do I submit my entry?

- Please log into your Future Engineers account, go to your dashboard or to the Power to Explore page, and submit your entry on or before February 9, 2024. For more detailed instructions, refer to the [How to Submit](#) help article.

How are the entries judged?

- A panel of judges will review eligible entries based on the following criteria.
 - 25 points: feasibility of where your RPS-powered space mission will go and your mission goal/s
 - 25 points: creativity of your selected space destination
 - 25 points: how well your special human power will help achieve your mission goal/s
 - 25 points: quality of the written entry

Is this Contest open to International Participants?

- No. This contest is only open to students in the United States and its territories.

Do I need to get parent signatures for students to participate?

- Parent signatures are not required to enter the contest; however, the potential winners' parents or legal guardians will be notified via email, and they will be required to sign and return additional documents by a specified time, which may include an Affidavit (or Declaration, as determined by Sponsor) of Eligibility, Liability and, where legal a Publicity Release.

One of my parents works for NASA. Am I eligible to participate?

- No, children of NASA employees are not eligible to enter.