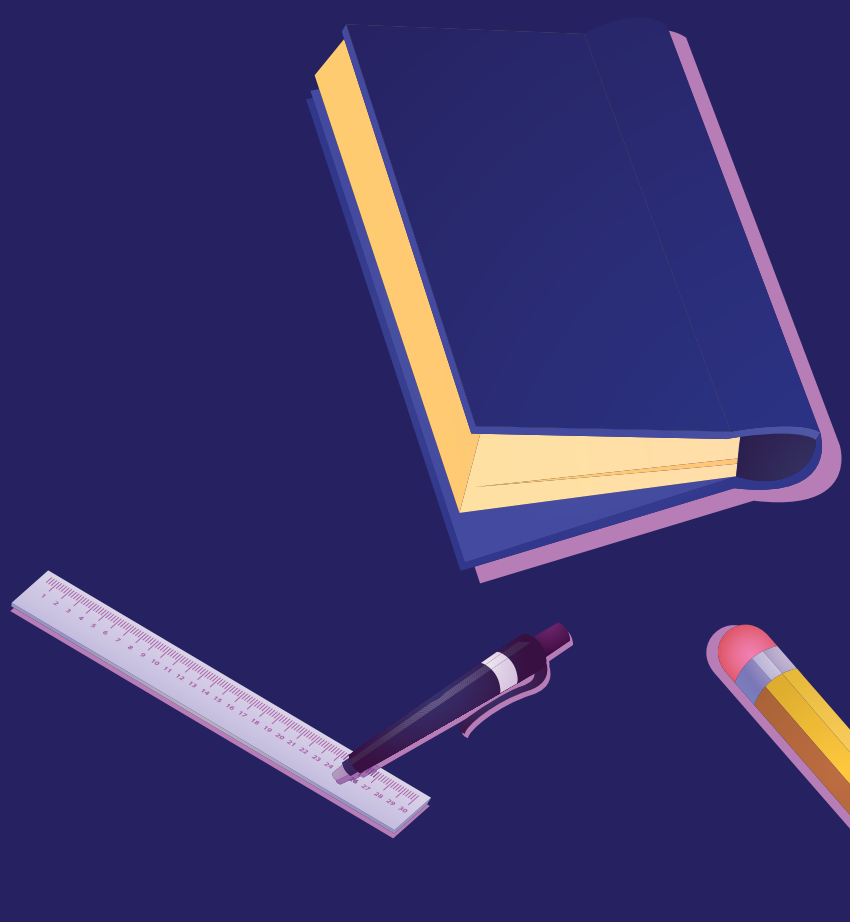
SADC Secondary School Essay Competition 2027



1. BACKGROUND

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is a Regional Economic Community comprising 16 Member States, namely; Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Established in 1992, SADC is committed to Regional Integration and poverty eradication within Southern Africa through economic development and ensuring peace and security. In 2021, SADC is commemorating 41st Anniversary of its journey from 1st April, 1980 when its forerunner the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) was officially formed, in Lusaka, Zambia and later transformed to SADC on 17th August 1992 in Windhoek, Namibia. Since its inception, SADC has demonstrated unwavering commitment to peace, stability and security in the region through adoption of a number of instruments aimed at ensuring peace and stability, as a precondition for socio-economic development.

The objectives of SADC, as stated in Article 5 of the SADC Treaty (1992) are to:

- achieve development and economic growth, alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the peoples of Southern Africa and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration;
- evolve common political values, systems and institutions;
- promote and defend peace and security;
- promote self-sustaining development on the basis of collective self-reliance, and the inter-dependence of Member States; achieve complementarity between national and regional strategies and programmes;
- promote and maximise productive employment and utilisation of resources of the region;
- achieve sustainable utilisation of natural resources and effective protection of the environment; and
- strengthen and consolidate the long-standing historical, social and cultural affinities and links among the peoples of the region.

The SADC Common agenda is linked to the SADC Objectives and is underpinned by a series of principles and policies including:

- promotion of sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development that ensures poverty alleviation with the ultimate objective of its eradication;
- promotion of common political values, systems, and other shared values, which are transmitted through institutions that are democratic, legitimate and effective; and
- promotion, consolidation and maintenance of democracy, peace and security.

In 1996 the Council of Ministers approved the established of the annual SADC Secondary School Essay Competition to support the process of regional co-operation and integration in the Region. The SADC Secretariat is pleased to announce the launch of the 2026 SADC Secondary School Essay Competition.

2. ELIGIBILITY

All secondary school going students from all 16 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member States are welcome to participate in the Competition.

3. TOPIC

In 1980 the SADC Founders officially formed the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), in Lusaka, Zambia which was later transformed into SADC on 17th August 1992 in Windhoek, Namibia. Since its inception SADC has demonstrated unwavering commitment to peace, stability, and security in the region through adoption of several instruments aimed at ensuring peace and stability, as preconditions for socio-economic development.

The topic for the 2027 SADC Secondary School Essay competition is; **"How Can Infrastructure Development, Agricultural and Critical Minerals Transformation Promote Industrialisation and Help Build a Better SADC Region?"**

The topic is derived from the theme of the 46th Ordinary SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government held in the Republic of South Africa, Durban on 17th August 2026, which is; "Resilient, Sustainable, and Inclusive Industrialisation through Infrastructure Development, Agricultural and Critical Minerals Transformation in Pursuit of a Just World", highlighting infrastructure, agriculture, and critical minerals as key drivers of industrialisation for a competitive, climate-resilient, inclusive and prosperous SADC region.

4. INSTRUCTIONS

The essay must contain a maximum of 1000 words and a minimum of 900 words in English, and a maximum of 1200 words and a minimum of 1100 words in French and Portuguese. Essays that do not comply with the permissible number of words will not be considered. A complete word count must be provided at the end of the essay.

Learners must provide references for their work where necessary; however, references do not contribute towards the word count of the entry. The preferred format of citation is APA. To facilitate simple sequencing, each answer must be accompanied by the question at the top. Learners are cautioned against using the bullet point format for their work.

Essays are coordinated by the Ministries of Education in all respective SADC Member States. It is the responsibility of Government officials in SADC Member States to submit the top 3 essays to SADC Secretariat for adjudication at regional level. **NOTE:** The SADC Secretariat will not accept entries from individuals and as such those entries will be automatically disregarded and disqualified. The deadline for submission of entries to Ministries of Education in respective SADC Member States is **31st March 2027**. Learners should submit to the Ministry of Education through their respective school heads. The deadline for submission of entries to the SADC Secretariat by Ministries of Education, through their respective National Contact Points, is **31st May 2027**.

ALL entries must be typed and submit in electronic version in Microsoft Word and and in hard copies. Entrants should sign and initial each page of the hard copy document to make sure that they have not been altered. All essays entering the competition should be in one of the SADC working languages, i.e. English, Portuguese and French.

All submissions must contain full contact details of the entrant, including, passport sized photograph, physical address, telephone, e-mail addresses, WhatsApp contacts and banking details. It mandatory to provide the Secretariat with banking details as per the table below:

5. MARKING GUIDELINES

The set of questions below are meant to guide entrants when responding to the question above. In answering the question above, secondary school learners should ensure that they address the questions listed below in their essays;

- What does resilient, sustainable and inclusive industrialisation mean, and how can it contribute to the future development of the SADC region? (20 points)
- How can improved infrastructure help SADC countries develop industries, create employment and connect communities and markets across the region? (20 points)
- How can the transformation of agriculture help SADC countries move from producing raw agricultural products to developing stronger industries and value-added products? (20 points)
- How can SADC ensure that the extraction and use of critical minerals benefit local communities, protect the environment and contribute to long-term development? (20 points)

- How can young people contribute to building a more resilient, sustainable and inclusive SADC region and promoting a just world? (20 points)

Judging criteria are as follows:
Uniqueness - unique in its genre or create something entirely new, exciting, original material that stands out from the pack.

Creativity – Creation of new dimension, twist to a style of writing and great new spin.

Communication – Communicating positive message of the region, with brilliance, creativity and imagination in use of words.

The brief - The essay type, subject and content focus, word limit and any other set requirements, conformity to the guidelines.

Knowledge and understanding - Assessing how well one has understood the question and how much they know and articulate the subject matter, and see breadth and depth of knowledge.

Argument and critical thinking - To get the good grades, this is an area to give attention to convincing the reader of your argument, and how one uses information to tell the story or make your point.

Use of sources – These examine all types and range of sources used in the construction of your essay to demonstrate analysis beyond any core texts to include current, respectable works, and maybe even discuss controversial ones

Style and presentation - This is how one manages to package substance and content, e.g. such as spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence construction, etc.

Note: The essay should not depict violence, sexually explicit language, or substance abuse, profanity by substituting symbols or words, and should be overly sensitive on matters of race, culture, tribe, religion and freedom of association. Competition rules and guidelines

The entrants' work should not have been published/broadcast by a registered and/or authorized broadcast company, newspaper, blogs, radio station, television station or agency or carried on an online of a registered and/or authorized agency in any of the SADC Member States.

The competition will only accept one (1) submission per writer and is open to all registered Secondary School active learners. All writers/candidates who are SADC nationals may enter the competition, except those in institutions contracted by SADC, family members/ children of SADC Secretariat staff, subsidiaries of SADC and the SADC Secretariat staff.

All essays entering the competition should be in one of the SADC working languages, i.e. English, Portuguese and French. However, the writer can use some inserts in any national indigenous language of the SADC Region, but provide translation in the glossary.

Learners are also encouraged to reference their work where necessary. The tone/composition of the essay must be reflective of the SADC region; and relate to the people and culture of inhabitants of the region.

Entries will be initially screened and judged by the Ministries of Education in all respective SADC Member States and consequently submit the top 3 essays per each Member State to SADC Secretariat for adjudication at regional level and selection of the top three (3) overall winners. Entry through adjudication by the three (3) selected SADC panelists/judges, and the decision of the Secretariat shall be final.

The Secretariat reserves the right not to award a prize in any of the essay if the entries do not satisfactorily meet the competition requirements.

Observations from the previous competitions

Students are encouraged to use available information to write well-structured and coherent entries.

Avoid cut and paste of information from research materials and Internet.

Do not use bullet points and short paragraphs with sub-headings throughout the essay rather write a narrative.

Show logic and coherence to indicate that the learner was thinking and linking their ideas in a way which demonstrates understanding of the topic.

In some instances it appeared that some learners are being assisted in writing their materials and it was apparent that the writing was not authentic. Learners are advised to present their own work.

Some learners only concentrated on their countries or neighbouring countries, therefore learners are encouraged to broaden their scope and cover the region.

Essay should have introduction, body and conclusion and this makes style of writing ideal and easy to follow.

Proofreading is key in producing good work, and learners should take care of errors, grammas and punctuations.

Marking Criteria
In marking the essays, Adjudicators expected participants to demonstrate clear understanding and complete analysis of the topic, showing originality of ideas and expression and an awareness of expected length of the discussion, scope, and audience. Even though there was no mark allocated to accuracy of language, per se, Adjudicators still expected participants to write essays which showed clear organisational and logical structure, and demonstrating mechanical accuracy of the language.

Winner and Prize
The authors of the winning entries will receive a once off prize money and a certificate signed by the SADC Executive Secretary.

Regional level prizes;
1st prize = USD1500
2nd Prize = USD1000
3rd Prize = USD750

In addition, the top 10 winners will each receive a certificate signed by the SADC Executive Secretary.

National level prizes;
1st prize = USD500
2nd Prize = USD300
3rd Prize = USD200

The top 3 winners will all receive certificates signed by the Minister of Education and the SADC Executive Secretary.

The decisions of the adjudication panel shall be final, and prizes will be awarded in accordance with the rules and regulations governing the competition. The Secretariat reserves the right to use the essay as and when required, and the writer reserves the right to share/ distribute the essay outside the SADC Secretariat sphere without consequences, but will not distort the original content and meaning of the piece.

The writer will not claim any future additional royalties or fees for the piece for future use by the Secretariat. The winning entry will remain the property of the SADC Secretariat.

ISSUED BY SADC SECRETARIAT
GABORONE, BOTSWANA
DATE: 5 NOVEMBER 2026

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SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY SECRETARIAT

SADC SECONDARY SCHOOL ESSAY COMPETITION ENTRY FORM

Photograph

PART I

A. PARTICULARS OF PARTICIPANT (to be completed in block / capital letters)

1. Full name: _____

   Surname: _____

   Other / First: _____

2. Residential Address: _____

   _____

   Phone: _____ Fax:_____ Email:_____

3. Business / Employer's Address: _____

   _____

   Phone: _____ Fax:_____ Email:_____

4. Nationality:_____

   Date and Place of Birth: _____

   Passport No: _____

   Date and Place of Issue: _____

   Date of Expiry: _____

Member States:

Angola	Lesotho	Malawi	Namibia	Eswatini
Botswana	Madagascar	Mauritius	Seychelles	United Republic of Tanzania
Comoros		Mozambique	South Africa	Zambia Zimbabwe
Democratic Republic of Congo				