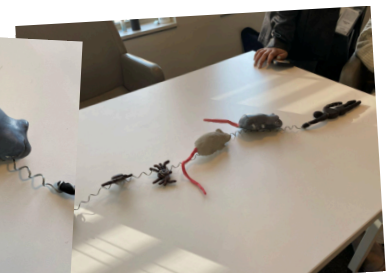
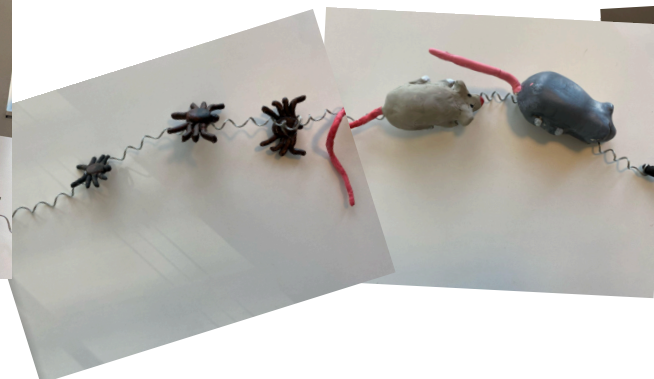




*Making Data "Sing" Through Creative Expression*

**2025 Competition Guidebook**



Support for the Hudson Data Jam Competition has been provided by Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, M&T Bank, Central Hudson, Adams Fairacre Farms, Price Chopper's Golub Foundation, LaBella, Welsh Sanitation Service & Central Hudson.

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# Project Overview

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Welcome to the Hudson Data Jam Competition!

The Hudson River Valley has been intensely studied by scientists for decades. Yet despite the tremendous discoveries made about the Hudson, many of the river's science stories are not well known by the people who call the Hudson Valley home. We believe that the skills of understanding, interpreting, and presenting data are essential in a world where our ability to collect data outpaces our ability to make it understandable for a public audience.

That's why we began the Hudson Data Jam Competition in 2014. We're looking for new, creative ways to share the science of the Hudson River and its watershed. This year, Data Jammers will immerse themselves in authentic, local datasets that have been collected by professional scientists, including Cary Institute ecologists. Whether teams create a graphic, song, video, sculpture, computer game, puppet show, or children's book, their imagination is the limit!

Projects will be judged using the criteria detailed on page 5. As you will see, the Hudson Data Jam Competition emphasizes creativity in presenting data. These are the very skills that will continue to be necessary as we strive to make local science understandable to the general public.

We can't wait to see what you create!

Sincerely,  
The Cary Education Team

## For more information:

CONTACT: [caryeducation@caryinstitute.org](mailto:caryeducation@caryinstitute.org)

DATA JAM on the WEB: <http://www.caryinstitute.org/students/hudson-data-jam-competition>

FACEBOOK: [@HudsonDataJam](https://www.facebook.com/HudsonDataJam)

Important Dates				
<b>Early Registration:</b> November 15	<b>Final Registration</b> January 17	<b>Consent Forms Due:</b> February 6	<b>Projects Due:</b> February 26	<b>Awards Ceremony:</b> April 3

# Exploring Data Through Art

(Adapted from Stephanie Bestelmeyer, Asombro Institute for Science Education)



Anyone who follows major league sports, and especially baseball, knows the incredible amount of data collected during each game. Craig Robinson is a self-proclaimed baseball fanatic who has turned some of these data into fun graphics in his book [Flip Flop Fly Ball: An Infographic Baseball Adventure](#) and on [his website](#). The sample infographic above shows how Mr. Robinson took data available to everyone, but found a way to present it in an innovative way. "Infographics" like those created by Mr. Robinson are becoming increasingly popular.

Keep in mind that graphical presentations are not the only option for presenting science to non-scientists. For example, students attaining a PhD in science can create a dance explaining their research and enter it in the Dance Your PhD Contest (<http://gonzolabs.org/dance/>). In last year's Hudson Data Jam, students created songs, videos, murals, computer games and more.

Now it's your turn! How can you present ecological data from the Hudson Valley to nonscientists? Teams can use any artistic media they like, just as long as their creative product illustrates interesting trends or comparisons in the data.

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# Competition Essentials

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## We offer two main Data Jam categories:

1. *Junior Data Jam* – for upper elementary grades 4-5
  - a. Submissions for Junior Data Jam require only a single graph, a brief interpretation of observed trends, and a creative project with a short explanation. Please refer to the Junior Data Jam Rubric on the [“Important Documents” webpage](#) for further details.
2. *Hudson Data Jam* – for grades 6-12 (prizes are awarded separately to middle and high school students)

## Teams

Students can work on projects on their own or in groups as small as two students or as large as a whole class. Prizes are awarded for a project, so winnings must be split between team members.

## Registration

Advisors must register their student(s) by January 17, 2025. Registration is non-binding, but is extremely useful for us so we can estimate the number of judges we will need.

To register:

1. Fill out the registration form on the [Hudson Data Jam registration website](#). Only one registration form is necessary for each adviser. Junior Data Jam teams will register using the same form.
2. You will receive a confirmation by email. If you have not received a confirmation within 24 hours of submitting your registration, please email us at [caryeducation@caryinstitute.org](mailto:caryeducation@caryinstitute.org).
3. All students participating in the competition must complete the student consent form with their parent/guardian. These are due February 6, 2025. ***Team projects with missing consent forms cannot be judged.***

## Which data should we use?

We provide dozens of local datasets collected by Cary Institute and other local organizations like Scenic Hudson and Riverkeeper. We also highly recommend using the data from the Day in the Life of the Hudson, especially if you've participated in Day in the Life.

Our datasets are available as Google Sheets through the [Datasets page](#). Each dataset includes background information. Here, you will find information on the dataset, including who collected the data, and when and how the data were collected. Most of the datasets also link to a PDF with additional background information.

If you want a fun, easy way to try graphing, you might want to try out our interactive drag-and-drop Hudson Data portal hosted on Tuva Labs Inc.:

<https://hudsonvalleydata.tuvalabs.com/>

## Parts of the Project

Each submission to the Hudson Data Jam Competition will include two parts – a scientific report and an interpretive creative component.

- **Report.** Each team must submit a report that summarizes their project for judges and others to review. The report is worth 55% of the total project score. For **Junior Data Jam**, participants will submit a brief paragraph interpreting observed data trends, plus a short explanation of their creative component, in lieu of a full report. For Junior Data Jam, the condensed report is worth 40% of the total project score.
- **Interpretive Creative Component.** Communicate your findings! The creative piece should **clearly** explain the data to someone without the scientific knowledge to interpret datasets or graphs on their own. Skits, videos, songs, puppet shows, poems, photographs, exhibits, sculptures, interactive displays and more are encouraged. *The projects will be judged online*, so live performances must be submitted as electronic audio or a YouTube video. Recordings must be 5 minutes or less. Projects with videos longer than 5 minutes will be disqualified and not be judged. The creative project is worth 45% of the total project score (60% for Junior Data Jam).

## Data Jam Report

The Data Jam report should be completed using the document titled: *Hudson\_DJ\_Report\_Form* found in the "[Important Documents](#)" tab of the website. Students should complete all components of the document, as outlined in the table below. Students are required to include information and citations from **two sources** beyond the Metadata file (not required for Junior Data Jam). These sources could come from scientific publications, newspaper articles or reputable online sources. **Note: Components required for Junior Data Jam are designated with an asterisk in the table.**

<b>Report Components</b> (these are the same as the Rubric, but this chart gives more detail) *Please Note: Reports should be <u>no more than 10 pages</u> including figures, tables and text (single spaced, font at least 11 pt, margins of at least 1")	
<b>1. Title/Organization*</b>	Include the title, name(s), grade(s), and school name(s) of all students who participated in the project.

	The report should be typed in a readable font, well organized, and free of spelling and grammatical errors.
<b>2. Introduction</b>  (1 paragraph)	Start your report by describing your topic to someone unfamiliar with it. Include the scientific question you investigated and a brief claim about what the dataset showed. Give an overview of the project but do not go into specific detail in your introduction.
<b>3. Dataset Description</b>  (1 paragraph)	Introduce the data to the reader. Explain what the variables are. Include as much information as you can about who collected the data, how they collected the data, where they collected the data, when they collected the data, why they collected the data, and the source of the data (ex: Vassar College, NOAA, Snapshot Day, Cary Institute), and any other relevant information. <i>Explain why a scientist might study these variables.</i>
<b>4. Data Representations (Graphs)*</b>	Your team will need to <i>create</i> at least one graph or chart of the data. Hand-drawn graphs are acceptable if they are neat and legible. Remember to label your axes and include a graph title. <i>If you selected a large dataset, your representation only needs to include the variables that are relevant to your investigation.</i>
<b>5. Data Trends or Comparisons*</b>  (1-2 paragraphs; 2-3 sentences for Junior Data Jam)	<p>Describe the trend(s) or comparison(s) in the dataset(s) you used for your project. In other words, <i>What does the graph look like?</i> You are encouraged to use basic descriptive statistics when appropriate (ex: average, range, standard deviation). Describe and address variability, if applicable. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The average annual blue crab population increased over time from 158 to 2,703 crabs/m<sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>• Despite the overall increase in pearly mussels from 1995-2010, the mussel population sharply dropped in 2003.</li> <li>• The precipitation in Poughkeepsie was variable from 1997-2012.</li> <li>• Fish populations were higher in Beacon than at Norrie Point in 2008.</li> <li>• There appeared to be no clear correlation between phosphorous and salinity levels from 1990-2000.</li> </ul> <p>If you used two datasets for a comparison, how were the data similar? How were they different?</p>

<p><b>6. Data Interpretation (Explanation)*</b></p> <p>(1-3 paragraphs, 1-3 sentences for Junior Data Jam)</p>	<p>Use reasoning and what you know about the topic to explain the trend(s) or comparison(s) you discovered. In other words: <i>Why do you think the graph looks the way it does? Why do you think your trend happened? Why is your finding interesting and important? Are your results expected or surprising? What environmental processes might be causing what you discovered?</i></p> <p>Make sure to support your explanation with evidence and be consistent with current scientific ideas.</p>
<p><b>7. New Questions and Hypotheses</b></p> <p>(1 paragraph)</p>	<p>Remember -- for your creative piece, your job is just to describe the data. However, when you look at data closely, you might start asking <i>more</i> questions that you can't answer without more research, such as 'Why did the numbers go down in 2003?' Or, 'What's happening in Beacon to make the site so different from others?' The report is your place to ask 'Why?' and 'What's up with that?' Then brainstorm some hypotheses. Hypotheses are the explanations your brain comes up with when you ask that 'Why?' question. You start thinking 'Maybe...' That 'maybe' is your hypothesis. Be sure to give at least two new ideas (hypotheses and/or questions) about future scientific research that could be done on this topic.</p>
<p><b>8. Written Explanation of Creative Project*</b></p> <p>(2-5 sentences)</p>	<p>Explain why you chose your creative method and what message you hope audience members will take away from your project. For example, "We believe the best way to help a general audience relate to and understand our findings is to create a fun, engaging, educational video. We hope that people who watch our video will realize that salt levels in the Hudson River strongly affect where different fish species can live." If you create an abstract visual art piece like a sculpture you may need a longer description here.</p>
<p><b>9. Brief Reflection on Data Jam</b></p> <p>(2-5 sentences)</p>	<p>Let us know what you thought about your Data Jam experience. You might consider the following questions: Was Data Jam challenging or easy? What was the hardest part? What was the most fun part? What did you learn from Data Jam? How would you change Data Jam if you had the chance? Do you think there is a way to share your project with an audience outside of Data Jam?</p>
<p><b>10. Reference List*</b></p>	<p>Include <b>at least two references</b> from outside of the Metadata document (e.g., data source, graph or table source, and anything used to explain the data interpretation). You can use any standard citation form (APA, MLA, etc.) <i>For Junior Data Jam, participants only</i></p>

	<i>need to cite the source of their chosen data set (i.e., HRECOS).</i>
<b>11. Link to Creative Project (if applicable)*</b>	If you upload your creative project to YouTube, make sure you include a link for judges! Videos should be no more than 5 minutes long.

## Submitting Your Project

The written report and creative project must be submitted electronically by 11:59pm EST on Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Advisors are responsible for submitting all projects in their Google Drive folder. Advisors will upload projects to the Drive folder and fill out a “Student Information” sheet with individual and group information. Each school will have their own folder. The report and creative project must be uploaded as a single PDF and videos must be uploaded onto YouTube. *All video links must be included in the report, and note that they must be 5 minutes or less. Please check the sharing settings on videos to ensure we can view them.*

Students’ projects will only be judged if they contain both a report AND a creative component. Please pre-screen your students’ work and only submit complete projects. See notes below about YouTube video requirements.\* Please only submit complete projects.

Instructions to advisors for uploading projects:

1. Check email after registration: A personal Google Drive folder link and a Consent Form link will be shared with you by the Cary Education team.
2. Notify us (vantassellr@caryinstitute.org) once all participating student consent forms have been submitted electronically.
3. Please vet your students' projects to be sure they address the requirements outlined in the rubric. We are lucky to have a wonderful pool of judges who are very excited to volunteer their time reviewing projects that have been completed thoughtfully and thoroughly.
4. Drag and drop or Save student projects to your folder. Note: Please use the file name generated in the “Student Information” Google Sheet in your folder. The spreadsheet will automatically generate the proper title in this format: "Project Title\_Level of Dataset\_School Name.pdf" Here is an example of a proper file name: *Mussels on the Move\_Level 1\_Cary Middle School.pdf*

\*All videos must be submitted as a YouTube link, and the video must be "unlisted" so that judges can view it with permission. Please ensure that your students' YouTube links are included in their reports. Videos that exceed 5 minutes in length will be disqualified.



Please note: The use of copyrighted music in project videos may result in YouTube's removal of these videos from their website. Check out [Free Music Archive](#) and other free music websites for tunes available through Creative Commons. If students want to use copyrighted music on YouTube, they must first obtain permission from the original creator. Projects that contain copyrighted material will not be judged.

## How Projects will be Judged

Judging will take place **online**.

A panel of judges, including scientists, artists, and teachers will evaluate each project based on the following criteria:

- Scientific Merit (Report) – 40 points (23 points for Junior Data Jam)
- Creativity in Communicating Data – 32 points

Please refer to the judging rubrics (available in the [Important Documents](#) page) for details on how projects will be scored.

## Announcing Winners

We will announce the winning teams at the Hudson Data Jam Awards Ceremony & Celebration virtually on Thursday, April 3, 2025. Students do not need to be present at the Ceremony to win, but are encouraged to attend! We will also post the winners on the Hudson Data Jam Facebook page and the Hudson Data Jam Project Gallery shortly after the competition.

## Prizes

Prizes will be awarded separately for elementary, middle, and high school students.

Hudson Data Jam: Middle school and high school age groups each will include...

- Best I project (\$400)
- Level 1 winner (\$200)
- Level 2 winner (\$200)
- Level 3 winner (\$200)

Junior Data Jam (see description below): Elementary school age group will include...

- Best overall project (\$200)
- Level 1 winner (\$100)
- Level 2 winner (\$100)
- Level 3 winner (\$100)

There will also be Honorable Mentions and various other special prizes. Prize categories are subject to change depending on participation in different categories.

## Rules & Regulations

### **Eligibility**

The Hudson Data Jam Competition is open to all current middle and high school students (grades 6-12). The Junior Data Jam is open to elementary school students (grades 4-5).

### **Previous Entrants**

Previous entrants are encouraged to compete again in the Hudson Data Jam Competition, as long as they meet the above student eligibility requirements. Students are welcome to use the same dataset(s) they used in previous years; however, they must create a new project for the competition. Previously entered projects are ineligible.

### **Team Advisors**

Participation in the Hudson Data Jam Competition and Junior Data Jam requires coordination by a responsible adult who agrees to facilitate and validate student participation. Educators (grades 4-12) of *all* subject areas are encouraged to get their students involved. Adult advisors can be teachers, parents, guardians, or other mentors.

### **Registration Period**

Registration for the Hudson Data Jam Competition is required, and due no later than January 17, 2025.

### **Project Entry Period**

Project entries for the Hudson Data Jam Competition are due online by 11:59 PM EST on February 26, 2025.

### **Student Privacy**

Student privacy is important to us. All adult team advisors will receive parental/guardian consent forms for permission of student participation and the release of limited personally identifiable student information (i.e., student name, grade level and gender, school name, hometown, photographs, video or audio files of the student, and project entry). **These consent forms should be completed and signed for each participating student and returned to the student's team advisor. A unique link to a Google form will be provided to each advisor to collect consents from students' families.** Consent forms are due February 6, 2025.

### **Publicity & Rights**

By entering a project into the Hudson Data Jam Competition, the project creator(s), parent(s)/guardian(s), and the team advisor grant to the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies world-wide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license to use all materials submitted by the student teams into the Hudson Data Jam Competition for publicity and educational purposes.

Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies may post information about the Hudson Data Jam Competition in the Cary newsletter, on the Cary website, in the Cary annual report, in the local newspapers, and on the Cary and Hudson Data Jam Competition Facebook pages. Project entries may be published without compensation through any or all of the above sources in whole or in part. Submitting a project entry does not guarantee it will be publicized. We will not publicize any student information without prior parental/guardian consent. Anonymized student project submissions may also be used for educational purposes as part of Cary Institute education programming.

## Plagiarism

Project entries cannot include plagiarized work. Plagiarism is considered the deliberate copying of someone else's thoughts, ideas, expressions, words, artistic expressions, or scientific work without formally acknowledging its source. Plagiarism includes project entries that are comprised substantially of someone else's work, copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit, the failure to put quotation marks around unmodified content that was copied from an outside source, and the use of photos, graphs, charts, or other images without acknowledging their source. Project entries that include plagiarized content will be eliminated from the competition. We recommend teams working together to help each other avoid plagiarism. The best way to ensure your work is original is to be creative!

**This competition requires students to use information that is not their own, and thus merits increased diligence to proper source acknowledgement.** Students will use data (scientific work) collected by a group of researchers. Students are also welcome to use any of the images provided on the "Datasets" page in their project entries. In order to avoid plagiarism, students should be sure to properly cite all sources of information for content that isn't their own original work. This includes noting the data source and the sources of any images copied or modified.

## Citations

All project entries must have a complete reference list of all resources used. Any standard citation form is permissible (APA, MLA, etc.), but the same format should be used for all citations for a given project entry.

## Additional Disclaimers

1. It is the responsibility of each participant and team advisor to obtain and read these rules and regulations for the Hudson Data Jam Competition.
2. Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies will not be responsible for any claims, costs, liabilities, damages, expenses, or losses arising from 1) Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies' use of project entries, 2) the participants' involvement in the competition, 3) technical failures of any kind, including, but not limited to, computer viruses or equipment malfunctions, 4) travel to and from the teacher workshops, Data Jam Expo, and other related activities, 5) the use of prizes, and 6) any events outside Cary Institute of Ecosystems Studies' reasonable control.
3. Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies reserves the right to reject any project entry for any reason and at any time, at its own discretion.
4. Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies may refuse to award a prize if a winning participant does not follow proper registration and project entry procedures, or these rules and regulations.
5. Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies is not responsible for any technical failures that may affect participation in the Hudson Data Jam Competition.

## [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

***Are Cary Institute educators available to help in teachers' classrooms?***

Depending on our availability, we may be able to visit your classroom to help with projects, either virtually or in person depending on locality. To increase your chances of securing a classroom visit, please register by Friday, November 15, 2024.

Please also check out our [recorded webinars](#) that provide guidance on topics such as basic data analysis, making a creative project, and how to support your students' Data Jam process.

### ***What help is available from Cary Institute educators for students directly?***

Cary Institute educators are delighted to answer any questions students have via email ([caryeducation@caryinstitute.org](mailto:caryeducation@caryinstitute.org)), including questions about the data. In many cases we are able to send specific questions about the data directly to the researchers who collected the data.

We are also offering **1:1 Virtual support sessions** January 27 - February 26. Advisors are welcome to join their students during these sessions, but we expect students to play a leading role in asking questions and responding to feedback about their projects. Advisors can book a time for support as well! Appointments are available for 15-minute sessions by appointment. [Appointments can be booked at this link.](#) **We will send a reminder email to advisors in January when students can sign up for these sessions.**

We also recommend checking out the following videos as a way to learn about Data Jam and get inspiration:

- [How to Data Jam](#)
- [A Quest for Evidence](#)
- A great example of a project that is creative and fun and effectively frames the story of the data in an engaging short film: [River Wars](#)
- Finally, check out Data Jam projects on Cary Institute's [YouTube playlist](#) as well as in our [Project Gallery](#).

### ***Can a student register and participate independently of their teacher or class?***

Yes. Any elementary (grades 4-5), middle, or high school student or student individual or team is eligible to participate. A student does not have to register through their teacher. They do, however, need to have an adult represent them or their team as an advisor. This can be a parent, guardian, or another trusted adult.

### ***What happened to the Family Data Jam category?***

For the 2021-22 Data Jam, we added a new category - Junior Data Jam - for elementary school students in grades 4-5 to replace Family Data Jam. While Family Data Jam engaged a small number of participants in 2020, participation in 2021 suggested that a new category for younger students would attract more interest.

### ***What do the different dataset levels mean?***

The simple answer is this:

- Level 1= Easy,
- Level 2= Moderate
- Level 3= Challenging

Dataset levels are derived by looking at the number of variables in the dataset and by the sheer amount of data collected. Elementary students will most likely work with Level 1 datasets. Most middle schoolers will be successful with a Level 1 or 2 dataset, and the appropriate level for high schoolers depends on their data experience and determination. Drop us a line if you need help selecting an appropriate dataset.

### ***Why do projects need to be submitted online?***

All projects must be submitted online because judging for merit prizes takes place online. This means that all of the files submitted online must clearly show the project in its entirety because that is how the judges will see it. If you create a 3-D object, send us lots of photos so we can see it from all angles (or even submit a video with it!).

### ***How should a team present their creative data display digitally so they can submit it online?***

It's up to students to determine the best way to present their project for online viewing. Most participants choose to either photograph or video record their work. Participants usually take photographs of their comic strips, dioramas, sculptures, and paintings, or record a YouTube video with a quick narration describing their project. Students also record YouTube videos of their choreographed dances, puppet shows, movies, original songs, and stop-motion videos.

Remember, the judges will be determining prize winners based on what you upload online, so be sure that they include a narrative description of pieces as needed. Take a look at our 2014-2024 Winning [Project Gallery](#) for ideas about how to display projects digitally.

### ***When is the next virtual Data Jam workshop for teachers?***

Visit our "[Workshops](#)" page to check our past webinars, new postings for future workshops, or email your name to [caryeducation@caryinstitute.org](mailto:caryeducation@caryinstitute.org) to sign up to receive email updates through our Ecosystem Teaching Newsletter. These workshops are optional, but highly recommended for new Data Jam teachers. Additionally, we encourage you to join our [Data Jam Network Facebook group](#), where we will be posting opportunities for webinars geared towards students and instructors.

### **Contact**

Please contact the Cary Institute education team if you have any questions about the project or competition at [caryeducation@caryinstitute.org](mailto:caryeducation@caryinstitute.org)

BEST OF LUCK AND HAVE FUN!