The Perse Cambridge Aristotelian Award for Research

Year 9 Research Essay Competition

Purpose of the competition

This competition has been set up to promote independent study skills in Year 9 pupils while simultaneously providing an avenue to explore super-curricular interests in the arts, humanities and sciences. This competition is split into two categories (arts/humanities and sciences). Prizes are awarded to winners in each half of the competition.

Eligibility

This competition is open to all students in Year 9 (or equivalent).

How are the winners chosen?

Essays will be judged based on the quality of the essay. The best essays will critically discuss both sides of the argument (where applicable) before reaching a conclusion. They will have logical and coherent arguments and refer to a wide range of sources.

The essays will be marked by a team at The Perse School, Cambridge. Personal information (school, name, etc.) will be removed from the essay submission before the essay is passed on to the marking team to safeguard the integrity of the competition.

Prizes

The winner of each category will receive a prize of £70. There will also be eight 'Highly Commended' prizes (four for each category). These prizes will be worth £20 each. Winners will be announced by the end of April 2027.

High quality submissions may be published on The Perse School's website. Students selected for this will be emailed in May 2027.

Essay questions

Students should answer one question from one of the categories.

Arts/Humanities

1. Has religion become less important in modern society?
2. Which offers greater advantages: fluency in one additional language or basic proficiency in several?
3. Should the government subsidise amateur dramatics?
4. What is the most significant impact of WW1 still evident today?
5. Is there ever a just war?

Sciences

1. Antimicrobial resistance is becoming an increasing threat to modern science: how should we respond?
2. How have drugs such as Ozempic changed our understanding of health?
3. Is investment in nuclear fission justified?
4. How effectively can AI systems detect and prevent their own errors?
5. Has computational progress slowed, or have we changed the way we measure development?

Essay guidelines

1. The competition is divided into two categories: arts/humanities and sciences. There will be prizes available for the winner and four Highly Commended entries in each category.

2. Each participant can only submit one essay. This should be submitted as a **pdf**.

3. Entries must be written in English and in a formal manner. Choose a sensible font and use it consistently.

4. Entries should have a minimum of 800 words and a maximum of 1,500. The bibliography, footnotes and any references to sources within the essay will not be included.

5. Please do not include your name on your entry pdf as we will anonymise the entries for marking purposes.

6. Sources: There is no minimum for the number of sources cited but we strongly recommend that you cite to at least five. All sources should be acknowledged where used within the essay *and* in a bibliography/reference list at the end of the essay. (**See also Rules 11: Plagiarism and 12: Use of AI**)

7. The deadline for submission is 5pm GMT on **Friday 15th January 2027**.

8. Independent schools and international schools may submit a maximum of four entries overall. This **does not** need to be limited to 'two entries per category.' State schools are allowed unlimited entries.

9. As one of the main aims of the competition is to promote independent study and research, the body of the essay should not be on a topic studied in school but rather a genuine interest of the participant, researched outside of school.

10. Submissions should be the sole work of the applicant – friends, family and teachers are not permitted to help with the writing of the essay.

11. Plagiarism is expressly forbidden. If any plagiarism is detected in the submission, then the participant will be immediately disqualified from the competition.

12. The use of AI to write all or part of the response is forbidden. (See Rule 11: Plagiarism). If AI is used to simplify online resources, the participant should acknowledge this in their bibliography by giving the URL of the AI and the questions which were asked. **All information within the essay should be rewritten in the participant's own words.**

Submitting your Entry

Students should upload their essays via the online form at Year 9 - Aristotelian Award - Perse Research or use the QR code on the poster.

The deadline for submission is **5pm GMT on Friday 15th January 2027**. Unfortunately, we may not be able to accept submissions after this time.

We hope to post on our website and social media a copy of the best submissions and a photo of those students. Therefore, when you submit your entry, you will be asked whether you give permission for your submission to be posted on the school's website/social media, and for a photo of you to be used.

Points of contact

Please email researchessay@perse.co.uk with any questions or queries regarding this competition.

PerseResearch