



World Class Schools Quality Mark

Essay writing competition

As an accredited World Class School, your students automatically qualify for our annual WCSQM Essay Writing Competition.

The competition will be judged by Dr. Philip Knox, University Lecturer in Medieval Literature, Faculty of English, Cambridge University. He is one of the editors of *New Medieval Literatures*, an annual of work on medieval textual cultures. He is the author of [Medieval Thought Experiments: Poetry, Hypothesis, and Experience in the European Middle Ages](#). He was state educated in Northern Ireland.



The award

There will be one winner and honourable mentions, who will receive the WCSQM Essay Award and commemorations at our Awards Ceremony on Friday 13th December 2019, at Lady Mitchell Hall, Cambridge University. The hall has hosted lectures from many famous people, for example Stephen Hawking, and Brian Cox. Yoko Ono and John Lennon's first public concert was held there in 1969. In addition, part of the students' prize will be an invitation to Cambridge University for a tour with Philip personally. Winning essays will be published on the WCSQM website, with winning students and schools named in press releases.

The challenge

Philip says, 'My own research focuses on the literature and culture of the medieval period, and I've always been interested in how changes in culture and society come about. Human societies are always changing, but sometimes those changes happen more quickly, and have larger effects. I think that today we are living through a period of change, and we are asking new questions about how, if at all, we as individuals can affect those changes. Thinking about history might be able to help us with these questions, although the present-day is offering new challenges.'

In a speech to the United Nations last year, the Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, then aged 15, said that, 'We can't change the world by playing by the rules.'

Does breaking the rules change the world?

The terms

The process you will need to follow to win is as follows:

- The competition is open to all students at your school **studying in years 4-5, 9-10** academic year 2019-20.
- The maximum length of each submission is **2,500 words**
- Submitted essays should **not** include diagrams or graphics
- Essays must be submitted in soft copy A4 portrait, using black, Helvetica, 12-point font in PDF or MS Word format

A maximum of three submissions per school will be accepted, and must be submitted **by 18th October 2019**.

- Essays should be submitted in a **single** email (with the three essays attached) to essays@worldclass-schools.org - i.e. one email per participating school
- The covering email should **confirm** that these essays have been independently authored by the students
- Late submissions will **not** be accepted
- WCSQM will work with Phil and a World Class school to select the winner and honourable mentions (with Phil's decision being final) with schools and students informed of the short-list **by 11th November**
- The authors of the short-listed essays will then be invited to attend the Awards Ceremony on 13th December where Phil will announce the overall competition winner and award the honourable mentions.

We suggest that

- You run an internal competition for your **Year 4 and 5 or 9 and 10** students
- A nominated judge within your school selects the best three for submission to WCSQM.

The competition is a fantastic summer holiday project.

If you or your students require further information on the competition terms or process, please feel free to contact WCSQM at essays@worldclass-schools.org