



## *Libra Essay Prize 2022*

At Libra Education we are excited to see our essay writing competition growing exponentially every year, reaching more and more schools around the globe. This time we have received an overwhelming number of entries of exceedingly good quality from various countries, and while some topics have proven to be very popular (namely Covid-19, genetics and renewable resources), several essays have interestingly discussed rather unusual subjects. From aeronautics to zoology, we have not read a single piece of work that may be deemed boring nor irrelevant, so if you took part in this year's competition, allow us to congratulate you on your initiative, creativity and hard work.

All the ideas presented are perfectly valid in their own right, which made our job of selecting the winners extremely challenging. Ultimately, we had to adjust our criteria to the highest standards possible and seek perfection in every area. So please do not feel disheartened if you did not win this time as competition has been truly fierce.

### **The three winners of the Libra Essay Prize 2022 are:**

**1st Prize: Anna - Cheltenham Ladies College - Politics**

**2nd Prize: Lily - Cheltenham Ladies College - Biology**

**3rd Prize: Kate - Sutton Grammar School – English**

And the following candidates have been awarded a special mention as part of the best 10, for which we would like to present you with a certificate of achievement that holds proof of your outstanding research and dedication.

Syeda - The Sydney Russell School - English

Selene - The Sydney Russell School - Geography

Lily - Berkhamsted School - Biology

Azra - Cheltenham Ladies College - Architecture

Gaazal - The Henrietta Barnett School - Sociology

Rachel - St Dominic's Sixth Form College - Biology

Isabel - Newstead Wood School - Psychology

Unfortunately, due to the high volume of participants, we are unable to provide personalised feedback. However, we would like to offer some advice that may help you to self-evaluate your work and identify areas for improvement.

### *Layout*

Whenever you write a text, you must always make sure to think of your reader; make it easy for them to navigate your ideas or they will get lost in an ocean of heavily condensed words. A text that is not properly justified, uses unappealing fonts, contains extremely long paragraphs or has no space between the lines becomes tiresome and creates a negative effect on the reader. Writing is a craft and general appearance plays its part as well.

### *Format*

Sadly, quite a few entries were rejected because they were not in the correct format. When taking part in a competition, it is important to read the instructions and regulations very carefully. Do not share links for the judges to download your work nor use word-processing programmes that look unprofessional. It is in your personal interest to make the judging panel's job as easy as possible.

### *Register*

An essay is a formal text, which means contractions, most phrasal verbs, colloquial words and idioms are out of place here. Your text should be adequate for an academic setting.

### *Punctuation*

Its importance is often underestimated, which presents consequences such as lengthy sentences, unclear ideas, subjects separated from their verbs, non-defining relative clauses not properly punctuated or too many short sentences poorly linked (giving the impression we are in front of a telegram and not an essay).

### *Coherence and cohesion*

If the ideas within a text are well structured and logically connected, you will find that it kind of "flows" nicely. The reader is then able to move from a concept to the next without the need to go back and revise a point to make sure they haven't lost the thread of the argument. Unfortunately, we found a few contradicting viewpoints, isolated sentences, irrelevancies, repetitions and entangled explanations. As mentioned before, always make sure you are writing for somebody else, not yourself. Make it easy for the reader to understand what you are trying to express without sacrificing vocabulary range, depth of analysis and complexity. A final note on this point: a complex topic does not mean it has to be explained in a difficult way; after all, you want your idea to be understood, not to puzzle your audience.

### *Spelling*

There is not much to say here except for: always have your text proof-read. We all make spelling mistakes, so please make sure your text is free from these easily avoidable stains before submitting it.



Congratulations to all! Regardless of the outcome, you have devoted valuable time to this exciting project, you've made your voice heard, stood by your beliefs and, hopefully, learned from the experience, so nobody can leave empty-handed.

Never stop reading. Never stop writing.