

DID YOU KNOW?

HUMMINGBIRDS SEE COLOURS THAT HUMANS CANNOT

According to research by Princeton and UBC Zoologists, hummingbirds see a range of combination of colours involving UV that humans cannot. Due to a fourth retinal colour cone, they can detect ultraviolet light. This is opposed to the three types of colour-sensitive cones that humans have in their eyes which are attuned to red, blue, and green light.

While humans are only able to detect only one kind of nonspectral colour – purple – birds can potentially see up to five different types. These are purple, ultraviolet and red, ultraviolet and green, ultraviolet and yellow, and ultraviolet and purple. Although hummingbirds can detect nonspectral colours, experts have admitted that it is impossible to really know how the birds themselves perceive them.

A research team from Princeton, UBC, Harvard, the University of Maryland and RMBL analysed a data set of 3,316 feather and plant colours. They found that birds likely perceive many of these colours as nonspectral, while we do not. Additionally, the researchers emphasised that nonspectral colours are not necessarily special relative to other colours.

"Tetrachromacy — having four colour cone types — evolved in early vertebrates," said Mary Caswell Stoddard, an assistant professor at Princeton University. "We think the ability to perceive many nonspectral colours is not just a feat of hummingbirds but a widespread feature of animal colour vision."



Five international writing competitions for high school students

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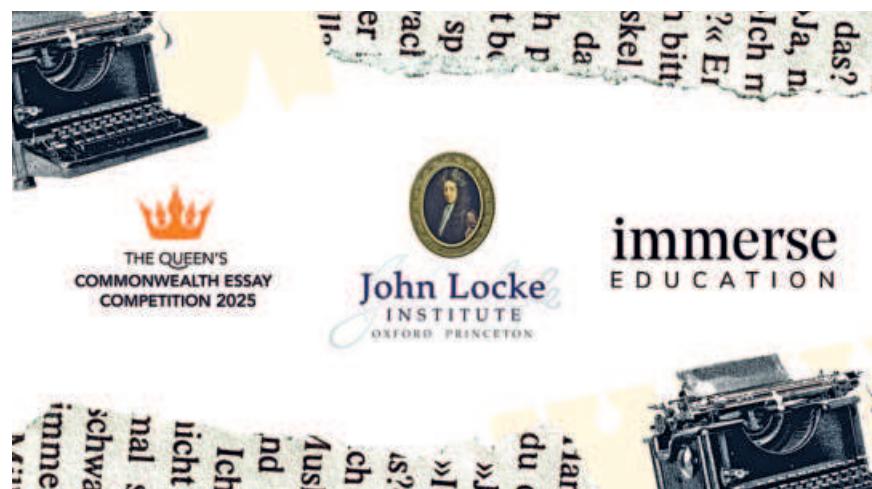
Writing competitions can serve as an excellent stage for young writers looking to platform their creativity, acquire new skills, and garner hands-on experience. In this article, we'll dig into five prestigious international writing competitions that welcome high school students from around the globe.

The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition

The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition is the world's oldest international school writing contest, inviting students from across all Commonwealth countries to share their ideas on global themes such as sustainability, community, and cultural identity. Open to participants aged under 18, it features two categories — Senior (14 to 18 years) and Junior (under 14) — with separate prompts for each. Participants are expected to interpret these prompts through their own lens, crafting pieces that blend originality with awareness.

Young Writers Award

The Young Writers Awards, organised by Bennington College, is open to high school students worldwide from grades 9 to 12. Participants may submit one entry in poetry, fiction, or nonfiction categories. One-act plays are also accepted but must not exceed 30 minutes in length. There is no specified theme for submissions in any of the categories.



John Locke Essay Competition

Hosted by the John Locke Institute, this event invites high school students from around the world to submit essays in categories including philosophy, politics, economics, history, law, psychology, and theology. Entrants must be 18 years of age by the end of June in the competition year. The competition values clarity of thought, logical reasoning, and originality of argument. A strong entry typically blends academic rigour with a personal voice, showing that the writer can engage independently with complex ideas.

The Adroit Prizes for Poetry and Prose

This competition is open internationally to high school and undergraduate students

and invites submissions in both prose and poetry categories. Contestants may submit multiple entries in each category as well as multiple submissions for the same category. Prose entries may include short stories that explore identity, loss, or belonging, while poetry can range from lyrical and abstract to narrative and confessional.

Immerse Education Essay Competition

Immerse Education Essay Competition invites ambitious young writers aged 13 to 18 from across the globe to submit academic essays on a topic of their choice from a curated list of subject questions or an open prompt. Participants may choose from a range of subject-specific questions, and are expected to write essays

that display both understanding and independent thought. It is essential that you are able to cite peer-reviewed sources accurately.

Things to keep in mind

Before you decide to work on a submission, it is crucial to read all the guidelines thoroughly of the specific competition you are choosing to enter. For instance, submissions are often required to be sponsored or reviewed by a high school teacher or academic referee. Also, make sure to look through the winning essays from previous years to grasp a clear understanding of the tone and quality of writing expected.

Other than that, it is advisable to proofread your essay multiple times. Refrain from using AI to generate ideas or paraphrasing existing work without proper attribution, as such practices will be flagged as plagiarism and result in disqualification.

The rewards of these competitions commonly involve monetary prizes, certificates, or scholarships to summer programmes conducted under the given institution. Top entries are often published, showcased on official platforms, or reviewed by esteemed writers and academics. Writing competitions are excellent opportunities to develop essential skills such as research, critical thinking, and citation, which you will find greatly useful in future endeavours. Even if you don't manage to win, the learning curve is definitely worth the effort.

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