

Libra Essay Prize Guidance



LIBRA EDUCATION



The Libra Essay Prize

An annual essay prize for all students in years 12 & 13 looking to prepare for university.



Land



Morality



Space



Eternity



Society



Spirit



- Pick one essay title from the options above.
- Write an essay of between 1,000 – 2,000 words.
- Submit your essay to info@libraeducation.co.uk with your name, year group, and school.

- **1st place – £250**
- **2nd place – £100**
- **3rd place – £50**



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Submitting your Essay

The deadline for submission is the 26th June 2020, winners will be announced the 3rd July 2020.

All winning essays will be published on our website. For further questions, please contact info@libraeducation.co.uk

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- *Essay-writing tips;*
- *Updates on the Libra Essay prize; and*
- *University Application Guidance*

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Research the topic to give an informed and considered opinion.

1. Create a Reading list
 - Choose a few texts that relate to the topic(s)
 - These can be a range of literature (fiction: novels, plays etc. or nonfiction: articles, biographies etc.)
 - Don't have to read everything, can be just a chapter
 - Be realistic in your choice of what to read in the time you have
2. Engage critically with the text
 - Read and reread key sections
 - Take detailed notes
 - Consider your own opinion in relation to the text
3. Develop your Argument
 - Begin planning using bullet points
 - Identify your key points
 - Order your points to create a "flowing" argument that has a logical sequence from point-to-point

Our Top Tip

Most people think of research, planning and writing as 3 separate and sequential stages.

In reality, the best essays are ones that inspire reflection in the writer – causing them to revisit their research or revise their plan.

Figure out what your opinion really is and why. Don't be afraid to revise your plan.



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Structure your Essay for Purpose and Direction

The classic structure is as follows:

1. Introduction

- A paragraph summary outlining the topic of discussion for your essay including the main question that you intend to answer.

2. Body paragraphs

- A paragraph detailing a single key point and analysing how it is relevant to your topic.
- This should state your own critical opinion and provide evidence
- The number of body paragraphs depends on the length of the essay (generally x3 / x6 / x9 etc.)

3. Conclusion

- A paragraph summarising the key arguments you have discussed, how they answer your main question and why.

Our Top Tip

The essay structure does not need to be fancy - it exists to give the reader a sense of direction and purpose.

The reader should be able to identify the key point of each of your paragraphs clearly.

The reader should feel that you are “going somewhere” with your analysis – that you will arrive at a logical conclusion.



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Reference Any and All Evidence you Use

Referencing your evidence strengthens your argument as it demonstrates that other academics also adhere to your reasoning. **Failure to reference evidence can also be viewed as plagiarism and disqualify your writing.**

There are a variety of referencing styles so please check the referencing style used by your institution. The most commonly used referencing style in UK universities is the Harvard Referencing style as seen below.

Mitchell, J.A., Thomson, M. and Coyne, R.P. (2017) *A guide to citation. E-book library* [online]. Available at: <https://www.mendeley.com/reference-management/reference-manager> (Accessed: 10 September 2016)

The referencing example above is for an ebook. Different forms of literature (novels, articles, plays) all have a slightly different format required. Check the format required for the reference online.

Each reference is then placed on the final page of the essay in alphabetical order, called the bibliography.

Our Top Tip

Update your bibliography with the details of your references as soon as you find them or use them in the essay.

This will save you time while writing and ensure you get into accurate referencing habits.

Check the referencing style used by your institution.



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Space



What are some of the big questions about “Space”?

Should we explore?

Are we running out?

Who owns it?

How much is it worth?

Land



What are some of the big questions about “Land”?

Is pollution the largest issue we face today?

Does nature have rights?

Will Climate Change alter the lives of future generations?

Society



What are some of the big questions about “Society”?

Does technology bring us together or apart?

What does homelessness imply of our society?

Do you identify yourself by your beliefs or your background?

Essay Examples

English

- What stands out to you?
- What do you like about this example?

'Fiction is like a spider's web, attached ever so lightly perhaps, but still attached to life at all four corners.'

Explore in relation to two contemporary novelists of either the nineteenth or twentieth centuries.

Woolf paradoxically presents the ideal of fiction as a carefully crafted web of lies that reveals fundamental truths of the human condition. Both 19th century novelists Charles Dickens and George Eliot sought to realistically portray Victorian society in an urban and a rural environment respectively. While the contrast between Dickens' cartoonish realism and Eliot's high realism appears to suggest that Dickens veiled his fiction more effectively, both approaches were ultimately equally successful examples of the Woolfian ideal.

Fiction, Woolf asserts, derives its beauty from its ethereal, almost transcendental appearance. But, 'like a spider's web',¹ it collapses if not attached to reality. To me, this means that writers must

¹ Virginia Woolf. *A Room of One's Own*. p.41.

Essay Examples

Biology

- What stands out to you?
- What do you like about this example?

How do we benefit from the microorganisms that live within us?

In 1683 a Dutchman, Antonie van Leeuwenhoek, having developed microscopes many times more powerful than any before, examined the white matter from his teeth and observed, 'the number of animals in the scruff of a man's teeth are so many that I believe they exceed the number of men in a kingdom.' After his death in 1723, no other scientists were able to see these 'animalcules' without the impressive magnification unique to Leeuwenhoek's microscopes (bequeathed to, and promptly lost by, the Royal Society) leaving his discovery to be dismissed for almost 150 years^{2,3}. Microbes only reclaimed the scientific spotlight 1860s when Louis Pasteur proved they could cause disease. However, this was the genesis of 'germ theory,' which indiscriminately cast all our resident bacteria as malicious invaders, and ensured that the microorganisms living within our bodies became known only as enemies to our health. Since then, modern medicine has focused on the war against microbes - through sanitation, antiseptics, and the miraculous development of antibiotics. The idea that these supposed "enemies" could actually be good for us only emerged this century, gaining prominence when the Human Microbiome Project in 2007 - a 5 year program to sequence the genomes of microbial populations of 300 healthy Americans - helped to unveil the myriad ways our resident bacteria benefit us.

Ironically, the huge benefits of the microorganisms within us are now only being understood as a result of the consequences arising from their destruction. Nobel laureate Barry Marshal once said "I never killed anyone by giving them antibiotics but I know of plenty who died when they didn't get 'em." However, it is time to challenge the use of antibiotics as a catch-all cure, in order to protect our endangered microbiota. We must embrace our natural defenders in order to protect ourselves from the increasingly prevalent 'Modern Plagues,' and, as we approach a post-antibiotic era, more research is needed to unleash the full potential from the microorganisms living within us.

Bibliography

1. BLASER, M. J. (2015). *Missing microbes: how killing bacteria creates modern plagues*.