

2020 READING SCHOOL / READING FOUNDATION McILROY ESSAY COMPETITION

To win the £250 cash prize, take the challenge and write an essay with the title:

How can a community come together and turn a difficult circumstance into a positive experience?

Objectives and criteria:

This competition aims to reward one essay written by a Reading School student which, in the opinion of the judging panels, displays the best combination of:

- **Flair** for expressing complex ideas about a subject in simple terms.
- A logical and well-developed **argument**: it must have a starting idea, develop over a series of topic paragraphs, and reach some kind of clear resolution.
- Evidence of **verve**: a spirit of enthusiasm for the subject and the task, and the process of writing about them.
- **Passion** for sharing a love and understanding of the subject in question.
- **Ingenuity** in coming up with exciting and original ways to tackle matters of current affairs and general knowledge.

Who can enter:

Any student, from any Year group, who is studying at Reading School during the 2019 - 2020 academic session can enter.

How students enter the competition:

You have the opportunity to be inspired by the question: ***“How can a community come together and turn a difficult circumstance into a positive experience?”*** and apply to it anything you feel is of value which you’ve learned in your study of an academic subject, pursuit of sport, enjoyment of a personal hobby, or just general knowledge and interest in current affairs.

Have a think: what kind of community are you interested in writing about? Your family, street, tutor group, school, sports club, faith-based or artistic community? Or a community you have learned about or watched even though you’re not directly involved? What are the most pressing and difficult circumstances our society faces in 2020? How has what you have learned and experienced in 2020, both in and out of school, prepared you to make a positive difference to the world around you? Which particular causes or places or ideas motivate you with examples of positive action? Are you going to explore how communities can make a positive difference in practical, political or philosophical terms?

Essays must be no fewer than 1,000 and no more than 2,000 words long. They must be word processed and saved as a Microsoft Word document and feature a specific word count (if entrants cannot access Microsoft Word they must contact rbaldock@reading-school.co.uk for more advice on how to submit an essay.)

Entrants must email their submissions to MCILROY2020@READING-SCHOOL.CO.UK

This is the only way essays can be entered for the competition. The deadline is 8.20am on Monday 15th September 2020.

Judging process:

All submissions will be marked anonymously to guarantee impartiality.

A panel of subject experts and teaching staff is responsible for the initial judging process. Depending on the number and quality of the submissions, that panel will then submit a short-list of nominated essays to go forward to a final judging group. The final judging panel will then assess the nominated essays to choose the overall winner.

The judges' decisions are final and not negotiable. The judging process will be subjective and based on collective opinions regarding rank order. No 'marks' will be made on, or awarded to, any essay, and all submissions will be retained by the School for further use. Entrants should not expect a specific personalised response to their submission.

Regulations:

Entrants must write their submissions entirely independently. No consultation with, or involvement of, staff at the school is permitted.

All use of research and academic sources and materials must be correctly referenced and credited in a bibliography (*use the Harvard referencing guide available on the LRC Sharepoint page*). Plagiarism of any kind will result in disqualification.

For additional guidance, please contact Mr Baldock at rbaldock@reading-school.co.uk. **No other member of staff will be able to offer advice on how to enter.**

Failure to follow these guidelines could result in your submission not being considered by the judging panels.

Follow this simple procedure:

- Decide ***"How can a community come together and turn a difficult circumstance into a positive experience?"***
- Word process a response on your own.
- Write no fewer than 1,000 words and no more than 2,000 words; clearly state your total at the end of the essay.
- Make sure any external sources have been correctly referenced and credited in a bibliography.
- Do not put your name on it, but do clearly state the word count.
- Attach your submission to an email and send it to McIlroy2020@reading-school.co.uk by 8.20am on Monday 15th September 2020.

REMEMBER: THE PRIZE IS £250 IN CASH.

How will you help a community turn difficult circumstances into positive action?