

Speak to the Future: Global Youth Essay Prize Terms and Conditions

1. Promoter, acceptance and definitions

1.1. The Speak to the Future: Global Youth Essay Prize (**Competition**) is conducted by Pymble Ladies' College ABN 75 645 100 670, Avon Road, Pymble NSW 2073, Australia, through its research centre, the Pymble Institute (**Pymble, we, us**).

1.2. These terms and conditions (**Terms**), together with the competition information, Key Dates, Academic Integrity Statement and Interview Guidelines published on the Pymble Institute website, form the rules of the Competition. If there is any inconsistency, these Terms prevail.

1.3. An entry does not progress to judging until the Terms are accepted under clause 3.5. By accepting, the entrant and (for entrants under 18) their parent or legal guardian agree to be bound by these Terms.

1.4. In these Terms:

- **Sydney time** means the time in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia (AEST or AEDT, whichever applies on the day).
- **Key Dates** means the dates and times for each stage of the Competition, as published and updated on the Pymble Institute website.
- **Entrant** means the student who submits an essay.
- **Parent** means the entrant's parent or legal guardian (called "parent or carer" elsewhere in Competition materials).
- **Research Journal** means the record the entrant keeps of their research process during the Research Phase.
- **Submission Deadline** means the date and time for submitting essays published in the Key Dates.
- **Acceptance Deadline** means the date and time for accepting these Terms published in the Key Dates.
- **Portal** means the online entry platform used for the Competition (Award Force).
- **Research Survey** means the optional Pymble Institute research survey described in clause 8.6.

2. Eligibility

2.1. The Competition is open to students worldwide who are aged 13 to 18 (inclusive) at the Submission Deadline and are enrolled in secondary schooling, including home schooling.

2.2. Age is determined as at the Submission Deadline. An entrant who turns 13 on or before the date of the Submission Deadline is eligible. An entrant who turns 19 on or before the date of the Submission Deadline is not eligible.

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2.3. Entrants compete in one of two divisions, based on age at the Submission Deadline:

Division	Age at Submission Deadline	Maximum essay length
Junior	13–15	700 words
Senior	16–18	900 words

2.4. Each entrant may submit one essay only. Entries must be the individual work of the entrant; group entries are not accepted.

2.5. Students of Pymble Ladies' College may enter. Immediate family members of judges and of PYMBLE staff directly involved in running or judging the Competition are not eligible.

2.6. Entrants are responsible for checking and complying with the laws, school rules and AI tool terms of use (including minimum age requirements) that apply to them in their own country. Entrants must not use any AI tool they are not permitted to use.

2.7. We may ask for proof of age, enrolment or identity at any time. Failure to provide it within 7 days of our request may result in disqualification.

3. Competition dates, entry and acceptance

3.1. The Competition runs in the following stages, in the Key Dates (all times Sydney time):

Date for 2027 Competition	Stage
15 February 2027	Competition opens, topic areas are published and the Research Phase begins
15 March 2027	Essay questions are released and the Writing Phase begins
4 April 2027, 11:59pm	Submission Deadline for essays
11 April 2027, 11:59pm	Acceptance Deadline for parents to accept Terms and approve child's essay to progress to judging
11 April – 10 May 2027	Essay judging
12 May 2027	Finalists notified
17 – 31 May 2027	Finalist interviews take place via MS Teams
6 June 2027	Winners announced and the Competition closes

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NOTE: These are the Key Dates at the time of publication. If they change, the updated Key Dates published on the Pymble Institute website apply, and we will notify registered entrants by email.

3.2. To enter, the entrant must create an account on the Portal in their own name with their own email address, complete the online form, and upload their essay as a PDF before the Submission Deadline. The entry form requires a Parent's email address.

3.3. Late, incomplete, illegible or corrupted entries will not be accepted. We are not responsible for entries lost, delayed or not received because of technical failure, internet outages, time zone errors or Portal issues. Entrants should submit their essay early and convert the deadline to their local time.

3.4. Entries must be written in English.

3.5. After submission, a Parent of an entrant under 18 will receive an email from the Portal asking them to read and accept these Terms. Entrants aged 18 at the Submission Deadline accept these Terms themselves. An entry progresses to judging only once acceptance is received.

3.6. If acceptance is not received by the Acceptance Deadline, the entry is treated as withdrawn and removed from the Competition. Reminder emails will be sent during this period, but it is the entrant's and Parent's responsibility to respond.

3.7. By accepting these Terms, the Parent confirms they are the entrant's parent or legal guardian and consent to the entrant taking part in the Competition, including the finalist interview if selected.

4. Essay requirements, AI use and academic integrity

4.1. The essay must respond to the published essay question and be related to the topic area the entrant selects.

4.2. The word limit in clause 2.3 includes quoted excerpts from the Research Journal. It excludes references, the reference list or the bibliography. Essays over the word limit may be penalised or excluded at the judges' discretion.

4.3. **Permitted AI use.** Entrants may, and are encouraged to, use AI tools during the Research Phase for researching, brainstorming, exploring and reflecting, and must record that use in their Research Journal.

4.4. **Prohibited AI use.** The essay itself must be written by the entrant. Entrants must not use AI tools to write, draft, rewrite, paraphrase or edit the text of the submitted essay.

4.5. **Quoting AI output.** AI-generated text may appear in the essay only as a dated, attributed quotation from the Research Journal, placed in quotation marks with its context explained.

4.6. The entrant must keep their Research Journal and any drafts until the Competition closes, and produce them within 7 days if we ask. Finalists must have their Research Journal and essay available at their interview.

4.7. The essay must be the entrant's original work. It must not infringe anyone's copyright or other rights, must properly acknowledge sources, and must not contain defamatory, offensive or unlawful material or personal information about other people.

4.8. The entrant must affirm that they have followed the Academic Integrity Statement, based on the College values of Integrity, Responsibility, Respect, Care and Courage.

4.9. An essay must not have been published, or entered in another competition, before the Submission Deadline.

4.10. If the judges or PYMBLE reasonably believe an entry breaches this clause 4, we may disqualify it at any stage, including after prizes are announced, and require return of any prize.

5. Judging, finalist interviews and conduct

5.1. This competition is a game of skill. Chance plays no part in determining winners.

5.2. Essays are judged within each division against the published judging criteria, which reward intellectual experimentation, academic effort, accurate record keeping, honesty in reflection, and persuasive writing and, if the entrant reaches the finals, speaking ability. All topic areas are judged against each other within a division.

5.3. The judges will shortlist up to three finalists in each division. Finalists will be notified by email on or about the date published in the Key Dates.

5.4. Each finalist attends one online interview of about 20 minutes via Microsoft Teams, hosted by PYMBLE, with up to three judges and one PYMBLE staff member. Final results are based on both the essay and the interview.

5.5. We will try to schedule interviews at a reasonable local time for each finalist, but finalists may need to attend early in the day or during school hours. A finalist who cannot attend any offered time may be withdrawn from final judging.

5.6. One reschedule is available if an unavoidable problem (such as illness or a power outage) prevents the interview. Finalists must tell us as soon as possible. If a judge is unavailable, the interview may proceed with two judges.

5.7. A Parent, or another adult over 18 known to the finalist and approved by the Parent, must remain in the room and in view of the camera for a finalist under 18. The accompanying adult must not speak during the interview except to help with introductions or technical problems, and must not add to or answer for the finalist.

5.8. If an accompanying adult interrupts more than once, the PYMBLE staff member may end the interview and the finalist may be disqualified.

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5.9. Finalists will not be penalised for technical glitches or for household interruptions such as pets or other people entering the room.

5.10. Entrants, Parents and anyone acting for them must not contact any judge about the Competition, directly or indirectly, on any platform, before, during or after the Competition. All communication must go through the PYMBLE contact provided. Any attempt to contact or influence a judge may result in disqualification.

5.11. The judges' decisions are final. No correspondence will be entered into about judging outcomes, and individual feedback on essays is not provided.

5.12. We may disqualify an entrant, at any stage, who breaches these Terms, provides false information, behaves in an abusive or disruptive way toward judges, staff or other entrants, or otherwise undermines the fairness of the Competition.

6. Prizes and recognition

6.1. Prizes (amounts in Australian dollars):

Division	Place	Prize
Senior	Winner	AUD 800 + gold medal
Senior	Runner-up	AUD 600 + silver medal
Senior	Other finalist	Highly Commended certificate + bronze medal
Junior	Winner	AUD 600 + gold medal
Junior	Runner-up	AUD 400 + silver medal
Junior	Other finalist	Highly Commended certificate + bronze medal

6.2. Every entrant whose entry progresses to judging receives a certificate of participation.

6.3. Winners will be announced on or about the date published in the Key Dates and notified by email. Medals will be posted to the address provided.

6.4. Cash prizes will be paid by electronic transfer to an account nominated by the winner or, for winners under 18, their Parent. Payment will be made in AUD; any currency conversion or bank fees are the recipient's responsibility.

6.5. Prizes are not transferable. If a prize cannot be delivered or paid after reasonable attempts within 3 months of the announcement, it is forfeited.

6.6. Winners are responsible for any tax payable on their prize in their own country.

6.7. We are not responsible for medals or certificates lost or damaged in the post.

7. Intellectual property, publication and publicity

7.1. The entrant keeps copyright in their essay and Research Journal.

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7.2. The entrant grants PYMBLE a non-exclusive, royalty-free, worldwide, perpetual licence to reproduce, publish, communicate and display their essay (and excerpts from it) for purposes connected with the Competition, the Pymble Institute and PYMBLE, including on the Pymble Institute website, in the annual Competition report, the Competition Portal and in promotional materials. We may make minor formatting changes but will not alter the substance. The entrant consents to these changes and to the use of excerpts under this clause, and PYMBLE will identify the entrant as the author where the essay is published.

7.3. The winning essays in each division will be published on the Pymble Institute website with the entrant's full first name and surname, country and division, unless the Parent (or entrant aged 18) asks us in writing to publish with first name only.

7.4. Winners will be invited to record an interview which may be published on the Pymble Institute website. Taking part is optional and does not affect the prize.

7.5. Winners' names (as in clause 7.3), school name and country may be announced on PYMBLE's website and social media channels. The entrant or Parent may opt out of social media publicity by notifying us before winners are announced.

7.6. We may use de-identified statistics about entries (such as numbers of entrants by country, division and topic area) in the annual report and elsewhere.

7.7. The entrant confirms they have the right to grant the licence in clause 7.2 and that the essay does not infringe anyone else's rights.

8. Privacy, recordings and the research survey

8.1. We collect the entrant's name, email address, age, school, country, the Parent's name and email address, and the essay, to run the Competition. We also collect bank details and postal addresses from prize winners to pay prizes and distribute medals. We may also collect proof of age, enrolment or identity if requested under clause 2.7, and audio and video recordings of finalist interviews under clause 8.4

8.2. We use this information to administer and judge the Competition, verify eligibility, communicate with entrants and Parents, award and deliver prizes, invite participation in the Research Survey, and for the publicity described in clause 7. We handle it in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and PYMBLE's Privacy Policy: <https://www.pymblelc.nsw.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Privacy-Policy.pdf>

8.3. Entries are submitted and stored through the Portal, a third-party platform, and may be stored on servers outside Australia. Entrant information will be deleted from the Portal within 4 months after the Competition closes, except for winners' essays and records we must keep by law.

8.4. Finalist interviews are recorded (audio and video) for judging purposes only. Recordings are kept for 3 months after the Competition closes and then permanently deleted. The Parent (or finalist aged 18) may request a copy.

8.5. Entrants and accompanying adults must not make their own recording of the interview and must not share any copy of the recording provided by us, including on social media, school platforms or with other families.

8.6. Research Survey. The Pymble Institute is conducting a separate, optional, anonymous research survey on young people's use of AI in education. It is governed by the Participant Information Sheet and its own consent process, not these Terms. Taking part, or declining, has no effect on judging or results.

8.7. The entrant or Parent may ask to access or correct personal information we hold, or make a privacy complaint, by contacting speaktothefuture@pymblelc.nsw.edu.au

9. Liability, changes and general

9.1. Nothing in these Terms excludes any right or remedy that cannot lawfully be excluded, including under the Australian Consumer Law.

9.2. Subject to clause 9.1, PYMBLE, its staff and the judges are not liable for any loss, damage or injury arising from participation in the Competition, use of any AI tool or third-party platform, technical failures, or acceptance or use of a prize, except to the extent caused by our negligence or wilful misconduct.

9.3. We are not responsible for the content, availability, accuracy or terms of any AI tool or third-party service an entrant chooses to use.

9.4. If the Competition cannot run as planned because of circumstances beyond our reasonable control, we may modify, suspend or cancel it, or change Key Dates, and will notify entrants by email and on the Pymble Institute website.

9.5. We may update these Terms to correct errors or respond to changed circumstances. Material changes will be notified to registered entrants and will not disadvantage entrants who have already submitted.

9.6. If any part of these Terms is invalid or unenforceable, the rest continues to apply.

9.7. These Terms are governed by the laws of New South Wales, Australia. Entrants and Parents submit to the non-exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of New South Wales.

9.8. Questions about the Competition or these Terms, contact speaktothefuture@pymblelc.nsw.edu.au