CLT Academic Enrichment Newsletter
February Break and Term 4, 2025-26

Dear Students (and Parents/Carers),

Welcome to the third Academic Enrichment Newsletter of the school year 2025/26, and you are going to notice some changes.
Most items that have been previously promoted in previous issues have been moved to pages on the Academic Enrichment Blog of the King Alfred's Academy website, and there is a link to each of those pages given instead. The only items that have been published previously but are still included are those with a submission deadline coming up soon (competitions, challenges, etc.) or those that require registration for a forthcoming event(s).
Posts that are totally NEW to this issue will continue to be printed in light blue, and posts that are still current but have already been published in previous issues will remain in black. This should make it easier for you to navigate the Newsletter.

(a) Events and Exhibitions organised by Institutions such as Museums and Academic Bodies
(b) Websites to explore
(c) Courses and Workshops
(d) The Competition Corner

For this issue, I would especially like to recommend looking at the competitions. These are especially powerful for students seeking to explore their subject and build material for their university applications.
The aim of this Newsletter is to share with Secondary schools in the Trust some of the various opportunities on offer in our immediate locality that students can pursue independently. We would like to develop an ever-stronger partnership with our parents in promoting the intellectual development and curiosity of all our students.

Pam Stokell
Head of Academic Enrichment

Date for your Diary

KAAEP Series of Talks 2025/26

Free Speech and Hate Speech
With Dr Maxime Lepoutre
Department of Politics and International Relations
University of Reading
Monday 9th March, 2026
5:00 – 6:15pm
King Alfred's Sixth Form Auditorium

Associate Professor Dr Maxime Lepoutre is an inspirational lecturer in Politcs and Political Philosophy at the University of Reading. Amongst the many concepts that he teaches, he has chosen to adapt the session that he uses to discuss the apparent contradiction between restricting Hate Speech and celebrating Free Speech.

What better way to start the week? Come along on Monday 9th March to find out more, and be prepared to tackle some tricky philosophical questions. You can reserve your seats by submitting this form: CLT AEP Talk - Free Speech and Hate Speech – Fill out form or by emailing pstokell@kas.cambrianlt.org

Section 1. In person and/or Livestreamed events from Museums and other Academic Bodies – includes webinars, talks, courses

Yes, the Royal Institution was set up for the dissemination of scientific ideas, but they are careful to appeal to a very broad range of interests, and their talks are an excellent place to start looking out for those priceless links between subjects that make learning so exciting. (And which will make you stand out from the crowd if you choose to apply to a top-level university.)

The Royal Institution YouTube Channel holds an archive of their lectures (about an hour long each), but if you are running short of time, you can also find a series of "Ri Shorts" at (181) Ri Shorts - YouTube which are short video talks about 10 minutes long,

And there is also the Royal Institution Animations selection at (181) Ri Animations - YouTube which are typically 5 minutes or less.

And below you will find this term's recommended selection of three of the longer talks:

Recorded Talk: Does Alien Life Exist?
In this talk, Dr Nikku Madhusudhan explores our quest for alien life, through the years, starting with the revelation that our planet revolves around the Sun, and the discovery that our Solar System was not the only group of planets in the Universe. Explore new exoplanets, JWST discoveries and the future of life beyond our planet. (52) Does alien life exist? - with Nikku Madhusudhan - YouTube

Recorded Talk: The Mind-bending Reality of Quantum Mechanics
Physicist and renowned broadcaster Jim Al-Khalili takes a look back at a century of quantum mechanics, the strangest yet most successful theory in all of science, and how it has shaped our world. He also looks forward to the exciting new world of Quantum 2.0 and how a deeper understanding of such counterintuitive concepts as quantum superposition and quantum entanglement is leading to the development of entirely new technologies, from quantum computers and quantum sensors to quantum cryptography and the quantum internet. The mind-bending reality of quantum mechanics - with Jim Al Khalili

Recorded Talk: What really happened during the Big Bang?
The Big Bang has long been accepted as the ultimate origin of our universe - but what if it's just the beginning of the story? In this talk, astrophysicist Niayesh Afshordi will explore the fierce scientific debates over cosmic origins, revealing how modern cosmologists are rethinking the Big Bang itself. He will discuss the latest theories, including his own leading-edge research, that challenge the traditional narrative: was the Universe born from a black hole? Does time extend before the Big Bang? Could our cosmos be part of a vast multiverse or an eternal cycle of rebirth?
What really happened during the Big Bang? - with Niyayesh Afshordi

And did you know – the Ri has a Podcast!
Most of those amazing talks which you can watch anytime on the Ri's Youtube channel are also available as podcasts, so you can listen in wherever you are. The link below will take you to the great talk by Lucy Cooke, who will take you on a journey through an array of different animal examples as she explores evolution:
Podcast: How did females evolve? - with Lucy Cooke | Royal Institution (rigb.org)
And there is lots more at: Browse our science online | Royal Institution (rigb.org)

The Linnean Society Online Talks

The Linnean Society of London is the world's oldest active biological society, dating back to 1788. It has a wide and varied programme of talks, and you can also arrange to visit their library at Burlington House, London.
The Linnean Society | Communicating Nature Since 1788

FREE Online talks from the Linnean Society

Many of the talks from the Linnean Society are recorded and available through their youtube channel: (3) Linnean Society - YouTube. Below are some recommendations to whet your appetite and hopefully prompt you to look for other talks!
Three new recorded talks for you to explore:

Discovering the Okapi

The Spirit of the Rainforest

Being Tree-ish | Notes on The Genius of Trees

Sixth Formers, if you have a study period during the day, it might be worth checking whether you can catch one of their lunch-time talks. Check out the events page online at: Upcoming Events | The Linnean Society

For Years 7 and 8: Oxford Brookes' Science Bazaar
Saturday 21 February 2026
This is one of Oxfordshire's biggest and most exciting free family events. The Science Bazaar is designed especially for children aged 5–12 and their families, and it is packed with hands-on activities, live demonstrations, workshops, and shows, all led by scientists, engineers, artists and students from Oxford Brookes University and some of the university's local partners.
Explore everything from tech and engineering to health, nature, and creativity, all under one roof. Whether you love explosions, inventions, animals, or art. There's something to spark everyone's imagination!
And for any older students who find themselves dragged along to this because of younger siblings, use the experience to practise your networking. Talk to the presenters about their research and their interests. Ask them what they would recommend for reading/a project/preparing for university. Introducing yourself and talking to others is a crucial Life Skill.
For more information and to book your places: Science Bazaar - Oxford Brookes University

The London Mathematical Society

The London Mathematical Society runs a series of talks - the LMS Popular Lectures - which are free public lectures that present exciting topics in mathematics and its applications to a wide audience. They are for anyone with an interest in mathematics, including those without high-level maths training. There is a real treasury of past talks to be found at **the LMS YouTube channel** - click 'subscribe' to be alerted when new videos are added. You can watch previous LMS Popular Lectures **here.**

The Oxford Mathematical Institute – Public Lecture: Going for Gold – the Mathematics of Sporting Success

As a sports person, the title of this talk immediately appealed to me! What is the best way to run to win a race? Why does a sprinter slow down before the finish line? Why do you swim better slightly underwater? Why, on a bike, the faster you go, the more stable you are? Amandine Aftalion is a mathematician and a senior scientist at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). She specialises in modelling based on low temperature physics alongside writing on a range of sports culminating in her book 'Be a Champion, 40 facts you didn't know about sports and science'. Enjoy her talk!

Going for Gold: the Mathematics of Sporting Glory - Amandine Aftalion

There are some fabulous museums almost on our doorstep – why not take a look around the University Museums of Oxford?

We are lucky to have some world-class museums just a short bus ride away. However, do check on their websites as many of the exhibitions still require you to book a timed ticket in order to reduce congestion in the galleries.

Take a look at:

The Ashmolean Museum

The Weston (Bodleian) Library

The Pitt Rivers Museum

The History of Science Museum and

The Natural History Museum.

Please note that there are other museums in Oxford, but these five are the University Museums and all are centrally situated within walking distance of one another. For example, you might like to visit the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock, and our Vale and Downland Museum in Wantage. And don't miss out on Modern Art Oxford!

And calling all students interested in stories, reading and books: the Story Museum is on the lookout for **Youth Collection Ambassadors** – a great opportunity to volunteer at the Museum and gain behind-the-scenes experience at a truly magical place! Click on the link above to find out more!

The Ashmolean Museum

The Ashmolean is the University of Oxford's museum of art and archaeology, founded in 1683. The Museum's world-famous collections range from Egyptian mummies to contemporary art, telling human stories across cultures and across time.
You can find out more about current exhibitions and events at: King Alfred's Academy - At the Ashmolean Museum

One World Family Festival 2026
Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th February, 11:00am – 4:00pm
Visit the Ashmolean for a celebration of the many communities and faiths of Oxfordshire with a dazzling array of activities, performances, talks, and crafts for all ages, taking place throughout the Museum.

This year's is **Nature**. From traditional Chinese and Nepalese dance to eco-pilgrimage lantern-making and Moroccan moon stories, there's something for everyone at this fantastic weekend festival. You can download the full programme at one-world-family-festival-2026-a5-programme-digital-v1.pdf

The Pitt Rivers Museum – a wonderfully eclectic museum.

For a list of some of their current exhibitions and events, please visit King Alfred's Academy - At the Pitt Rivers Museum

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The History of Science Museum

This Museum is based in the oldest museum building of the country, and it has a breath-taking collection of scientific artefacts through the ages and from across the world. You will find a listing of their current exhibitions and displays here: King Alfred's Academy - At the History of science museum

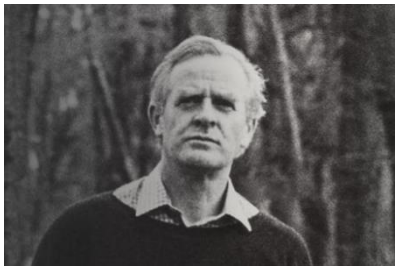
Home | History of Science Museum
Event: Let's talk about Surveillance: Tracking disease
Thursday 12th March 2026, 5:30 – 7:30pm
This is a free event, but booking is essential due to limited numbers.
Let's Talk About: Surveillance | History of Science Museum

And from the Natural History Museum of Oxford:

Oxford University Museum of Natural History holds an internationally-significant collection of natural history specimens and archives in a stunning example of neo-Gothic architecture. It is home to a lively programme of research, teaching and events focused on the sciences of the natural environment.
You can find some of their current exhibitions and events at: King Alfred's Academy - At the oxford natural history museum

From the Bodleian Libraries

If you find yourself in the city of Oxford, why not take a walk down Broad Street and pop into the Bodleian Library to see one or more of the four Exhibitions listed below. All are FREE to enter, and you do not need to book beforehand.
Also, do take a look at the Events listings, as many of these are free to access as well. Please visit: Events & Exhibitions | Visit the Bodleian Libraries (ox.ac.uk)



Exhibition: John Le Carré – Tradecraft
Available until 6th April 2026
Discover the enduring legacy of one of the greatest writers of the past century.
Tradecraft draws upon the vast archive of John le Carré, otherwise known as David Cornwell. Held at the Bodleian Libraries, this material – much of which is displayed for the first time – spans Cornwell's entire life and career, from his time as a student at Lincoln College, Oxford, to drafts penned in his final weeks.
This exhibition offers unique insights into the working methods of the writer who shaped the modern spy novel. For more information: John le Carré: Tradecraft | Visit the Bodleian Libraries
The Treasury, Weston Library. FREE Exhibition, no booking needed.

Display: A song of Myself
This is a wire sculpture by Tom Phillips RA, on long-term loan.
Blackwell Hall, Weston Library

Display: Dancing with Jane Austen

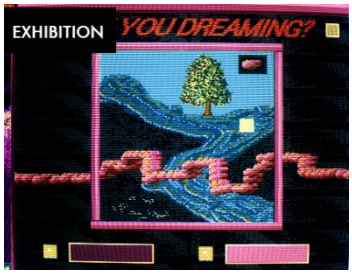
Available until 12th April 2026
Marking the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth, *Dancing with Austen* explores how important dance was to Austen's gentry society and its crucial role in her creativity.
Blackwell Hall, Weston Library

You will find the full list at Events & Exhibitions | Visit the Bodleian Libraries

Modern Art Oxford

Summer Exhibitions and Events at Modern Art Oxford

Modern Art Oxford is one of the UK's leading contemporary art spaces. Our programmes offer opportunities for all for inspirational exchange and creative participation, both in person and online. Well worth a visit. Take a look at their range of workshops, exhibitions, performances and other activities at: What's On | Modern Art Oxford



Exhibition: Suzanne Treister – Prophetic Dreaming
Available until 12th April 2026
Prophetic Dreaming is the first major institutional retrospective by pioneering digital and para-disciplinary artist Suzanne Treister (b. 1958). Spanning more than forty years, the exhibition maps Treister's visionary practice and investigations into new technologies, networks of power, alternative belief systems, and the futures they prefigure. Full Price £9.50, concessions £7. No need to book in advance. Modern Art Oxford

From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum

Recorded Online Talks
The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum has a fantastic collection of recorded talks, with titles including *The Secret Life of Ian Fleming; The Pegasus Bridge Story* and *T.E. Lawrence: the Unconventional Warrior.* You can find all three series of talks here: Online Talks – Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum

Temporary Exhibitions:

Threadlines
Available until 14th March 2026
This Exhibition draws together the work of six artists, in a variety of media, inspired by the exhibits at the Museum. The name, *Threadlines*, is multi-layered, evoking the the 'threadlines' inside the barrel of a gun to the more literal threads and stitched items, such as uniforms and kit, stitched leather, and a Japanese soldier's flag for luck and protection.
Threadlines – West Ox Arts Exhibition 2026 – Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum

Service in Cyprus
Available until 29th March 2026
A brand new Exhibition of sketches, photos and memories from Martin Slater, based on his experiences of military service in Cyprus during the 1950s. Service in Cyprus – Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum

Women weaving stories in Sustainable Fashion
Available until 15th June 2026
The Iraqi Women Art and War Sustainability fashion exhibition highlights not only the beauty and craftsmanship of sustainability fashion, but also the strengths and solidarity of women using art as a tool for healing and empowerment.

You can find out more about this museum at Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum – Conflict & County

Section 2. Sites to explore online

Strongly recommended: Beyond the Classroom - Trinity College Oxford's Online Academic Enrichment Programme is back in 2026

What online after-school academic enrichment programme new series of mini lectures, Oxplore taster sessions, academic skills talks and advice about preparing for university study and submitting a competitive application to university and the University of Oxford. Gain a certificate demonstrating your commitment to super-curricular enrichment!

Who any state school student in Year 7 to 12 who is interested in exploring learning across a broad range of themes and across subjects beyond the classroom, and/or may be interested in applying to Oxford.

When on Tuesdays at 4:30pm-5:30pm, beginning Tuesday the 10 March 2026, (excl school holidays) for 15 sessions running to Tuesday 7 July. Students can opt in for the sessions of their choice.

Where online on Teams.

Links see more details can be found on our website which will be updated as themes for the programme are confirmed and students can register themselves at Trinity Beyond the Classroom 2026.

The Linnean Society's Tree of Life – it's amazing!

OneZoom is a freely available Tree of Life, connecting all species together in a spiraling beanstalk that shows evolutionary history. Each leaf on the OneZoom tree represents a species and the branches show how they are connected through evolution. Discover your favourites, see which species are under threat, and wonder at 105,307 images on a single page. It is a great way of visualising all life on Earth.

There are two suggested activities for exploring this amazing Tree of Life.

OneZoom: Tree of Life explorer | The Linnean Society

Exploring some of the lesser known Arts and Humanities subjects: (De)constructing Identity Webinars Series

This webinar series is specifically for State School students to explore those lesser-known subject options offered at University. This webinar series from Clare College Cambridge will run on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the month of March, and will include subjects such as Education, Classics, Asian and Middle-Easter Studies, and Modern and Mediaeval Languages. For more information and details of how to sign up, please visit: (De)constructing Identity: Arts and Humanities at University | Clare College - Cambridge University. Priority will be given to Year 12 students, but other age groups may apply.

Podcast with Richard Damania, Chief Economist of the Sustainable Development Practice Group for the World Bank

Environmental degradation of our land, water and air is not just an ecological but an economic issue which in turn has an impact on development.

The World Bank has recently released a report into the connection between the economy and the environment. The report titled 'Reboot Development - The Economics of a Livable Planet' explores the issues around a declining environment, its connection to the economy as well as how futures could be managed to improve both areas for everyone.

Listen to the Podcast here.

TORCH Blogs

TORCH, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities, has a vibrant range of research communities that publish updates about their activities, research projects and collaborations regularly. Visit our blog page to find out more about the recent work of our Research Hubs, Networks and Global Partnerships.

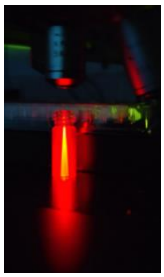
Recent blogs include - Equity in Global Health (Medical Humanities) Folk Dance and AI: Rethinking Traditions (Global Partnerships) What Do Foreign Medical Trips of African Presidents Reveal About Global Health? (International Engagement)

Blog | TORCH | The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities

Film: Disability in Britain and Ireland – 1714 to 1785

"The 18th century, like any period, has its own ideas about...disabled embodiment." In this new film, Declan Kavanagh discusses how people understood disability in this period, from Samuel Johnson's definitions to William Hay's essay *Deformity*, which offers a personal account. Free to watch. You can watch this here. And on the same page, you will find links to several other past films, four of which are free to all viewers.

Cambridge Physics Centre Lecture Series for 2025/26



This lecture series is open to all, but aimed at those in years 12 and 13. It exists to enthuse, stimulate and challenge students and their teachers across the whole broad spectrum of physics-related topics. It is a live event at the Cavendish Laboratory, directions to the lectures and parking for the evening can be **found here**.

Recordings of this year's lectures are **available here**, and previous lectures can be **seen here**.

The Oxford Martin School – Finding solutions to the world's most urgent challenges

The University of Oxford boasts that there is no research organisation in the world that is quite like the Oxford Martin School in that it brings researchers from across all disciplines to work together on finding solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges.

As part of sharing their work, they have a series of talks – a mixture of in-person and online – most of which are free and open to all. It's worth keeping an eye on their events page, and also to go browsing through their archive of past talks at: Past Events | Oxford Martin School. You will find something here that is relevant to almost any academic interest. Well worth scanning through if you are doing/considering an EPQ on a topic that involves a threat to the world or to society.

Click on the links for more information and to register for the talks. You can register to attend either in person or online. If you miss the talks, the link will also let you know where you can find the talk retrospectively on the Oxford Martin youtube channel.

'Putting nature on a path to recovery: how are we doing?… | Oxford Martin School

Wednesday 4th March 2026, 5:00pm.

Dr David Cooper will highlight why urgent action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss is important, describe progress in achieving the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Diversity Framework, and discuss what further steps are needed.

The following talks are recordings of events that took place in January:

'Biodiversity, ecosystem services and sustainability: is it time for a reset? Oxford Martin SchoolIn

David Obura presents some provocations to explore the underlying causes of challenges to sustainability today, and emerging perspectives to build new solutions for the multiple intersecting crises across nature, economy, society and governance.

'The (missing) third pillar: Carbon management| Oxford Martin School

Professor Ottmar Edenhofer examines why large-scale carbon dioxide removal (CDR) is essential for meeting climate targets and establishing a third pillar of climate policy alongside abatement and adaptation.

Two new projects from Zooniverse

For all those citizen science enthusiasts, here are two projects to whet your appetite. If neither of these grab your attention, then head over to Projects — Zooniverse where you will find hundreds of other projects, on all sorts of topics, from languages to astrophysics, and from medicine to the Arts. **And did you know that working on Zooniverse projects can count towards the volunteering bit of your D of E qualification?**

Terrestrial Parasite Tracker

Parasitic arthropods inflict an enormous burden on human society; they afflict human health and the animals on which we depend. The negative effects of parasitic arthropods are exacerbated by current climate and ecosystem change. Arthropod borne pathogens infect and kill millions of people each year. Arthropod-borne pathogens can also have a significant impact on our livestock, which poses a serious threat to agriculture and food security globally. The goal of the Terrestrial Parasite Tracker (TPT) project is to mobilize and digitally capture vector and parasite collections to help build a picture of parasite host-association evolution, distributions, and the ecological interactions of disease vectors which will assist scientists, educators, land managers, and policy makers. For more information and to get started, visit Notes from Nature - Terrestrial Parasite Tracker — Zooniverse

Dolphin Spotting

This project uses **underwater** and **aerial** videos, analysed through **four workflows**.

- Two workflows are simple detection tasks that ask whether dolphins are **present or absent**: one underwater and one aerial. These help us identify when dolphins appear in the recordings.
- The other two workflows are **detailed annotation tasks**, shown after dolphin presence is confirmed. In these, volunteers describe dolphin **behaviour** and the **context** of the scene, again using underwater or aerial footage.

Underwater videos usually make dolphins easier to see, while aerial videos provide important information about the surrounding environment and human activity.

For more information and to get started, visit Dolphin Spotting | Zooniverse - People-powered research

Top Tip to practise your Languages: For an extra challenge, why not attempt to work on a project in either Spanish or French? Zooniverse has translated several of its projects into other languages. Whatever your chosen project, look for the Language button on the top right of the project's home page.

If you are thinking ahead to Higher Education and know that you want to apply to some of the country's top universities… but not sure what subject to choose for your degree, then attending subject taster webinars is a great way to explore your options and find out what you really like.

Subject Taster Webinars

This series offers online taster lectures followed by a Q&A that are delivered by some of the University of Cambridge's most prestigious fellows. The aim of these webinars is to give students who are considering applying to the University of Cambridge (and, if you are female, Murray Edwards College) an insight into the breadth of the degree programmes on offer; the content and research that is involved; and the teaching style that is used (the teaching style at Murray Edwards will be the same as that offered by other colleges).

The series spans a huge range of subjects across arts, humanities, social sciences and STEM. If you want to learn what it would be like to study at Cambridge, explore the webinars on offer at the link below and sign up to register your interest in attending. Do check back again as they will be adding more webinars over the term.

And worry not if a webinar you wanted to watch has already taken place: you can catch up with them at the Murray Edwards College YouTube channel .

The webinars are carrying on until the end of April, so there are plenty left!

To view up and coming Webinars and to register to attend, please go to:
https://www.murrayedwards.cam.ac.uk/study-us/outreach/webinars

Subject Tasters from the University of Reading

Subject tasters coming up in the near future:

- BA English Lit – Understanding "the gaze" in *The Gruffalo, Frozen* and *Beyond. Weds 18th Feb, 5pm. Register here.*
- MPharm Pharmacology – From Light to Sight – a journey into the human eye. *Weds 25th February 4pm. Register here*
- Building a sustainable future through surveying, construction management and architectural engineering. *Tues 24th February, 6pm. Register here.*

You can sign up for future subject tasters (they will send you a recording as well!)

And you can catch up with some past subject taster webinars at: Subject tasters

English Language and Applied Linguistics - How AI is made to sound human and linguistic stereotypes

History - Religion in Britain during the First World War

Modern Languages Travelling Words: How and why European languages borrow from each other

Especially for Y10s – Y13s looking to broaden their super curriculum in preparation for University Applications (also great for EPQ ideas!):

Super-curricular activities are not mandatory. However, they can help you make a competitive application, and prepare you for a challenging academic environment, so we strongly recommend them. Super-curricular participation can enhance your personal statement, give you greater confidence in your subject choice, show that you are serious about your area of study, and give you a wealth of ideas to draw upon in discussions if you're invited to interview.

It's likely that you'll develop new ideas and opinions, critical thinking and analytical skills, and an ability to understand new information from different sources – this is all great preparation for succeeding at university. **King Alfred's Academy - Super Curricular exploration**

Courses and Workshops

This section is set aside for courses and workshops, both in person and/or online, which students are able to access independently. They are almost always offered by academic bodies with a mission to develop the intellectual potential of curious young minds.

Previously published courses that are still current my be found at: King Alfred's Academy - Courses and Workshops

Peterhouse Modern & Medieval Languages Webinar 2026

Peterhouse, University of Cambridge, is hosting an online webinar introducing students to studying **languages, literature, and linguistics** at Cambridge. The session includes academic insights, student perspectives, a live Q&A, and admissions guidance.

It is open to all students over the age of 14 and will be held on **Wednesday 11th March at 18:30 pm.** For more information please see the list on our website: https://www.pet.cam.ac.uk/peterhouse-modern-and-medieval-languages-webinar-2026)

To register, please use the sign-up link here: https://qualtricsxms684tm8p5.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5ywInUPZmBuzzIW

Deadline for registration: Wednesday 4th March at 17:00 pm

Subject Taster Days for Year 12 students

Lincoln College are again running in-person Study Days, for prospective students in Year 12 from state schools. The programme is designed to support students from non-traditional Oxbridge backgrounds who are on track to do well and potentially make an application to a selective university. There are four subject choices:

- Physics and Engineering
- Modern Languages
- English Literature
- History of the Ancient World.

For more information and details of how to register, please visit: Lincoln College Study Days | Lincoln College Oxford

Competition Corner

"Why bother entering competitions? I am probably not going to win anything."
And this is very true. But entering academic/educational competitions is an excellent way of stretching your brain and your abilities, and you will learn and hone many skills along the way. Once you are in Year 10+, entering academic competitions and being able to reflect on your experiences is something that will make you stand out in university and high-level apprenticeship applications. So *do* get into the habit of checking the **Competition Corner** of the *KAAEP Bulletin,* or looking online for other competitions. (If you find something, do please let me know so I can share it with others!)

Year 12 is an important year for this as the most competitive universities seek out those students with the motivation and enthusiasm to enter academic competitions.

(a) They make you stand out from the crowd - you can talk about your research in your personal statement.
(b) They help you to explore and discover new interests.
(c) They are a good way of testing whether studying the subject at university is really for you.
(d) They improve and develop your critical thinking and essay writing skills in readiness for stepping up to university.

"*It is a great idea to enter a competition in an area that you enjoy or are good at whilst you are still at school. If you win or are placed, that is excellent, but even if you don't, it demonstrates commitment, interest, drive and immediately differentiates you from others. It looks good on your UCAS Form."* Student Ladder – Steps to Success.

The Guardian Foundation Emerging Voices Award
Are you aged 16-18 and thinking of Journalism as a possible route? Or maybe there is something out there that you believe in passionately and you want to be heard? Or maybe you're thinking of going into Politics, or International Relations? If so, then this challenge is for you. There are some great prizes, including being published in the Guardian Foundation. To find out more and for details of how to submit your entry, please visit: Emerging Voices Awards | The Guardian Foundation

Fitzwilliam College Year 12 Competitions
Fitzwilliam College is holding several competitions:

- Eight different Essay Competitions
- One Architectural Design Competition
- Two Translation Competitions

The essay competitions are on Ancient World and Classics, Archaeology, Economics, English, History, Land Economy, Medieval World and Slavonic Studies.
The translation competition are in French and German.
Further information and details of how to enter may be found at the links above.
The deadline for submission for ***all*** of the above competitions is **6pm on Friday 27th February 2026.** So you'd better get cracking!

Girton College's Humanities Competition – in response to objects from the Lawrence Room Museum

This is an opportunity for students in Year 12 or equivalent to research and write beyond the curriculum, using one or more of five selected objects from the Lawrence Room museum objects, as their focus. Essays or creative responses (such as dramatic monologues, short stories or poems) are equally welcome.
For more information and details of how to enter, please visit:
https://www.girton.cam.ac.uk/humanities-writing-competition
The deadline for entries is Friday 20th March 2026.

Young Historian Awards 2026

The purpose of these Prizes is to encourage you to think, research and frame your own questions that you will answer from further reading and research. This might be the result of a piece of work your teacher has set you to do at home, or it may be a piece of research you are carrying out for your own interest. It is also an opportunity to perhaps tell some of the untold stories around the themes.
Deadline: 17th July 2026
Open to: students aged from 11-19
For more information and details of how to enter, please visit:
https://www.history.org.uk/secondary/categories/516/news/3689/young-historian-awards-2026-take-part-secondary

Peterhouse Kelvin Biological Sciences Essay Prize 2026

This essay competition aims to give students the opportunity to explore scientific concepts and topics beyond the classroom, and to engage with scientific research. It is open to students in Year 12. Please note that there is a strict limit of four entries per school preferably across multiple questions. **So please let me know if you are planning to enter this competition so that I can monitor numbers.**
More information on the competition, how to submit an essay, and this year's essay questions can be found on our website: https://www.pet.cam.ac.uk/peterhouse-kelvin-biological-sciences-essay-competition
Essay Questions (choose one):

1. What do we need to know to save a species from extinction?
2. Why does chirality matter in biology?
3. Why do some species live days and others centuries?
4. Can biosignatures provide convincing evidence of life on exoplanets?
5. With machine learning, can we abolish experimental chemistry?
6. Is quantum computing currently useful?

Deadline for submissions: Monday 20th April at 23.59

The Author of Tomorrow Award, from the Wilbur & Niso Smith Foundation

This creative writing award is designed to find the adventure writers of the future! Prizes are awarded in three age categories, and these cater for students from Year 7 up to Year 13.
It is a prestigious award, so well worth entering for any aspiring young author in the adventure genre. For more information and details of how to enter, please visit: Author of Tomorrow | Wilbur & Niso Smith Foundation

Imperial College – the Grantham Climate Art Prize 2026

Young people aged 11-25 across the South East of England are invited to enter the 2026 Grantham Climate Art Prize by designing a mural to draw attention to the climate crisis. The 20m long mural will be on Imperial's White City campus and will be the 14th mural across Great Britain in this art prize series. A cash prize of £250 will be presented to the winner and runners-up will receive £150 each.

The design for the mural needs to consider the question: **What does a thriving, vibrant city full of nature and innovation look and feel like?**

The winning design will be selected by a judging panel and transformed into a large-scale panoramic mural by professional artist Jeru Nomi at White City Campus. Runner up designs will be exhibited alongside it in an exhibition.

For more information and details of how to submit your entry, please visit: Grantham Climate Art Prize | Grantham Institute – Climate Change and the Environment | Imperial College London

Lincoln College
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Creative Life Sciences Competition for Year 12

This is advance notice of an exciting Life Sciences Essay Competition. Students will be invited to write an essay of up to 1,500 words in answer to a question. The Judges welcome creative submissions, and entrants are welcome to approach the question in whatever way is most meaningful to them, as long as they demonstrate that they are thinking scientifically. The questions are designed to test creativity and scientific intuition rather than knowledge.

Full details about how to submit your essay, together with this year's questions, click **HERE .**

Oxford German Olympiad 2026: Spiel und Sport

What: The Oxford German Network have launched the 13th edition of its annual German Olympiad! This year's topic is "Immer unterwegs - Mobilität und Reiselust". There are a variety of different challenges aimed at different age groups. Some are for individuals to enter, others are aimed at groups. There is even a taster competition for pupils who have never studied German before!

Who: Students from any school, from Years 5 to 13

When: The closing date for all entries is Thursday 12 March 2026

Where: Online

Contact: Any questions can be directed to the Olympiad Coordinator, Eva, at: olympiad@mod-langs-ox.ac.uk

More info: More information about the Olympiad can be found on the Oxford German Network website.

St John's College
Oxford

Year 12 Classics and Ancient History Competition

This competition is open to all students, not just those who may be studying Classics, There are four questions to choose from, each with a focus in a particular area – History, Literature, Philosophy or Art and Archaeology. The questions are brilliantly thought-provoking.

For more information and details of how to enter, please visit:
Classics Essay Competition 2026 | St John's College, Oxford

Deadline for submission is 4pm on Sunday 22nd February 2026

Poetry Competition for students aged 16 – 18

The Tower Poetry Competition offers the UK's most valuable prize for young poets. The poet who writes the single best poem on the theme receives £5,000. There will be a second prize of £3,000, and a third prize of £1,500. Along with these, there will be ten runners up, who will each receive £500. The top three winners will also be offered a place on the Tower Poetry Summer School.

The theme for this year's competition is "A Riddle".

For more information and details of how to enter, please visit: Enter the Tower Poetry Competition | Christ Church, University of Oxford

The deadline for submission is 12noon Thursday 19th February 2026

Year 12 Essay Prize on Colonialism and its Legacies

The prize is intended to encourage students to engage with the legacies of colonialism in all its forms – historical, political, economic, social, cultural. Colonialism is a major theme in British history. Its legacies are all around us. By writing an essay for the prize, a student has an opportunity to uncover the enduring influence of colonialism in our society and culture and to address some of the difficult and uncomfortable questions that it poses.

There are four questions to choose from – all of them thought-provoking and exploring different areas of study. For more information and details of how to enter, please visit:

Rex Nettleford Essay Prizes: Colonialism and its Legacies - Oriel College

Deadline for submission is 12noon Monday 23rd February 2026.

Film of the Month Competition – any film, any genre, any time of year

This is an ongoing competition for young people aged between 5 and 19. Although it does say "any film", there are some guidelines that you need to follow. You can submit at any time. The website has guides and resources to support your film-making as well. If you are interested in the idea, take a look at: Details of our active competitions. - Film of the Month - Into Film

Ghost Stories – a Writing Competition for 12-18-year-olds

Few stories are as much fun to write as a good, spine-tingling ghost story. Those that get your readers on the edge of their seats!

This competition is open all year round, and is free to enter.

For more information and details of how to enter, please visit: Fright Club (12-18 Year-Olds) | Young Writers