Peterhouse Thomas Campion English Prize 2019
(Funded by the Friends of Peterhouse)

Writing your essay

Write an essay of <u>between 2,000 and 4,000 words including footnotes and appendices</u> on one of the following questions. Include a bibliography and ensure all sources are referenced. **Essays must be submitted as a PDF** via the online form. Please ensure that the pages in your essay are numbered and that your name and school appears clearly on the first page. Please also **name the PDF file in the following format: Prize-Question number-Surname-Initial e.g. TCampion-2-Smith-F.pdf.**

Competitors are advised that the main focus of the essay should **not** be material previously or currently being studied by the entrant as part of their sixth form studies. The entrant may refer to topics that will be studied in future so long as, at the time of the closing date, the entrant has received no formal tuition on the topic in question. All entries must be verified by a Head of Sixth Form or Head of History confirming that the essay is the entrant's own work and that the main focus of the essay is not something which they have hitherto studied in the sixth form classroom.

How to submit

A maximum of **two entries** per competition per school can be accepted, except by prior arrangement with your school. All entries must be approved by a teacher, so make sure your teacher and Head of Department know you are entering and you have the relevant email address to hand when you create your account. Once essays are uploaded to our system, it is not possible to make changes – please ensure you are happy with your work before pressing 'submit'. It is unfortunately not possible to provide feedback on essays.

The deadline for you to submit your essay is 16:00 GMT on **Monday 25th March 2019**. Essays which are not submitted by this time will not be considered under any circumstances. Your teacher will then receive emails from Peterhouse asking them to confirm that you are eligible and that the work complies with our guidelines, as listed in this document and on our website. They must do this by 16:00 GMT on **Monday 1st April 2019** – please inform them of this. Essays which have not been approved by a teacher will not be considered. For this reason, submission by post, fax or email will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances, and only by prior arrangement.

Please direct any questions to essayprize@pet.cam.ac.uk.

Prizes

Each competition has a prize pool of £750. Winners will be contacted by post - please make sure your postal address and other contact details are entered correctly!

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1. 'To call some piece of writing literature does not really tell you anything useful about it, it just pays a compliment.' Does the term 'literature' in fact do any work of definition?

2. Can literature ever be 'timeless' - and, if so, how could we know?

3. 'A poem should not mean but be' (ARCHIBALD MACLEISH). What might this mean, and is it true?

4. In that poetry is always patterned language, we may say that poetry is language tending towards mathematics.' Discuss some examples of poetic patterning in the light of this judgement.

5. Can an atheist ever really *read* a religious text?

6. 'The time is past in which time did not matter' (PAUL VALERY). How do literary works convey the mattering of time?

7. 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty -, that is all/Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.' (JOHN KEATS, 'Ode on a Grecian Urn').
 'Do not forget that a poem, even though it is composed in the language of information is not used in the language-game of giving information.' (WITTGENSTEIN)

What light do these two quotations throw on each other?

8. 'Realism is essentially the democratic art' (GUSTAVE COURBET). What arguments can be mounted against this?

9. 'What is wanted, in art, is to harness the power of the unfinished' (LOUISE GLUCK). Discuss some ways in which the power of the unfinished might be harnessed in literary writing.