

PETERHOUSE VELLACOTT HISTORY PRIZE

Writing your essay

Write an essay of between 2,000 and 4,000 words including footnotes and appendices 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. Vellacott-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 s/he has 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 History 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 **Friday 17th March 2017**. 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 **Thursday 23rd March 2017** – 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.

Prizes

All three competitions have a top prize of £500 and a second prize of £250; several further essays will be highly commended. Winners will be contacted by post - please make sure your postal address and other contact details are entered correctly!

Vellacott History Prize Questions 2017

1. 'Whatever Africans share, we do not have a common traditional culture, common languages, a common religious or conceptual vocabulary... We do not even belong to a common race.' [APPIAH] What is African history?
2. Is race a modern concept?
3. Should Herodotus be considered the father of history?
4. What is the significance of epigraphy for the historian?
5. Why were there so many Greek-speakers in ancient Egypt?
6. Why did barbarian rulers convert to Christianity?
7. Discuss the historical significance of **ONE** of the following buildings: the Umayyad Mosque; Hagia Sophia; the Alhambra Palace.
8. Discuss the historical significance of **ONE** of the following manuscripts: Codex Vaticanus, the Book of Kells, Magna Carta.
9. Discuss the role of horses in **ONE** of the following: eleventh-century Western Europe; thirteenth-century Central Asia; eighteenth-century North America.
10. Did the power of the Papacy increase during the eleventh century?
11. What were the political consequences of the Black Death?
12. 'The Renaissance was the visible consequence of a financial revolution.' Discuss.
13. What was humanism?
14. Does it make sense to speak of **EITHER** a 'Mediterranean World' in the sixteenth century **OR** an 'Atlantic World' in the seventeenth century **OR** a 'Pacific World' in the eighteenth century?
15. Why did early modern people accuse their neighbours of being witches?
16. Would historians do better to describe early modern 'wars of religion' as civil wars?
17. 'Rather Turkish than Catholic.' Did anyone really believe this in early modern Europe?
18. Why did Galileo believe that the language of nature was mathematics?
19. 'The influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished.' [John Dunning, 1780] Discuss with reference to any 50-year period of British politics.
20. Was Enlightenment an elite phenomenon in eighteenth-century Europe? (Answer with reference to at least two countries.)
21. 'Give me liberty or give me death!' [Patrick Henry, 1775] How far does this sentiment account for the American rebellion against British rule?
22. Why were there so many new inventions in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries?
23. How important was violence and coercion to the success of the Dutch empire?
24. Was there a 'crisis of masculinity' in the late Victorian period?
25. Why did many critics around the turn of the twentieth century believe that "the nineteenth century, which has done such wonderful things, has been on the whole a failure"? [J. W. Mackail, 1900]
26. What was the role of imperialism in the fall of the Qing dynasty?
27. How global was World War One?
28. Was the Third Reich a welfare state?
29. 'The more globalized the world has become over the twentieth century, the more strongly national borders have been regulated.' Discuss.
30. 'The average Anglican is a 24-year-old African woman.' How can we account for the shift in the heartlands of Christianity to the global south?
31. How important was the Cuban revolution in the context of 1960s Latin America?
32. 'Probably there are countries where you can predict a man's opinions from his income, but it is never quite safe to do so in England'. Do you agree with George Orwell?
33. 'What finally was it that made an excellent historian? He must set himself the ideal of arriving at the truth, without in the process losing a sense of what was right and appropriate'. Do you agree with Professor Ermanno? (*Garden of the Finzi Continis*).
34. 'Perhaps the means of salvation are already there, implicit in history, unadvertised, carefully concealed by the war mongers, only awaiting rediscovery to be acknowledged with enthusiasm by all thinking men and women'. [VERA BRITAIN, *Testament of Youth*] Discuss.