

The Guardian Foundation

Emerging Voices Awards

16-18 category guidance

The Emerging Voices Awards is a political opinion writing competition celebrating new voices and fresh perspectives in the UK which, now more than ever, is essential to the future of quality, independent journalism.

The competition offers a range of prizes, provides a platform for new voices in journalism and gives young people the opportunity to gain experience and networks.

We invite those aged 16-25 from a state school background to submit a short political opinion piece on a subject of their choice. We particularly encourage entries from those with a lower socio-economic background, Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, LGBTQ+ and people with a disability.

The winner will have their article published on The Guardian Foundation website and receive a £100 Guardian bookshop voucher.



How to enter

Writing the article

Your article should:

- be between 500-700 words (pieces over the word count will be disqualified!)
- have a strong, coherent argument
- be timely and have a political angle to local, national or international news
- be in your own, unique voice
- be well researched, showing a good grasp of the facts

Please read the full guidance in this document before submitting your piece.

For more useful hints and tips, or [visit our website](#).

Submission

- To enter a piece for consideration, you or your teacher should fill out [this entry form](#) in full and submit it by 11:59pm on 15th February 2025
- The link to the form can also be found on our website
- You will be able to upload your article to the submission form
- Your article should be in PDF format
- The article should not include your name or personal details as they will be judged anonymously. The PDF file name can include your name.

If you encounter any problems with the form, the submission process or have any access needs, please do not hesitate to email us awards@theguardianfoundation.org

Judging

The pieces will be judged by a panel made up of experienced Guardian and Observer journalists and contributors. We will let you know if you have been shortlisted by 17th March 2025. If your article is shortlisted, it will be reviewed by a final judging panel, who will decide the winner.

Prizes and feedback

The winning piece will be published on The Guardian Foundation website, which is visited by over 6,000 people a month. The winner will also receive a free voucher to a Guardian Live event, a year's digital subscription to the Guardian, a £100 Guardian Bookshop voucher and a trophy presented at our awards ceremony event..

The runner up will receive a Guardian Live voucher and a certificate presented at our awards ceremony event.

All shortlisted entrants will receive detailed feedback on their piece from the judges and a digital certificate.

Further guidance

1. Find your own voice

We are not looking for a piece written “in the style of” Hugo Young or anyone else, but for an authentic new voice, and a fresh perspective on a topic you feel passionate about. Choose a subject and argument that you feel isn't currently well represented and that you can communicate well to your readers and take them on a journey. We're keen to hear from people from different backgrounds, and about ideas, subjects and viewpoints you may not feel have been covered before.

2. Construct a good argument

Your piece should present a clear argument that reflects your opinion on your chosen subject. Remember that you are trying to persuade your reader to come around to your view. Make this easy for them by including evidence, addressing other perspectives directly, presenting a conclusion and structuring your writing in a way that is easy-to-follow. Don't forget to proofread your work before you submit it - check all your spelling/grammar!

3. Include a personal anecdote

A strong opinion piece will weave some expertise in or experience of your subject by sharing a personal/professional anecdote. It's important for the reader to see and trust that you truly understand the topic by providing your own perspective on an issue.

4. Do your research

Remember that while a strong argument is important, so too is a grasp of the facts. Writing a good opinion column involves just as much reporting as a news piece, if not more. Your task is to persuade others, so you need to make the strongest possible case for your opinion - strong enough to persuade your opponents. The best pieces consider the opposite position's best argument, then knock it down with an even better argument.

5. Show your workings

The winning piece will appear online. Links are an essential part of writing for the web. The internet is awash with rumours, gossip and inaccuracies, which makes credibility all the more important to our readers. Writing about a government report? Link to it. Quoting the prime minister? Link to the source. Referring to old news stories? Find the link. The more you can show the workings of your research, the better.

6. Be topical

Your piece should also be timely, or ahead of time (bearing in mind that the winning article will be published in early-mid April). So choose a subject that is as broad as possible. It could be ongoing (for example, climate change, human rights, elections) or that hasn't happened yet, but will (eg an event that is happening later in the year or next year).

7. Don't feel limited

Politics is the choices that individuals, governments, corporations and other groups make, and how those choices impact society or a group of people. This means that most topics can be looked at from a political angle, so don't feel limited in your subject matter. If you have any questions, feel free to email us.

Terms and conditions

1. The Guardian Foundation's Emerging Voices Awards 16-18 age category is open to those who are 16, 17 or 18 years old on 10th January 2025. You must be resident in the UK. You must be either currently attending a state-funded school or have previously attended one.
2. The Award is not open to employees or agencies of Guardian News & Media Limited ("GNM"), its group companies or their family members, or anyone else connected with the creation or administration of the Award.
3. Entries can be submitted by the author, their teacher or a youth group leader. The entry form should be filled out in full with articles uploaded in PDF format. The deadline for all entries is 11.59pm on 15th February 2025. Entries received after this deadline will not be processed.
4. No responsibility is taken for entries that are lost, delayed, misdirected or incomplete or cannot be delivered or entered for any technical or other reason. Proof of delivery of the entry is not proof of receipt.
5. The Guardian Foundation reserves the right to not process entries with illegible application forms or those that do not include the correct amount of entered material.
6. Entries must be the original work of the person responsible for the publication. Any evidence of plagiarism may result in the entrant being disqualified.
7. We will check all entries to ensure AI tools have not been used. Those who have will be disqualified. Basic grammar and spell check tools are permitted.
8. Parental permission must be secured by the adult or young person submitting the entries if the entrant is aged 16 or 17. The Guardian Foundation cannot be held responsible if this has not been obtained.
9. All content must be original and any quotes must be real. Permission must be given from the person(s) quoted in the articles if personally obtained.
10. The winning article will be edited according to Guardian practice.
11. Strictly one article entry per person.
12. We will not accept entries that have been published anywhere before or during the competition period.

Judging and the prizes:

11. The judges' decision is final and no negotiations or correspondence with entrants will be entered into. The list of people acting as judges for the Award will be set out on our website when they have been finalised. The full criteria to be applied is set out in this document. From the entries the judges will select a shortlist of no more than 10 finalists.
12. Only shortlisted entrants will be contacted by The Guardian Foundation.
13. The winner of the award will have their piece published on The Guardian Foundation website, receive a free place at a Guardian Live event (where available) and a digital subscription to the Guardian. The winner will also receive a £100 Guardian Bookshop voucher. The winner and runner up will be provided with the details of how to arrange their attendance to the Guardian Live event shortly after the announcement.

Terms and conditions (cont.)

Other terms and conditions:

14. The Guardian Foundation retains the right to substitute the prize with another prize of similar value in the event the original prize offered is not available due to circumstances beyond its reasonable control.

15. The prizes are non-exchangeable, non-transferable, and are not redeemable for cash or other prizes.

16. The winner and runners up will be required to be photographed or provide photos for promotional purposes.

17. Material entered will not be returned to senders.

18. The Guardian Foundation accepts no responsibility for any damage, loss, liabilities, injury or disappointment incurred or suffered by you as a result of entering the Award or accepting the prize. The Guardian Foundation further disclaims liability for any injury or damage to your or any other person's computer relating to or resulting from participation in or downloading any materials in connection with the Award. Nothing shall exclude the liability of The Guardian Foundation for death, fraud or personal injury as a result of its negligence.

19. In consideration of The Guardian Foundation agreeing to consider their entry, each entrant: (a) grants GNM and The Guardian Foundation a royalty-free licence to copy, edit, display, publish, broadcast and make available their entry in any format in connection with the Award or promotion of the Award; (b) agrees that GNM and The Guardian Foundation may publish their name in connection with the use of the entry; (c) warrants that the work submitted with their entry is their own or the relevant team's original work, that it is not defamatory and that it shall not infringe any third-party rights including, without limitation, privacy; and (d) agrees that GNM and The Guardian Foundation may grant to its partners and/or associated companies a sub-licence of the rights licensed to GNM under these terms and conditions on such terms as GNM and The Guardian Foundation shall agree in its sole discretion.

20. The Guardian Foundation reserves the right at any time and from time to time to modify or discontinue, temporarily or permanently, the Emerging Voices Awards or any feature thereof with or without prior notice due to reasons outside its control (including, without limitation, in the case of anticipated, suspected, or actual fraud).

21. The Emerging Voices Awards and these terms and conditions shall be governed by English law under the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts.

The Guardian Foundation

Our purpose is to promote global press freedom and access to liberal journalism.

By engaging with audiences and educators, in schools and communities, our media literacy work tackles disinformation, enhancing people's ability to critically evaluate news.

Through training, mentorship, bursaries and career guidance, we facilitate opportunities for people from underrepresented backgrounds to use their voice and agency and be included in the media.

By collaborating with fellow journalists and news organisations on areas that challenge their viability, we foster their capacity to engage people with fact-based journalism.

Contact us about the award

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