



THE QUEEN'S COMMONWEALTH ESSAY COMPETITION 2018

PRESS RELEASE: The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition 2018 winners announced

Four young writers have been named as the Winners and Runners-Up of The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition 2018, selected from approximately 12,000 entries from across the five regions of the Commonwealth. The competition is the world's oldest international schools' writing competition.

Representing almost every Commonwealth country, entrants wrote on pertinent topics such as the role of education in building a fairer future, what they would do as their country's Head of Government for the day to improve life for young people and their perfect recipe for a common future.

Senior Winner Zahra Hussain, 17, is from Lahore, Pakistan and Senior Runner-Up Ng Woon Neng, 16, is from Singapore.

Junior Winner Janine Shum, 13, is from Singapore and Junior Runner-Up Floria Gu, 13, is from Vancouver, Canada.

This year's competition reflected the 2018 Commonwealth Theme of 'Towards a Common Future' and its four sub-themes of A Fairer Future, A More Sustainable Future, A More Secure Future and A More Prosperous Future which informed the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in London in April.

The Winners and Runners-Up produced highly original and thought-provoking short stories and poems on such varied topics as child marriage, the impact of environmental damage on future generations, educational inequality, and the competing concepts of Wealth, Freedom, Health and Happiness.

Entries were assessed by a pan-Commonwealth body of volunteer judges, drawn from more than 40 different countries. Judges commented on the maturity shown by many of the young writers, with entries described as 'intelligent', 'impassioned', 'thoughtful', 'articulate' and 'beautifully written'.

The final decision was taken by an expert panel of authors, journalists and poets which included *Times* journalist Giles Coren and spoken word artist Jaspreet Kaur, who performed at the Commonwealth Service in Westminster Abbey in March this year.

The four Winners and Runners-up will be flown to London later in the year to take part in 'Winners' Week': a special programme consisting of cultural and educational activities. The week includes an Awards Ceremony at Buckingham Palace where HRH The Duchess of

Cornwall will present the Winners and Runners-up with their certificates on behalf of Her Majesty The Queen, and notable authors will read extracts of the winning pieces.

Dr Greg Munro, Chief Executive of The Royal Commonwealth Society said, 'This year's entries were of an incredibly high standard, offering insightful and inspired thoughts on a wide range of topics. It's wonderful to see so many young people engaging with the Commonwealth through creative writing and sharing their ideas and experiences on important issues, similar to those raised at The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting earlier this year.'

--ENDS--

NOTES TO EDITORS:

More information about the Competition, including the Winners and Runners-up, can be found here: <https://thercs.org/youth-and-education/the-queens-commonwealth-essay-competition/>

Senior Winner: [*Hues of Red*, Zahra Hussain, 17, Lahore, Pakistan](#)

Senior Runner-up: [*An Odd Company*, Ng Woon Neng, 16, Singapore](#)

Junior Winner: [*Two Voices*, Janine Shum, 13, Singapore](#)

Junior Runner up: [*Inheritance*, Floria Gu, 13, Vancouver, Canada](#)

The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition was founded in 1883 and is the world's oldest international schools' writing contest. The competition is sponsored by Cambridge University Press and this year received approximately 12,000 entries from across the Commonwealth. The competition in the modern day gives creative young writers the opportunity to explore contemporary themes through the written word.

The Junior category is open to entrants aged 13 years and under and the Senior category is open to entrants aged 14-18.

The overarching theme for 2018 was 'Towards a Common Future', which mirrors the 2018 Commonwealth Year theme and the theme of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in April. Both Senior and Junior topics gave young people the opportunity to think about the four sub-themes: a fairer future, a more secure future, a more sustainable future and a more prosperous future. The topics provided an opportunity to develop critical thinking and to express views on difficult issues in a creative manner. The essay questions were as follows:

Senior Category:

- 1) The road to a safer future.
- 2) How does education contribute to a fairer future?
- 3) 'Healthy, Wealthy, Happy, and Free': is one more important than the others?
- 4) Future generations have rights too, which must be defended. Discuss.

Junior Category:

- 1) What does a safer future mean to you and your community?
- 2) Write a recipe for a common future: what ingredients will you need? What is the best method for making it? What will it look like?
- 3) 'A Day in the Life'. Imagine you are your country's Head of Government for the day: how will you build a better future for young people?
- 4) Our Common Earth.

The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS), founded in 1868, is a network of individuals and organisations committed to improving the lives and prospects of Commonwealth citizens across the world. Through youth empowerment, education and advocacy, the Society promotes the value and values of the Commonwealth. www.thercs.org

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