



Murray Edwards College Franklin Society, University of Cambridge

franklinsoc@gmail.com

Essay Competition – Advice to Students

- There is no need to meet the upper word limit. A shorter essay that more closely answers the question will be considered more highly than a longer one that is less concise.
- Consider several different approaches to the essay title and try to include a range of ideas in your essay.
- Always proofread your work.
- Always check the scientific accuracy of your claims. It is best to do this by finding a reliable scientific source to reference – for example a textbook, scientific paper or journal article.
- Don't forget to reference the sources you use. A good method of doing this is using the Harvard referencing system or a method similar to that used on Wikipedia. It is important to indicate exactly where your sources were used in the text. Always consider the credibility of your sources and only use those that you consider to be accurate and reliable.
- Planning is essential – make notes of the important ideas you want to include and structure these into coherent paragraphs. Some people find it helpful to create spider-diagrams, while others will bullet point out each paragraph. Whatever method works best for you, ALWAYS start your essay with a plan.
- Although you are definitely encouraged to look beyond the A level syllabus and at degree level sources, try to write your essay for a non-specialist audience, such as other students studying A level science subjects. Explain all ideas clearly with relevant examples and evidence.
- Write your essay in a 'formal' voice – colloquial language or a conversational tone are not appropriate. It's best to write in the third person (i.e. avoiding "I" or "you").

Judging Criteria

The following may be taken into account when judging entries

- Scientific accuracy of the essay
- Creativity and originality of entrant's approach to the question
- Comprehensiveness of response
- Academic level of the essay and use of ideas and knowledge beyond the AS/A level syllabus
- Writing style and ability to explain ideas to a non-specialist audience
- Clear presentation of the topic and focus on answering the question
- Use of real world examples and evidence
- Range, credibility and validity of sources used
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar