

Whitlam Institute

WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY

WHAT MATTERS? COMPETITION IT'S TIME TO WRITE!

Dear English Coordinator

The Whitlam Institute's annual *What Matters?* writing competition, sponsored by Officeworks, is being more enthusiastically embraced by students, teachers and parents alike each year. In 2011 over 1800 students seized this opportunity with the support of their teachers. Do have a look at the short TV program on last year's awards ceremony for an idea of what this competition is all about (www.whitlam.org/whatmatters).

This competition is simplicity itself, offering all primary and secondary students in NSW and the ACT the opportunity to write a 400- 600 word opinion piece on what matters to them and why. The 2012 competition is now open and we would welcome entries from as many of your students who may wish to participate.

HOW TO ENTER (see enclosed poster for display in your school)

Students submit typed 400-600 opinion piece accompanied by a signed Entry Form (**form enclosed**). One entry per student. **All participating students receive a Certificate of Participation.**

JUDGING CRITERIA

See overleaf for the judging criteria and information.

STUDENT PRIZES

Prizes are awarded in 4 categories: Years 5/6, 7/8, 9/10 and 11/12.

- \$350 for each category winner and \$200 for each category runner-up. Finalists attend an Awards Ceremony on **17 August 2012** where the overall winner is announced and students participate in a Young Writer's Forum.
- Overall winner receives a laptop donated by competition sponsor Officeworks.
- Year 11/12 winner receives the opportunity to participate in ReachOut's ReachoutReporters multimedia content producing program (www.reachout.com), receiving professional training and the opportunity to be published online and be paid for their work.
- The category winners from Years 5/6, 7/8 and 9/10 will each receive a full-day creative writing workshop donated by *The Writing Workshop*, conducted by award-winning author Bernard Cohen.

SCHOOL PRIZES

All participating schools go in a draw for a chance to win one of five Officeworks vouchers valued at \$1000 each.

CLOSING DATE: 4 May 2012

I do hope that you might encourage your staff and students to participate in this competition. We would be grateful if you could pass this information on to relevant teachers in your school.

If you have queries or require further information please contact Amy Sambrooke in our office on (02) 9685 9072 or visit our website at www.whitlam.org.

Warm regards



Eric Sidoti
Director, Whitlam Institute



Proudly sponsored by Officeworks

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2012 *WHAT MATTERS?* WRITING COMPETITION

CRITERIA

The following criteria will be applied by judges when selecting winning entries in the 2012 *WHAT MATTERS?* writing competition.

Criteria one	Original work of between 400-600 words
Criteria two	Careful attention to spelling and grammar
Criteria three	Focus on a matter or issue of significance, expressed with passionate conviction
Criteria four	Articulate through appropriate and effective use of language with logical cohesion
Criteria five	Creative and imaginative approach to the subject
Criteria six	Readable and engaging

Tips for 2012 *WHAT MATTERS?* WRITING COMPETITION provided by our judges

The following tips have been provided by our judges to help prepare a winning entry:

1. Correct spelling and grammar is essential.
2. Authenticity. Don't write what you think your teacher or the judges would want you to write about. Write about it because you care.
3. Personal experience. This is not essential, but a common theme with many of the standout essays is a level of personal experience.
4. Don't overwrite. Keep the language simple and to the point. Too often the writing gets overwrought in an attempt to express how serious the subject matter is.
5. Be original.
6. Do your homework beforehand. You don't have to fill your essay with facts and figures, but it will help you shape your understanding of what you are writing about.
7. Use examples, case studies, media reports, etc. Root your essay in real life.
8. Just because the subject matter is serious doesn't mean your essay has to be completely serious. Humour expressed well can be very appealing. Humour expressed badly isn't. If you use humour, use it judiciously.

The 2011 winning and highly commended entries can be viewed on our website at www.whitlam.org/whatmatters.

We hope you find these resources helpful.

If you have any questions or require more information please contact the Whitlam Institute on 9685 9187 or visit www.whitlam.org

Please send all entries with clearly completed and signed entry forms by **Friday 4 May 2012** to:

**Whitlam Institute within the University of Western Sydney
Locked Bag 1797
Penrith NSW 2751.**