INSTITUTE FOR CAREER STUDIES

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL STUDENT WRITING COMPETITIONS DIRECTORY

2026–27

Discovering Talent. Developing Ideas. Empowering Thought-Leaders.

SPECIAL ICS DAY EDITION
23 NOVEMBER 2026

An initiative of the Institute for Career Studies (ICS), Lucknow

Guiding Futures, Shaping Change.
High Touch before High Tech.

A Message from the Founder Director

Nurturing Young Voices in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

As we celebrate ICS Day, I am delighted to present the ICS National & International Student Writing Competitions Directory 2026–27.

At ICS, we have always believed that education must go beyond the acquisition of knowledge. It must nurture the ability to think independently, question intelligently, communicate meaningfully and contribute creatively to society.

We are living in an age of Artificial Intelligence, where information is abundant and technology is transforming how we learn, work and communicate. Yet the ability to develop an original perspective, express an idea with sensitivity, construct a meaningful argument and communicate with purpose is a vital human strength.

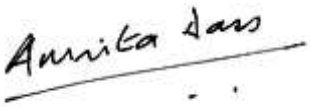
Writing is one of the most powerful ways of developing these capabilities. Through this directory, ICS seeks to connect students across India with national and international platforms where their ideas, imagination and literary talent can find expression and recognition.

We hope this publication will encourage schools to create stronger cultures of reading, writing, reflection and intellectual curiosity. We also hope it will inspire students to look beyond examinations and discover the joy of expressing their own ideas.

Our aspiration is to nurture a generation that does not merely consume information but questions, interprets, creates and contributes.

Let every child discover the power of their voice.

Warm regards,



Dr Amrita Dass
Founder Director
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https://www.icscareergps.com/

About this Directory

This directory is a curated resource for students, parents, teachers, school leaders, librarians and educators. It brings together selected opportunities in academic essays, creative writing, short stories, poetry, research, journalism, environmental writing, letter writing and book publishing.

Primary audience: students from classes 3 to 12. Each competition has its own age, grade, nationality, school-enrolment and submission rules. The organiser's current rules always take precedence.

How to read competition status

Status	Meaning
Open / announced	The organiser has published a current-cycle window or deadline.
Upcoming / date awaited	The competition is established, but the next cycle's date is not confirmed.
Closed – current cycle	The most recent deadline has passed; monitor the organiser for the next edition.

PART I | National writing opportunities – India

1. Albert Barrow Memorial All-India Inter-School Creative Writing Competition

CISCE | 2026 cycle completed; 2027 circular awaited.

Eligibility: Students of Classes IX–X and XI–XII in CISCE-affiliated schools; one participant per school in each category, as per the 2026 circular.

Focus: Inter-school creative writing and literary expression.

Current cycle: The 2026 competition was scheduled for 13 July 2026. The 2026 circular specifies two categories: Classes IX–X and XI–XII. Schools should consult the next CISCE circular for the 2027 date, host-school arrangements and instructions.

Official information: https://www.cisce.org/

ICS note: An important national opportunity to retain in the directory. Do not imply that schools outside CISCE affiliation are eligible unless a future circular says otherwise.

2. National Young Authors Challenge 2.0

Big Red Education in partnership with Penguin Random House India | Open – 2026–27 cycle.

Eligibility: Grades 5–12; two age/grade categories, as defined by the organiser.

Focus: Original short-story writing; selected stories are considered for anthology publication and online showcase.

Current cycle: Submission period runs to 15 February 2027. Early-bird deadline: 30 November 2026. The organiser describes two books featuring selected stories and a publishing bootcamp.

Official information: https://www.penguin.co.in/newsroom/big-red-education-and-penguin-india-launch-the-national-young-authors-challenge/

ICS note: Check the official registration portal for fees, exact word limits, consent and publication terms.

3. Write India Campaign - Times of India

Organiser: Times Internet Limited / The Times of India.

Format: A short-story writing initiative built around a monthly passage or prompt shared by a featured author. Participants develop the prompt into an original story, following the general campaign rules and the author-specific instructions.

Historical campaign pattern: The official campaign FAQs describe submissions opening on the 7th and closing on the 30th of the month. The Season 3 page describes monthly author prompts, selection of monthly winners and publication of selected winning stories in an end-of-campaign book. These details relate to earlier campaign seasons.

2026–27 status: The Times of India campaign pages currently accessible show legacy season information and author pages marked closed. No currently active 2026–27 monthly prompt or open submission window could be confirmed. Students and schools should check the live campaign page before preparing an entry.

Important participation note: Read the current terms carefully. Earlier terms have included originality requirements, editorial rights, exclusivity and promotional-use provisions. Parental or guardian guidance and approval are important for participants under 18.

Official pages: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/write-india/authorcampaign.cms | https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/books/writeindia/season-3/writeindiaaboutus_s3.cms

4. Times of India - Young Writers / Parenting Essay Contests

Organiser: Times Parenting / Times Internet Limited.

Format: The current Times Parenting contest page advertises a child-focused essay-writing contest. The displayed example prompt is “Write a Letter to Mother Earth”, inviting children to express their thoughts about nature and environmental protection.

Recognition shown on the current contest page: gift vouchers worth ₹20,000, e-certificates for participants and online/social-platform features for winning entries. The page states there is no entry fee for that advertised contest.

Eligibility and age: The contest page provides an age-group field in the entry form, but the exact age range should be checked in the live contest rules. Do not assume that all editions are restricted to ages 6–15.

2026–27 status: The Times Parenting contest page is live, but the contest window is specified for each individual prompt. Confirm that the relevant prompt is open before submitting.

Official page: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/parenting/parenting-contest
Clarification: The current TOI Young Leaders offering is described by TOI as a paid confidence, public-speaking and storytelling masterclass for Grades 4–9, with certificates, feature opportunities and jury-selected recognition. It is not described on its current page as an essay-writing contest. Schools should not present it as one unless TOI publishes separate essay-contest rules.

TOI Young Leaders information: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/toi/youngleaders

5. All India HOPE Talent Contest

SchoolsIndia | 2026 cycle – results scheduled for December 2026; entry status to be checked.

Eligibility: Nursery to Class XII through participating schools; category-specific rules apply.

Focus: Essay writing and art.

Current cycle: The 2026 edition is identified by the organiser as the 24th edition. Consult the official notice for category, deadline, fees and result details.

Official information: https://www.schoolsindia.com/

ICS note: Include only the writing category when promoting this as a writing opportunity.

6. Urja Shakti Essay Competition

Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology (RGIPT) | 2026 cycle closed; next edition awaited.

Eligibility: The 2026 edition was for female Class XII students studying Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics.

Focus: Essay writing on women and energy.

Current cycle: The 2026 competition included a 1,000-word limit and a first prize of ₹15,000, as stated in the 2026 notice.

Official information: https://www.rgipt.ac.in/

ICS note: Eligibility was highly specific. Recheck the next notice before recommending to students.

7. Youth Eco Summit – Student Writing Challenges

Youth Eco Summit | 2026–27 cycle – verify individual category window.

Eligibility: School students in organiser-defined grade categories.

Focus: Environmental writing, open letters and related creative submissions.

Current cycle: The advertised programme included selected writing categories with a 30 November 2026 deadline. Themes include waste, sustainability and environmental responsibility.

Official information: https://youthecosummit.com/

ICS note: Do not assume every summit activity is a writing competition; use the exact category rules.

8. ICMR S.H.I.N.E. National Competition

Indian Council of Medical Research | 2026 cycle concluded; next edition awaited.

Eligibility: Student eligibility and category requirements are defined in the annual ICMR notice.

Focus: Health, science, research and community problem-solving; interdisciplinary written submissions may form part of the entry.

Current cycle: Consult ICMR's official notice for the exact competition format, language availability, awards and submission requirements.

Official information: https://www.icmr.gov.in/

ICS note: Include as an interdisciplinary research opportunity, not as a conventional creative-writing contest.

9. Writory Monthly Poetry Contest & Monthly Short Story Contest

Writory | Monthly competitions; ongoing throughout the year.

Eligibility: Writers aged 13+ years. There are no residency or nationality restrictions; participants from India and across the globe can participate.

Focus: Original poetry and short stories.

Monthly cycle: The contest opens on the 1st of every month, submissions close on the 25th, and results are announced on the 30th. Certificates are emailed to participants and scores are made visible in their profiles. Entry fee for the poetry contest starts from INR 150 onwards. Certificates are provided to all participants. Winners and participants maintaining a three-month streak can earn free entries. Stories must be 100–6,000 words, excluding the title. Entry fee is INR 199 for one story, INR 349 for two stories, and INR 699 for five stories. Monthly winners receive free entry to the next round, while participation in three consecutive rounds earns the Seasoned Quill badge along with a free entry.

Current cycle: Ongoing since new submission windows open on the 1st of every month.

Official information: Poetry: https://writoryofficial.com/poetry-contest-india, Short Story:

https://writoryofficial.com/story-writing-competition-india

ICS note: A useful recurring opportunity for students aged 13+, particularly those interested in poetry and creative writing.

10. Wingword Poetry Competition

Wingword Poetry Festival | 2026 cycle concluded; next edition awaited.

Eligibility: Indian citizens and persons of Indian origin. Participants aged 15 years and above can enter the main category, while those aged 7-14 years can participate in the Junior Category. Poems must be originally written by the applicant. Beginners are encouraged to participate.

Focus: Poetry in any subject, length or style. The competition is conducted entirely online, and performance is not required.

Entry fee: INR 1,099 for one poem, INR 2,099 for three poems and INR 3,099 for five poems. Each poem is considered an individual entry.

Current cycle: The 2026 extended submission deadline was 15 November 2026. Results are scheduled to be declared at 8 PM on 30 November 2026. The 2027 competition details are awaited.

Official information: https://www.wingword.in/

ICS note: A good opportunity for students interested in poetry, particularly those looking to write in Indian languages as well as English. The Junior Category makes it relevant for younger students from Classes 7–8 and above, subject to age eligibility.

11. Shrihind Publications Bal-Vividha Creative Writing Competition

Shrihind Publications | Nationwide annual creative writing competition for young writers | 2026 cycle concluded; next edition awaited.

Eligibility: Children aged 5–16 years. Each participant can submit up to two creations.

Focus: Poem, story, play, article or painting. The theme is open to the participant's choice. Written submissions should be between 100 and 800 words. Entry fee is INR 100.

Current cycle: Consult Shrihind Publications official notice for the 2027 cycle details.

Official information: https://shrihindpublications.in/creative-writing-competitions/, https://shrihindpublications.in/baal-vividha/

ICS note: A valuable creative-expression opportunity for students aged 5–16

12. India Writing Project

India Writing Project | 2026 cycle concluded; next edition awaited.

Eligibility: No age restriction.

Focus: Original essays, poems, articles or short stories on any topic or subject, in any preferred style or genre.

Current cycle: Consult India Writing Project official notice for the 2027 cycle details.

Official information: https://indiawritingproject.com/contest/

ICS note: Build a portfolio of original English writing

13. Chanakya National Law University Article Writing Competition

1st CNLU National Article Writing Competition 2026 cycle concluded; next edition awaited.

Eligibility: Open to undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled in a recognised law university, college or institution in India.

Focus: Legal article writing, with submissions expected to be original and unpublished.

Current cycle: Consult CNLU official notice for the 2027 cycle details.

Official information: https://www.scconline.com/blog/post/2026/10/15/cnlu-cle-national-article-writing-competition-2026-competition-law/

ICS note: The competition can help students develop skills in legal analysis, structured argumentation and formal legal citation.

14. ICSSR National Essay Writing Competition for Young Scholars

Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) | 2026 cycle concluded; next edition awaited.

Eligibility: Open to undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled in Institutes of National Importance or in a UGC-recognised Indian University/Deemed University/Institution/College.

Focus: Essay writing on life, contributions, courage and legacy of unsung heroes and young revolutionaries of India's freedom struggle.

Current cycle: Consult ICSSR official notice for the 2027 cycle details.

Official information: https://www.icssr.org/

ICS note: A specialised academic writing opportunity for undergraduate and postgraduate students, particularly those interested in history, social sciences, research and India's freedom movement.

15. National Online Essay Writing Competition

Controller and Auditor General (CAG) of India | 2026 cycle concluded; next edition awaited.

Eligibility: Students and young people aged 15–29 years.

Focus: Essay writing on the Institution of the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) of India

Current cycle: Consult national online essay writing official notice for the 2027 cycle details.

Official information: https://www.scholarshipsinindia.com/awards/national-online-essaywriting-competition-2.html

ICS note: A valuable opportunity to write on civics, public administration, governance and contemporary national issues.

16. TATA Building India School Essay Competition

TATA Building India | School-based national essay competition | 2026 cycle concluded; next edition awaited.

Eligibility: Students of classes 6 to 8 and 9 to 12.

Focus: A school-based competition combining film screening and essay writing, conducted at the participating school.

Current cycle: Consult TATA building India school essay competition official notice for the 2027 cycle details.

Official information: https://www.tatabuildingindia.com/essay-competition

ICS note: A valuable opportunity to create awareness through film with essay writing.

17. Write To Win Environmental Article Writing Competition

Environment and Climate Change | 2026 cycle concluded; next edition awaited.

Eligibility: Students of classes 6 to 12.

Focus: Theme-based writing competition.

Current cycle: Consult write to win official notice for the 2027 cycle details.

Official information: https://writetowin.online/

ICS note: A valuable opportunity to create awareness on climate and environment through essay writing.

18. Zorba Books Essay Writing Competition

For writers across India | 2026 cycle concluded; next edition awaited.

Eligibility: : Open to all writers across India, including students, working professionals, first-time writers and experienced authors.

Focus: Theme-based writing competition.

Current cycle: Consult Zorba Books official notice for the 2027 cycle details.

Official information: https://www.zorbabooks.com/writers-challenge/

ICS note: An accessible creative-writing opportunity particularly suitable for practising concise expression.

19. National Young Authors' Fair 2026

BriBooks | Open – 2026–27 cycle.

Eligibility: School students; consult the organiser for age-specific participation requirements.

Focus: Book writing, creative authorship and publishing.

Current cycle: School registration closes 27 November 2026; student registration closes 6 December 2026; book publishing period closes 14 January 2027; National Awards and Exhibition scheduled for 27 March 2027.

Official information: https://www.yaf.bribooks.com/events/nyaf-india-2026

ICS note: Review the commercial terms carefully, including any optional book purchase, printing, distribution or participation charges.

20. Bukmuk Inter-School Short Story Writing Competition

Bukmuk Publishing | 2026 cycle – deadline advertised as 30 November 2026; verify live status.

Eligibility: Children in organiser-defined age groups; international entries may be accepted under the current rules.

Focus: Original short stories and possible anthology publication.

Current cycle: Age groups, theme, word count, fee and publication arrangements are set by the current organiser notice.

Official information: https://www.bukmuk.com/

ICS note: Confirm that the advertised edition remains open before circulating this entry as an immediate opportunity.

PART II | International writing opportunities

A. Academic essays and critical thinking

21. Cambridge Rethink Essay Competition

Cambridge Centre for International Research (CCIR) | 2026 cycle concluded; next edition awaited.

Eligibility: Students of age 11 to 18

Focus: Critical thinking and exploration of historical, contemporary and speculative future issues.

Current cycle: Consult Cambridge essay competition official notice for the 2027 cycle details.

Official information: https://cambridge-research.org/essay-competition/

ICS note: A particularly strong opportunity for students who enjoy questioning ideas, analysing complex issues and developing independent arguments.

22. Oxford Agora – The Global Essay and Defence Prize

Oxford Global Education | Open – closes 31 January 2027 at 23:59 GMT.

Eligibility: Ages 11–18 worldwide; Junior 11–13 and Senior 14–18.

Focus: Academic argument and essay writing; shortlisted entrants may be invited to defend their argument before an academic panel.

Current cycle: Free entry. Junior essays up to 1,000 words; Senior essays up to 1,500 words. Academic Defence sessions are scheduled for 2–15 March 2027. Organiser states that Oxford and Cambridge academics set questions; the competition is independently organised by Oxford Global Education and is not administered or endorsed by either university.

Official information: https://oxfordglobaleducation.com/oxford-agora

ICS note: Students should read the detailed AI, bibliography, process-statement and safeguarding rules. Avoid implying official University of Oxford affiliation.

23. Horizon Academic Essay Prize 2027

Horizon Academic | Open – final registration/submission deadline 24 January 2027.

Eligibility: Students in any country who will be enrolled in high school as of 31 May 2027.

Focus: Academic essay writing; 2027 theme: Back to the Future.

Current cycle: Free registration until 17 January 2027; late registration costs US$5 until 24 January 2027. Shortlist notification scheduled for 8 February; virtual award ceremony 14 February 2027.

Official information: https://horizoninspires.com/essay-prize/

ICS note: Read prize and scholarship terms carefully; scholarship benefits may be conditional on programme admission.

24. Yale Review of International Studies Essay Prize

Yale Review of International Studies / competition portal | Open – submissions close 31 January 2027 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.

Eligibility: Students enrolled in high school in any country on 31 January 2027; individual entries.

Focus: International relations, global affairs and evidence-based essay writing.

Current cycle: Essays must be 1,000–1,500 words, in English, with MLA 9 referencing. Free entry. Early-bird deadline 27 December 2026. The portal states that AI use is restricted to spelling/grammar checks or source discovery and must be disclosed.

Official information: https://highschoolessaycomp.org/

ICS note: Students should follow the portal's anonymity and citation requirements. Confirm the exact prompts and rules before submission.

25. The Oxford Essay Prize 2027

Oxford Centre for Advanced Research | Open – registration deadline 3 January 2027.

Eligibility: Ages 14–18.

Focus: Interdisciplinary academic essays responding to organiser-issued prompts.

Current cycle: Registration is free until 20 December 2026, then £5 until 3 January 2027. Organiser advertises more than £9,000 in combined cash prizes and scholarships; see its terms for details.

Official information: https://apply.globalessayprize.uk/registration

ICS note: Do not confuse this independently organised prize with a University of Oxford admissions or university-administered competition.

26. Harvard Crimson Global Essay Competition 2027

Harvard Crimson Education competition team | 2027 dates announced; registration and regional schedules should be checked.

Eligibility: High-school students; international regions and age requirements are governed by competition rules.

Focus: Creative, argumentative and journalistic writing.

Current cycle: Available competition information lists registration closing 10 February 2027, regional submission 23 February and global final submission 19 March 2027. Fees and regional eligibility must be checked.

Official information: https://www.essaycomp.org/

ICS note: Do not imply that the competition is organised or endorsed by Harvard University. Verify the current official schedule.

27. John Locke Global Essay Prize

John Locke Institute | Annual competition – 2027 questions and dates awaited.

Eligibility: Students under 19; junior category and subject-specific rules apply.

Focus: Philosophy, Politics, Economics, History, Psychology, Theology, Law and Science.

Current cycle: Essay length and category rules are published with each annual question set. Previous editions have used a maximum of 2,000 words; confirm the 2027 rules.

Official information: https://www.johnlockeinstitute.com/

ICS note: Prestigious academic opportunity; students should prepare only after the new questions and rules are published.

28. The Concord Review

The Concord Review, USA | Rolling/periodic submissions; check current issue deadlines.

Eligibility: Secondary-school students; international submissions.

Focus: Original historical research essays and scholarly writing.

Current cycle: Submission guidance and issue schedule are published by the journal. This is a publication-oriented research opportunity rather than a conventional prize contest.

Official information: https://www.tcr.org/

ICS note: Particularly suitable for students with strong interest in history and independent research.

29. The Sidgwick Prize 2027

The Sidgwick Prize | Open – deadline 30 June 2027.

Eligibility: Students aged 13–18 worldwide on the date of submission.

Focus: Academic essays across the subjects specified by the organiser.

Current cycle: Registration opened 19 September 2026. Essay limit 2,000 words. Late entries may be accepted until 15 July under the organiser's conditions.

Official information: https://www.sidgwickprize.com/

ICS note: Use the current year's questions, format and referencing guidance.

B. Creative writing, poetry and literary expression

30. Queen's Commonwealth Writing Competition

Royal Commonwealth Society | 2026 edition closed; 2027 cycle awaited.

Eligibility: Commonwealth nationals or residents aged 18 or under; India is eligible subject to current rules.

Focus: Creative writing in English around an annual theme.

Current cycle: Annual competition established in 1883. The organiser's website confirms the 2026 edition is closed and invites entrants to follow future announcements.

Official information: https://www.royalcwsociety.org/writing-competition

ICS note: Check 2027 age divisions, theme, word limit and national eligibility when announced.

31. Bennington College Young Writers Awards

Bennington College, USA | 2026 cycle closed; next cycle awaited.

Eligibility: High-school students in Grades 9–12; consult the annual rules for international eligibility.

Focus: Poetry, fiction and nonfiction.

Current cycle: Previous awards have included cash prizes. Confirm the next submission period, fee status, categories and prize amounts directly with Bennington.

Official information: https://www.bennington.edu/events/young-writers-awards

ICS note: Do not advertise a prior-year prize amount as guaranteed for the next edition.

32. Write the World – International Writing Competitions

Write the World | Recurring programme; check live monthly prompt.

Eligibility: Ages 13–19; international participation subject to platform rules.

Focus: Recurring writing prompts and competitions in short fiction, flash fiction, poetry, journalism, personal narrative, songwriting and other genres.

Current cycle: The platform offers writing opportunities, peer feedback and expert review. Dates, prompts and prizes vary by monthly competition.

Official information: https://writetheworld.org/

ICS note: Useful as a regular writing-practice platform, not one single annual contest.

33. UPU International Essay Writing Competition

Universal Postal Union (UPU) | Organised in partnership with WHO and UNESCO; in India, conducted nationally by India Post and CBSE | 2026 cycle concluded; next edition awaited.

Eligibility: Students aged 9–15 years.

Focus: Theme-based writing competition.
Current cycle: Consult UPU official notice for the 2027 cycle details.

Official information: https://www.upu.int/en/universal-postal-union/outreachcampaigns/international-letterwriting-competition-for-young-people
ICS note: A valuable opportunity to develop creative writing, communication and empathy through the traditional art of letter writing.

34. Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award

The Poetry Society, UK | 2026 cycle closed; 2027 dates awaited.

Eligibility: Ages 11–17; international entries accepted under the annual rules.

Focus: Poetry on any theme.

Current cycle: Free entry. Check the annual rules for number of poems, length, age cut-off and deadline.

Official information: https://poetrysociety.org.uk/competitions/foyle-young-poets-of-the-year-award/

ICS note: Strong opportunity for students interested in poetry and literary expression.

35. Oxford–BNU Creative Writing Award 2026/27

Oxford-Princeton / Oxford BNU programme as stated by the organiser | Open to eligible Oxford community entrants; not for general school distribution.

Eligibility: The current notice is restricted to eligible members of the Oxford community; it is not a general school-student competition.

Focus: Original unpublished English short story, 2,500–10,000 words.

Current cycle: Submissions opened 12 November 2026 and close 31 January 2027 at noon, according to the Oxford notice. Entry requires an Oxford SSO email and affiliation details.

Official information: https://opgdi.site.ox.ac.uk/events/oxford-bnu-creative-writing-award-202627-submissions-now-open

ICS note: Listed for awareness only. ICS should not promote it as an opportunity for Indian school students.

C. Environment, society, journalism and global citizenship

36. Bow Seat Blue Planet Awareness Contest 2027

Bow Seat, USA | 2027 cycle announced; verify current submission portal and deadline.

Eligibility: Ages 11–18 worldwide; junior and senior age bands apply.

Focus: Environmental arts and writing, including creative writing, poetry, spoken word, film, visual art and multimedia.

Current cycle: The 2027 theme and submission dates should be checked on the official contest page before final student promotion. Free entry is stated in contest materials.

Official information: https://bowseat.org/programs/blue-planet-awareness-contest/contest-overview/

ICS note: Excellent for linking writing with ocean conservation, climate, environmental justice and critical thinking. Confirm 2027 theme and date on the live portal.

37. International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People

Universal Postal Union (UPU) | 2026 cycle closed; 2027 theme and India participation instructions awaited.

Eligibility: Typically young people aged 9–15; entries are coordinated through national postal administrations.

Focus: Letter writing, communication, empathy and global citizenship.

Current cycle: Students should monitor the UPU announcement and India Post's national arrangements. National deadlines may differ from international timelines.

Official information: https://www.upu.int/en/universal-postal-union/outreach-campaigns/international-letterwriting-competition-for-young-people

ICS note: Do not assume direct online entry; follow the national postal administration's instructions.

38. The New York Times Learning Network Student Contests

The New York Times | Recurring 2026–27 programme; individual windows apply.

Eligibility: Many contests target middle- and high-school students; age, country and school rules vary by contest.

Focus: Opinion writing, open letters, podcasts, personal narratives, STEM interviews, visual storytelling and reading.

Current cycle: The Learning Network publishes a calendar of multiple contests. The Open Letter and Podcast contests are among the recurring formats. Consult each contest page for exact 2026–27 dates and international eligibility.

Official information: https://www.nytimes.com/section/learning

ICS note: Useful for journalism and contemporary-issues writing. Some contests may restrict entries by geography or age.

39. Immerse Education Essay Competition

Immerse Education | Annual cycle; check the live 2027 announcement.

Eligibility: Ages 13–18; international participation subject to annual rules.

Focus: Short academic essays across subject areas.

Current cycle: Previous editions have used a 500-word essay format and offered scholarships for Immerse programmes. Confirm current prompts, deadlines, fees and scholarship conditions.

Official information: https://www.immerse.education/about/programmes/immerse-essay-competition

ICS note: Scholarships may be conditional on admission and programme terms; do not present them as cash awards.

PART III | Planning calendar 2026–27

The following calendar is a planning aid. Always verify deadlines, time zones and entry status on the organiser's official page before acting.

Period	Competition	Planning note
November 2026	Penguin National Young Authors Challenge	Early-bird deadline 30 Nov; final deadline 15 Feb 2027
November 2026	BriBooks National Young Authors' Fair	School registration 27 Nov; student registration 6 Dec
November 2026	Bukmuk Short Story Competition	Advertised deadline 30 Nov; verify live status
December 2026	Yale Review Essay Prize	Early-bird 27 Dec; final 31 Jan 2027
December 2026	The Oxford Essay Prize	Free registration to 20 Dec; final registration 3 Jan 2027
January 2027	Oxford Agora	31 Jan 2027
January 2027	Horizon Academic Essay Prize	17 Jan free registration; 24 Jan final
January 2027	Yale Review Essay Prize	31 Jan 2027
February–March 2027	Harvard Crimson Global Essay	Regional 23 Feb; global final 19 Mar; check rules
March 2027	BriBooks National Awards & Exhibition	27 Mar 2027
June 2027	Sidgwick Prize	30 Jun 2027
2027 – date awaited	Write India Campaign - Times of India	Await organiser announcement
2027 – check portal	Times of India - Young Writers / Parenting Essay Contests	Check current contest page for theme and deadline
2027 – date awaited	Albert Barrow Memorial Competition	Await CISCE circular
2027 – date awaited	Queen's Commonwealth Writing Competition	Await organiser announcement
2027 – date awaited	Foyle Young Poets	Await organiser announcement
2027 – check portal	Bow Seat Blue Planet Awareness	Check current contest page for theme and deadline
Monthly/Quarterly	Writory Monthly Test Poetry and Short Story Compilation	Open for submission on 1st of every month, submission deadline is 25th of

		every month and result declaration on 30th of every month
2027 – date awaited	Wingword Poetry Competition	Await organiser announcement
2027 – date awaited	Shrihind Publications Bal-Vividha Creative Writing Competition	Await organiser announcement
2027 – date awaited	India Writing Project	Await organiser announcement
2027 – date awaited	Chanakya National Law University Article Writing Competition	Await organiser announcement
2027 – date awaited	ICSSR National Essay Writing Competition for Young Scholars	Await organiser announcement
2027 – date awaited	National Online Essay Writing Competition	Await organiser announcement
2027 – date awaited	TATA Building India School Essay Competition	Await organiser announcement
2027 – date awaited	Write To Win Environmental Article Writing Competition	Await organiser announcement
2027 – date awaited	UPU International Essay Writing Competition	Await organiser announcement
2027 – date awaited	Zorba Books Essay Writing Competition	Await organiser announcement
2027 – date awaited	Cambridge Rethink Essay Competition	Await organiser announcement

PART IV | Choosing competitions by age and interest

These are indicative matches only. The official eligibility rules for each competition must be checked.

Student group	Opportunities to explore
Classes 3–5	BriBooks; HOPE (where category permits); school-based creative writing activities. Check each programme's minimum age.
Classes 6–8	Penguin National Young Authors Challenge; Write India Campaign - Times of India; Times of India - Young Writers / Parenting Essay Contests; BriBooks; Bukmuk; Oxford Agora Junior; Queen's Commonwealth when open.

Classes 9–10	Albert Barrow (CISCE schools); Penguin; Write India Campaign - Times of India; Times of India - Young Writers / Parenting Essay Contests; Oxford Agora; Horizon; Yale Review; Bow Seat; Write the World for ages 13+.
Classes 11–12	Albert Barrow (CISCE schools); John Locke when open; Yale Write India Campaign - Times of India; Times of India - Young Writers / Parenting Essay Contests; Review; Horizon; Oxford Agora Senior; Sidgwick; Concord Review; NYT contests where eligible.

PART V | Student guidelines

1. Choose thoughtfully
Select competitions that match your age, interests, strengths and available time. Read the theme and rules before beginning.

2. Write originally
Your submission should reflect your own ideas, research, language and voice. Never copy another person's work or submit purchased or ghost-written content.

3. Research responsibly
Use reliable sources, take notes, distinguish facts from opinions and acknowledge references in the format required by the organiser.

4. Follow AI rules
Read each competition's AI policy. Some allow limited spelling or grammar support; others prohibit AI assistance. Never present AI-generated text or arguments as your own. Disclose permitted use exactly as required.

5. Observe format and deadlines
Check word count, language, file type, anonymity requirements, time zone, entry fee and submission route. Save a copy and confirmation.

6. Protect your privacy
Share personal information only through official organiser channels and with appropriate parent/guardian awareness. Do not publish contact details in the body of an entry.

7. Review publication terms
Understand copyright, first-publication rights, permissions, possible charges and whether the work may be reproduced or promoted.

8. Value learning as well as awards
A competition is an opportunity to learn. Selection is valuable, but thoughtful effort, revision and growth matter too.

PART VI | Guidelines for schools and teachers

Nominate a coordinator

Each interested school may nominate one Young Writers Coordinator, supported by a language teacher and librarian where possible.

Build a school writing calendar

Display suitable opportunities, circulate monthly alerts and allow students time for reading, drafting and revision.

Mentor without taking authorship

Teachers may explain prompts, teach writing skills and offer general feedback. They should not write or substantially rewrite a student's entry.

Promote inclusive participation

Encourage students across language backgrounds and ability levels. Identify age-appropriate opportunities and provide reasonable support.

Maintain integrity

Explain plagiarism, citation, originality and AI rules. Keep student drafts and research records where appropriate.

Safeguard students

Obtain parental consent where required. Verify organiser identity, protect student data and review online interaction, publication and payment terms.

Celebrate effort

Recognise participation, improvement, shortlisting, publication and awards. Avoid making prizes the only measure of success.

PART VII | The ICS vision

From Information to Imagination. From AI to Human Intelligence.

At ICS, we believe that education must prepare young people not merely for examinations or employment, but for life. The ability to think independently, express ideas clearly, understand different perspectives and communicate with empathy will remain fundamental to human development.

Writing nurtures these qualities. In an age when technology can generate words, the ability to give those words meaning, purpose and human understanding becomes even more valuable.

Our aspiration is to nurture not just successful students, but thoughtful writers, independent thinkers and responsible global citizens.

About ICS

Founded in 1985 by Dr Amrita Dass, the Institute for Career Studies (ICS) is a pioneer in career education, guidance and counselling. Guided by its vision, “Guiding Futures, Shaping Change,” ICS is committed to empowering individuals with the wisdom, empathy, foresight and capabilities to navigate an evolving world.

A key focus of ICS is to help individuals discover their unique potential and fine-tune their career choices to align their interests, aptitudes and aspirations with emerging opportunities in the world of work. Its endeavour is to prepare young people for future careers, enabling them to pursue pathways that offer not just job readiness, but also purpose, meaning and success.

With a philosophy of High Touch before High Tech and a commitment to Value Dominant Learning™, ICS seeks to nurture human intelligence, creativity, critical thinking and lifelong learning.

Through its initiatives in education, career guidance, professional development and technology-enabled learning, ICS strives to empower young people to discover their potential, develop ideas, create value and lead change in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

INSTITUTE FOR CAREER STUDIES (ICS)
Lucknow, India
Guiding Futures, Shaping Change.
High Touch before High Tech.
ICS Day | 23 November 2026

Scan the QR below and download the ICS Career GPS mobile app to discover your ideal educational and career path.

Follow our socials:

Editorial and publication notes

This directory is an independent information resource prepared by ICS. ICS is not the organiser, sponsor or official representative of the listed competitions unless expressly stated. Competition details, eligibility, dates, fees, prizes, publication rights and submission requirements may change. Students, parents and schools must consult the organiser's current official rules before entering. ICS does not guarantee selection, prizes, publication or scholarships. The rights in student submissions remain subject to the relevant organiser's terms.

Official sources

- CISCE – official website and circulars – https://www.cisce.org/
- Penguin India – National Young Authors Challenge announcement – https://www.penguin.co.in/newsroom/big-red-education-and-penguin-india-launch-the-national-young-authors-challenge/
- BriBooks – National Young Authors' Fair 2026 – https://www.yaf.bribooks.com/events/nyaf-india-2026
- Oxford Agora – 2027 competition rules and dates – https://oxfordglobaleducation.com/oxford-agora
- Horizon Academic Essay Prize 2027 – https://horizoninspires.com/essay-prize/
- Yale Review of International Studies Essay Prize – https://highschoolessaycomp.org/
- The Oxford Essay Prize 2027 registration – https://apply.globalessayprize.uk/registration
- The Sidgwick Prize 2027 – https://www.sidgwickprize.com/
- Queen's Commonwealth Writing Competition – https://www.royalcwsociety.org/writing-competition
- The Concord Review – https://www.tcr.org/
- Write the World – https://writetheworld.org/
- Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award – https://poetrysociety.org.uk/competitions/foyle-young-poets-of-the-year-award/
- Bow Seat Blue Planet Awareness Contest – https://bowseat.org/programs/blue-planet-awareness-contest/contest-overview/
- Universal Postal Union – International Letter-Writing Competition – https://www.upu.int/en/universal-postal-union/outreach-campaigns/international-letterwriting-competition-for-young-people
- The New York Times Learning Network – https://www.nytimes.com/section/learning
- Immerse Education Essay Competition – https://www.immerse.education/about/programmes/immerse-essay-competition