



INTERNATIONAL HUMANITIES CHALLENGE

What is the International Humanities Challenge?

Exploring ideas. Challenging thinking. Connecting the humanities.

The International Humanities Challenge

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A new academic humanities competition for international school students aged 11–16 (Juniors 11-13, Seniors 14-16 (age on 1st Jan 2027)).

The International Humanities Challenge is a team-based competition that celebrates knowledge, argument, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration across the humanities.



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Writing • Inquiry • Ideas • Competition



The Theme for 2026-27

A Changing World



Economic



Environmental



Social/Cultural



Technological

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Competition Format

All teams take part in every event. The competition is designed to reward different strengths across the humanities, from knowledge and analysis to teamwork and communication.

The Big Question

Students first discuss a major humanities question in teams, then write an individual structured response using evidence, argument, and critical thinking.

Individual Mega Quiz

Students complete an individual humanities quiz covering history, geography, politics, economics, culture, and global issues.

Team Quiz

Teams work together to answer more challenging humanities questions, rewarding discussion, collaboration, and breadth of knowledge.

Humanities Challenge

Teams prepare a short presentation responding to a contemporary or historical issue, supported by examples and clear argument.



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On humanitieschallenge.com you will find a collection of articles, videos and other resources to help you prepare.

The International Humanities Challenge does not have a fixed syllabus. These resources are designed to develop your understanding, encourage discussion and introduce interesting case studies, not provide lists of facts to memorise.

Knowledge of the case studies we recommend will certainly help you in the competition, but they are only examples. We encourage you to explore your own examples, make connections between different topics, and stay curious about the world around you.



Success in the IHC comes from applying knowledge, comparing ideas and thinking critically—not simply remembering information.



How can one change transform millions of lives?

Discuss the images



A sea almost disappeared within one lifetime.



A text-message service lifted thousands of families out of poverty.



Melting ice could make one of the world's smallest countries much richer.

Which story would you most like to investigate?



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You have 10 minutes to investigate one of the case study, become the experts.

Aral Sea

M-Pesa

Greenland Climate Change and opportunity

As you read, discuss:

- What changed?
- Why did it happen?
- Who benefited?
- Who suffered?
- What surprised you most?

Be ready to teach another group.



Which statement do you agree with most?

Move to the statement you agree with.

Defend your choice.

- Every major change creates winners and losers.
- Technology usually improves people's lives.
- Environmental problems often begin with economic decisions.
- Small decisions can have enormous consequences.



Finding Connections

As a group...

What do these three stories have in common?

Think about:

- Change
- Decisions
- Winners
- Losers
- Unexpected consequences



The Big Question

Is it inevitable that some people must lose so that others can benefit from change?

There is no right answer.

What evidence from today's investigations supports your view?



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