

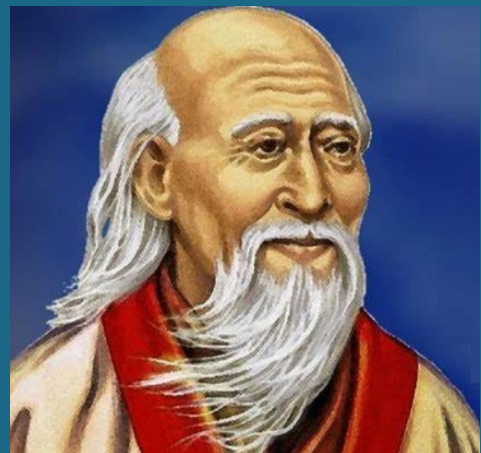
DHS Scholars' Newsletter

Autumn Term



"A scholar who cherishes the love of comfort is not fit to be deemed a scholar."

— Lao Tzu



Durrington High School

Going Beyond Our Best through Kindness, Aspiration, Perseverance and Pride



Scholar (Sko-luh)

An expert who studies a subject in great detail.

What is the DHS Scholars' Newsletter?

The DHS Scholars' Newsletter is an important source of information for upcoming events, competitions and opportunities available to students away from the school curriculum. Any student at DHS can take advantage of the opportunities listed in the newsletter providing they are passionate about a subject and have a desire to further their learning outside of the classroom.

Inspiring the Next Step

We are incredibly proud that **seven of our students currently attend Brighton College**, one of the UK's leading independent schools, renowned for its academic excellence, breadth of opportunities and outstanding university destinations. Brighton College has a particularly strong track record of preparing students for competitive university applications, with pupils progressing to Oxford, Cambridge, Russell Group universities and leading institutions around the world.

We have also been delighted to see students from our school go on to **Oxford and Cambridge**, demonstrating what can be achieved when academic ambition is combined with curiosity, commitment and a willingness to make the most of opportunities beyond the classroom. This is why we place such importance on **extracurricular events, competitions, challenges and enrichment opportunities**: they allow students to discover and develop their interests, demonstrate initiative and resilience, and build a portfolio of experiences that can strengthen future applications.

Whether competing in a national competition, representing the school, taking part in a subject-specific challenge or pursuing an interest beyond the curriculum, these experiences can help students stand out by showing colleges universities not simply what they have achieved academically, but **who they are, what motivates them and how they engage with the world beyond the classroom**.



FAQs and Other Information

FAQs

- **What are the benefits of taking part in the events/competitions?**

As an individual, being a scholar builds your ability to be curious, to ask questions and to be rigorous and disciplined in answering them. It will develop key analytical skills and build your ability to work independently whilst also recognising the limits of your own knowledge to help seek appropriate feedback.

For your future, studying off-curriculum can further develop a passion in a certain area. It is also looked upon favourably by top colleges, universities (such as Oxbridge) and employers.

Some competitions also offer cash prizes or even the opportunity to have your work published!

- **Do I need to be a Durrington Scholar/Oxford Scholar to take part?**

No. All opportunities are available to all students providing they meet the entry criteria (normally age or year group).

- **How do I take part in an event/competition?**

Use the newsletter to identify what you want to take part in and use the website linked to find out as much information as you can. Some you can sign up/enter independently and some require parent/teacher permission so speak to an appropriate adult. If you're struggling to get started, speak to the teacher of that subject or Mr Borrett in G21 for help.

- **Is there a cost?**

Most events/competitions are free to attend or to enter. If there is a cost, speak to the teacher of your subject. or Mr Borrett in G21.



If you are taking part in any of the events or competitions in this newsletter (or one that's not included) then please tell us about it so we can celebrate your efforts!

KAPP points are on offer, just [fill in this Google form](#).



Events and Competitions

- Science

UK STEM Festival Participant

Age 13 to 19 on 22nd November '26 - **Sign up via the website**

Sign up opens 16th September 2026

Festival takes place 5th - 10th May 2027.

The UK STEM Festival invites you to enter your STEM project to win a seat at the festival in London. There are 40 places available and each is a fully funded 5-night stays for one student and a parent/carer on the dates above.

You will present your project and meet scientists, engineers and industry leaders.

If you don't want to enter a project but would like to visit, the weekend of the 8th/9th May 2027 is open (free) to visitors with no registration needed.



BioCraft Competition

Open to all - **Enter via the website**

2026 competition will open mid October 2026

In this competition, participants create a Biology-inspired 3D artwork from recycled, or other, materials.



UK CanSat Competition

Age 14+ - **Speak to an adult you would like to work with**

Registration ends 2nd October

For teams of 3 to 6 students and an adult, your first task will be to recruit a an adult to register and work with you.

The challenge is to design and build your own simulation of a real satellite, integrated within the volume and shape of a soft drink can.



Events and Competitions

- Science continued



CREST Awards

Open to all - **Speak to a teacher you would like to work with**

The awards can be worked on any time throughout the year

The Crest Awards are STEM based projects split into 4 levels getting progressively harder. The onus is on you as the student to complete the project but you will need a teacher to register, upload your projects and assist you if needed.

- Maths



UKMT Maths Olympiad for Girls

Year 11 Girls only - **Speak to Mr Borrett for more information.**

Takes place in school at 3:10pm on 22nd September 2026

The Mathematical Olympiad for Girls (MOG) is aimed at girls and young women across the UK and consists of five challenging problems.

Entry to MOG is by discretionary entry.



Events and Competitions

- English

Betty Haigh Shakespeare Prize

Year 7 to 11 - **Enter via the website**

Entry Deadline - 30th September 2026

The Betty Haigh Shakespeare prize offers an opportunity for students to demonstrate their creativity and their engagement with an adaptation of one of Shakespeare's texts.



The Solstice Writing Prize

Year 7 to 11 - **Enter via the website**

Entry Deadline - 10th October 2026

The Solstice Nature Prize is a national, annual writing competition for young writers, which invites young people to take a closer look at the natural world, explore their relationship with it, or examine the challenges it faces, and write short stories, poems, and thought-provoking blogs in response.

The Young Walter Scott Prize (Creative writing) - See "History" competitions

Britain's Last Roman Hoards (Short story) - See "History" competitions



Events and Competitions

- History



Britain's Last Roman Hoards - Short Story

Year 7 to 11 - **Enter via the website**

Entry Deadline - 20th October 2026

Somewhere in Britain, a hoard hidden away in the fifth century is waiting to be found. We want you to imagine the story behind this hidden treasure...

Write a short story of up to 1000 words inspired by late Roman hoards and enter this competition for a chance to win up to £50!

The Young Walter Scott Prize

Year 7 to 11 - **Enter via the website**

Entry Deadline - 31st October 2026

The Young Walter Scott Prize is for historical fiction. Your task is to write a short story (800 to 2000 words) about anything you think will interest your reader providing it is set in a time before you were born.

Winners receive £500, and an invitation to visit the Borders Book Festival and Abbotsford, the home of Sir Walter Scott himself.

The prize-winning stories will be included in the annual YWSP Anthology.



Historical Association – The Great Debate

Years 10 and 11 - **Speak to Speak to Miss Hitchcock if you are interested.**

Dates TBC.

The Great Debate is a public speaking competition where students have 5 minutes to present their speech arguing their answer to the question: ***How does your local environment help us to understand national and global histories?***

This competition is for a small number of students places will be limited.



Events and Competitions

- Geography



[Young Geographer of the Year \(Royal Geographic Society\)](#)

Year 7 to 11 - **Speak to Mr Atkins for more information.**

Deadline - 2nd October 2026

The Young Geographer of the Year is our **annual geography competition for students**, recognising the outstanding work of the next generation of geographers. The **theme** for this year's Young Geographer of the Year competition is: **From Source to Sea.**

Your task is to **create a poster** that explores rivers, showcasing the processes that shape them, the features they create, and the many ways they are used by both people and nature.

Royal Geographic Society Free Webinars

These free webinars from the RGS are great for all DHS students with enthusiasm for the subject. These are bookable by all once registered for account.

[What do geographers actually do?](#) 14th October 2026

[Careers in ecosystem and conservation](#) 11th November 2026



- Art (Geography theme)



[Re-Invention UK-Wide Art Competition](#)

Age 5 to 25 - **Check the website for more information**

Submission deadline is 31st October 2026

The theme of this competition is 'Reinvention' - whatever this means to you. Environmental themes are a big part of this year's Turner Prize exhibition at MI-MA, so we're looking for art that inspires us to reinvent ourselves and our systems for the good of the planet. Harness your creativity and imagination to come up with a renewed vision for a greener, cleaner world so get creative! Paint, sculpt, stitch or otherwise conjure a piece of art on the theme of *Reinvention*. Your artwork can be made using any media and materials EXCEPT Artificial Intelligence.



Events and Competitions

- MFL

European Day of Languages

Various Activities for all ages - **Check the website**

Date: 26th September but website can be accessed year round.

The European Day of Languages takes place on 26th September 2026. The linked website has competitions, videos, activities and lots more to get involved in!



UK Linguistics Olympiad

Year 7 to 11 - Speak to Mrs Cooper if interested.

Registration deadline 2nd November 2026

UKLO is a language-analysis competition for all ages. Competitions start relatively straight forward but can conclude with students competing internationally. The competition aims to develop a students' lifelong interest in the world's languages but doesn't require fluency in multiple languages as questions are based on decoding.

There are practice resources via the link but you will need a teacher to sign you up and organise the assessments.

- Computing

UK Bebras Challenge

Year 7 to 11 - **Speak to Miss Taylor for more information.**

Runs 9th to 20th November 2026

The Bebras Challenge brings computational thinking to schools worldwide. It runs every November, over a two-week window, with students taking on a series of fun, engaging tasks under their teachers' supervision. Last year, more than 4 million students from over 80 countries took part.

In the UK, the challenge is **open to all young people aged 6 to 19**. Each student gets 45 minutes to tackle interactive, age-appropriate tasks online, marked automatically so everyone — whatever their strengths in maths or computing — has a chance to shine.



Oxford Inspire Critical Thinking

Inspire Critical Thinking is a **free online programme** for pupils in **Years 9 – 12 who attend a non-selective state school in the UK** run by St John's College at the University of Oxford. Each year, Inspire Critical Thinking explores a new theme through **four online workshops**, each of which contains articles, videos, interviews and more from University of Oxford academics and students!



Each workshop contains articles and videos aimed at helping you develop your critical thinking experience

How does it work?

- Read whichever articles interest you
- Think – what questions do you have based on what you've read?
- Explore – use the further resources to research that debate in more detail
- Discuss – share your views in our forum
- Vote – cast your vote in a poll
- Challenge – complete a superchallenge for a chance to win a prize!
- Oxford Spotlight – find out about a part of Oxford university

Workshop Challenges

Want to win a £10 Amazon giftcard? You can submit an entry for one superchallenge per workshop. Winners will be selected at the end of the month and you will receive an email informing you of the outcome. If possible, save your entry in PDF format, named as `firstname_yeargroup_workshop number`. In your email, please confirm your name, school, year group and whether you would be happy for your work to be shown on social media. inspire@sjc.ox.ac.uk

[Register for Inspire Critical Thinking](#)

Registration to take part in Inspire Critical Thinking opens in October at the start of the academic year. The first class will then be released in January. **You can register by filling out the forms at the top of the webpage linked.**

If you are an Inspire Scholar on our Inspire Scholars Programme for Years 9, 10 & 11 you are automatically registered for Inspire Critical Thinking,

