



UNIVERSITIES OF
 OXFORD & CAMBRIDGE
 ALUMNI NETWORK
 MALAYSIA

Academic Exploration Competition by

The Oxford & Cambridge Society of Malaysia

Prize Winners

STEM or Computer Science	Humanities Essay
<p><i>How is the War in Ukraine Challenging Us to Think Differently?</i> Each team may consist of up to 3 people</p> <p>1st Place Jayavarman a/l Thiyagu Artificial photosynthesis to produce fuel.</p> <p>2nd Place Ian Yew Banding Electricity Supply and Internet Access Together</p> <p>3rd Place Han Cheng Jun How has the war in Ukraine made us think differently about medicine?</p> <p><i>Special Mention</i> Hana Fauzi, Izzati A Manap, Munierah M Nordin Technological Prospects and Impacts for Post Covid-19 Recovery in Biomedical Sciences</p>	<p><i>Humanities: How is the War in Ukraine Challenging Us to Think Differently</i> Individual work - not a team task.</p> <p>1st Place Chai Yuan Zheng The Ukraine War: A Case against Nuclear Mobilisation</p> <p>2nd Place Terrence Tan Kah Weng How is the war in Ukraine challenging us to think differently? - Economics Perspective</p> <p>3rd Place Puteri Aishah Hanani How is the war in Ukraine challenging us to think differently? - Media Analysis</p> <p><i>Special Mentions</i> Lim Li-Ann Economic Sanctions: Friend or Foe?</p> <p>Liow Miao Xuan How is the War in Ukraine Challenging Us to Think Differently: From an Economics Perspective</p>



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	<p>Sophia Tan How is the War in Ukraine Challenging Us to Think Differently: From an International Relations Perspective</p> <p>Yip Pei Yuan, Erica Russia's Invasion: Thoughts, Negotiations and Changes</p>
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Prizes

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 1st prize: RM500 cash (per team)● 2nd prize: RM300 cash (per team)● 3rd prize: RM200 cash (per team) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Certificate and medal● Prize giving ceremony once it is safe to hold a large-scale function.● Publication on our website |
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Comments on Winning Submissions

Humanities

Chai Yuan Zheng

The Ukraine War: A Case against Nuclear Mobilisation

- This essay scored highly for originality. It explored nuclear deterrence theory, and considered whether Ukraine should have kept its nuclear weapons. One judge characterised it as ‘refreshingly different’.
- This narrow focus worked well, enabling the author to take quite a deep dive into the concept of deterrence.
- Many current references were provided.
- The judges appreciated the comparison of the impact of a lack of a nuclear deterrence in the Ukraine War to past conflicts such as the Yom-Kippur War and Indo-Pakistani War. They also appreciated the consideration of nuclear deterrence with regard to other current zones of geopolitical tension such as North and South Korea.
- The combination of a focused topic (‘deterrence’) analysed against a variety of current and historical comparisons outside of Ukraine was effective. Essays that scored less highly, in contrast, tended to adopt a ‘broad/sweeping/generalised’ approach solely in the context of Ukraine.

Terrence Tan Kah Weng



How is the war in Ukraine challenging us to think differently? - Economics Perspective

- We liked the author's original conceptualisations: for example, characterising battlefronts as "on the one end, the culmination of human brutality and brawn colliding with a fireball of violence, and on the other a psychological plane on which markets intertwine with people's expenditure."
- The writer was quite effective in sharing with the reader a sense of how the writer was genuinely trying to think differently about economics concepts like sanctions and currency depreciation based on what has been observed so far during the Ukraine war.
- The dramatic writing style made for an enjoyable read, although this essay could have been strengthened if it had incorporated a bit more logical reasoning amidst its rhetorical flourishes.

Puteri Aishah Hanani

How is the war in Ukraine challenging us to think differently? Media Analysis -

- This essay displayed a high degree of originality, and the writer made a good attempt to address the question directly.
- The topic, media portrayal of the conflict, worked well as a narrow focus that allowed for some deep analysis.
- The organisation and coherence of this essay was strong, with an effective use of connectors and mini-conclusions to guide the reader. Points were expressed clearly and were often followed by good explanations that developed the essay well.
- Having explained how social media gives you what you want to see or read, we'd like the writer to have gone further, perhaps by providing examples of one-sided views of the war.

Special Mentions

Lim Li-Ann

Economic Sanctions: Friend or Foe?

- This essay scored very highly and only just missed being in the top 3.
- Nicely structured, and well presented.
- The essay offered alternative viewpoints on the impact of economic sanctions deliberating counterattacks and novel interventions by Russia, with relevant analysis to support perspectives in counter arguments on the repercussions of war on jobs, resources and lives, thereby asking readers to reflect on the direct and indirect implications of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.



Liow Miao Xuan

How is the War in Ukraine Challenging Us to Think Differently: From an Economics Perspective

- This essay was well constructed and an enjoyable read. Although the title was broad, the essay itself focused more narrowly (and thereby more effectively) on the global food crisis and the impact upon Malaysia.
- We'd like to commend the author for thinking about the consequences of the Ukraine War for Malaysia, specifically.
- We'd also like to commend the author for the practical solutions to the food crisis that s/he suggested. This display of practical thinking as an extension of academic analysis was rare, and the judges found it refreshing.

Sophia Tan

How is the War in Ukraine Challenging Us to Think Differently: From an International Relations Perspective

- We felt this had potential, but it didn't extend the initial mentions of interesting concepts such as the 'Realism Theory' into a deeper analysis.

Yip Pei Yuan, Erica

Russia's Invasion: Thoughts, Negotiations and Changes

- This essay was not easy to read and so it lost marks for coherence.
- However, a couple of the judges found it to be a highly remarkable piece of writing in its attempt to think with originality.
- This was a brave thing to do - tremendous.
- The author is to be commended for this effort and should be encouraged to engage in further academic work - we felt there was a very interesting voice expressing itself here.

STEM

1st Place Jayavarman a/I Thiyagu

Artificial photosynthesis to produce fuel.

- Well written and researched with the right amount of depth needed to convince people that this might be a viable alternative
- Creative mindset in looking for energy independence, outside of the obvious.

2nd Place Ian Yew

Banding Electricity Supply and Internet Access Together

- Like the first placed essay, well written and researched with lots of literature to convince people that this might be a viable alternative
- However, judges felt that this essay was a lot more theoretical compared to the previous one, and the author did not provide how the outcome would look



like as well as what was needed to make this solution work

3rd Place Han Cheng Jun

How has the war in Ukraine made us think differently about medicine?

- Well written with lots of different perspectives.
- Good points and research to back up arguments. It brought in the uncomfortable idea that sanctions had far more unintended consequences than initially expected.
- Was quite broad and "high-level" compared to the first two.

Special Mention Nur Ilham Addina Binti Mohd Yusoff, Muhammad Izzul bin Suhaimi, Nik Nurfatin Umaira Binti Hasdi

Video Entry

- Good effort, entertaining and we liked how they highlighted the consequences of the war.
- Overall however, it lacked substance.

General Comments

Humanities

- **Originality.**
 - The judges felt that many of the essays were a collation of facts rather than a display of original thinking. This could be a result of (i) insufficient guidance in the instructions or (ii) entrants being fearful of 'being wrong'.
 - Many essays spent too much of the word count providing background information. Background information could be summarised, so as to free up more time for more analysis and original thinking.
 - The judges wished that more entrants had explored topics beyond the school syllabus. Of course it's understandable that many entrants will build on their school studies, but the essay title and instructions allowed for an exploration of topics beyond the classroom - for example, creative arts, philosophy, international law or social justice. Again, perhaps there is insufficient scaffolding provided in our instructions and guidelines to allow for this kinds of exploration beyond the school curriculum.
- **Use of Evidence.** Academic referencing was usually quite good (and an improvement on prior years). However, even the best essays often failed to define all the terms and concepts utilised.
- **Analysis.**



- As with prior years, many entrants adopted too much of a broad, generalised approach, rather than focusing on a narrow topic area and diving deeply into an analysis of that area.
- Candidates should try and ensure there is a robust connection between the reasons they provide and the conclusions that they draw. Quite often a statement is presented as a conclusion, and yet the essay has not provided the reasons ('reasoning') to justify that conclusion.
- **Addressing the question.** The judges would have liked many of the essays to have addressed the question of 'how we are being challenged to think differently' more directly. A lot of the essays did not address the question in a specific way. For example, whilst it's good to observe that "sanctions should have, in theory, weakened the ruble, and yet the ruble has strengthened", it would improve an essay to then extend the analysis to explore more specifically the ways of thinking that informed the view that sanctions should weaken a currency, and to consider alternative ways of thinking that could explain why the currency is strengthening.
- **Organisation / Coherence.**
 - Most essays were quite well organised, with a clear abstract, an introduction, a main body, and a conclusion. Sub-titles were often utilised.
 - Some candidates did not understand that an abstract should provide a summary of the complete essay; they used the abstract as another form of introduction, to introduce the topic areas that would be considered.
 - Many essays could have had improved coherence. The reader needs to be led through an argument effortlessly - it shouldn't be necessary for a reader to expend a lot of energy to decipher the deep meanings that the author is trying to express.
 - As a general rule, the quality of an essay will be correlated with the ease of reading of that essay. Note that this doesn't mean that the content of the essay need be simple - the goal is to express complexity in a way that a reader can follow and understand effortlessly. This will often require the writer to use a lot more signposting language and appropriate connecting words and phrases.

STEM

- While there was a lot of good research and effort put in, judges would have loved to have seen some truly original ideas from the authors.