

ADVICE FOR ORWELL YOUTH PRIZE ENTRANTS

By Elizabeth Ryan

Hi there!

I'm Elizabeth Ryan and I'm a volunteer reader for the Orwell Youth Prize. This is one serious competition and I can't wait to get stuck in.

Now this is one of the most unique and challenging competitions I've ever been involved with. Never before have I come across a writing competition where feedback has been given on the first draft of a potential entry. Also there aren't many competitions that allow such wide scope in presenting work (stories, poems, plays, essays, blog pieces, journalism pieces and even video games).

There are articles and form guides on the website as to how to you write your entry. So what I will do is add what I have learned from longlisting previous competitions which includes the Radio 2 500 Words competition and The Richmond Writers Festival where the entry I longlisted won the whole competition outright.

In whatever way you take the theme, "**Coming Up For Air – Writing the Climate Crisis**" what's looked for above all else is a **complete piece of work** which has a **beginning, middle and an end**. This also applies to the video games category.

Also, as the website documents say, really research, plan and develop your entry. Once somebody gets to university and employment, the days of doing one draft of a written work are **gone** and never is that more true in any writing career.

Also very few writing competitions offer feedback so really avail yourselves of this opportunity. When the feedback comes back to you, really read it through and take on board whatever constructive comments or critiques that are in there. There's a fair chance that whoever gives feedback on your entry could be longlisting it at the first stage.

But above all, have fun! Remember George Orwell did a lot of writing through being a poet/novelist/essayist/journalist and more. But remember all of that revolved around only one thing and that was writing. Compose your entry in whatever form you feel comfortable with and with whatever plays to your strengths.

I wish the very best of luck to you all. And I hope your entry will be in my longlist. I do have a track record you know!