

CCIR ACADEMY

# RE:THINK ESSAY COMPETITION 2021

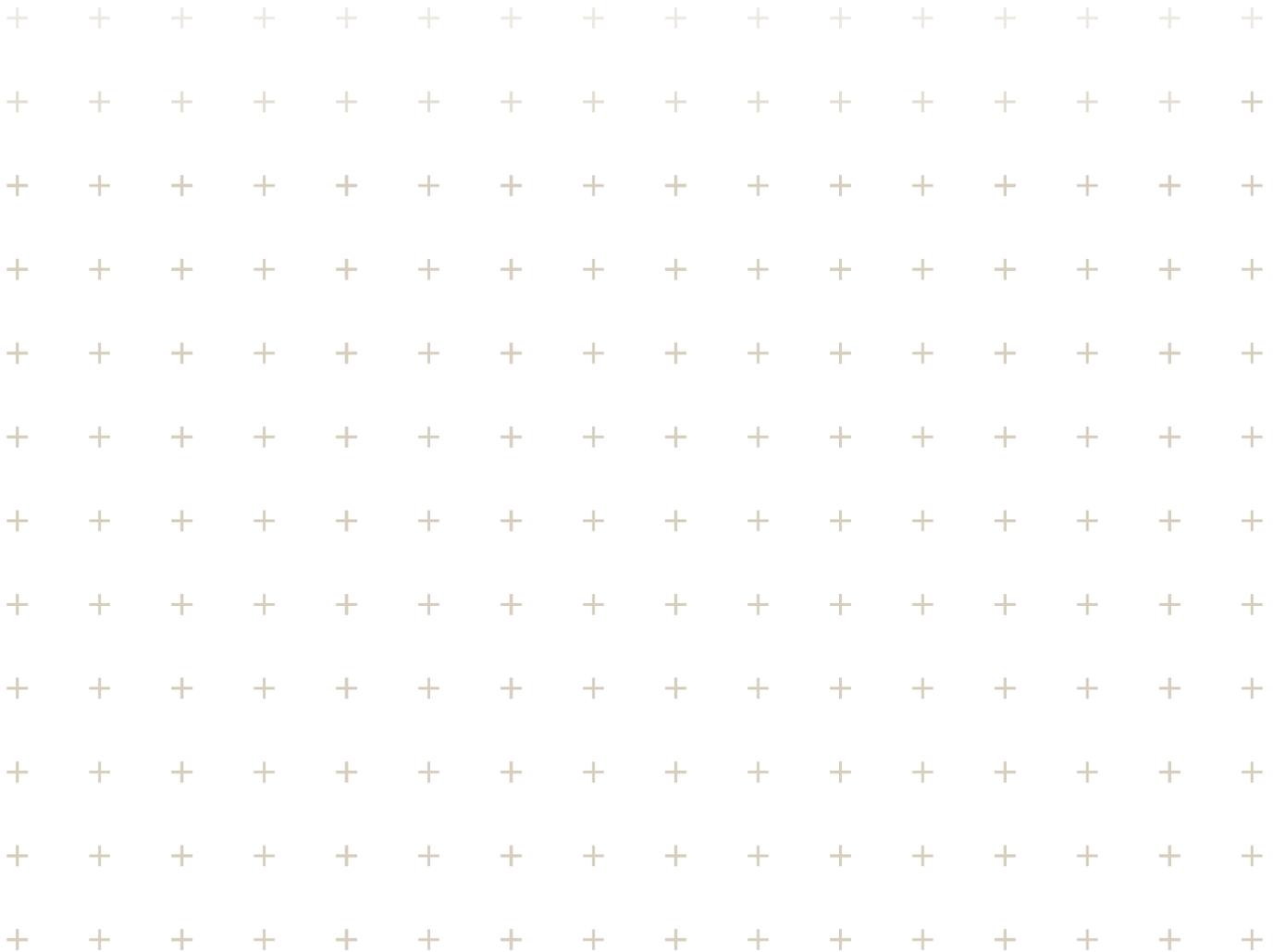
*"The Stories, the Science, and the Significance of COVID-19."*



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# RE:THINK ESSAY COMPETITION



## ABOUT RE:THINK

Re:think is an annual interdisciplinary essay competition open to high schoolers around the world, judged by leading Cambridge academics, and sponsored by the Cambridge Center for International Research (CCIR). The purpose of Re:think is to invite students from different backgrounds to come together to investigate, reflect on, and discuss the most significant issues confronting humanity today.



The winners of this competition will be awarded a cash prize of 150 GBP along with scholarships that range from 700GBP-1000GBP to one of the CCIR Academy programmes. In addition, competition finalists will be invited to an online conference, where they will get the opportunity to discuss their work with leading academics from Cambridge in an intimate setting.



## ELIGIBILITY

- + Re:think is open to all current high school students (graduating years 2021-2024).
- + To participate, students must submit an application and pay a 15 GBP entry fee.\*
  - + \*The entry fee may be waived for students in need. Please email us at [essaycompetition@cambridge-research.org](mailto:essaycompetition@cambridge-research.org) for more information.



## KEY DATES

- + Registration is rolling until the submission deadline.
- + The deadline for submission is July 15th, 2021.
- + The finalist shortlist will be released on July 22nd, 2021.
- + The conference will then be set for the weekend of July, 30th 2021, where we will announce the overall winners of the competition.



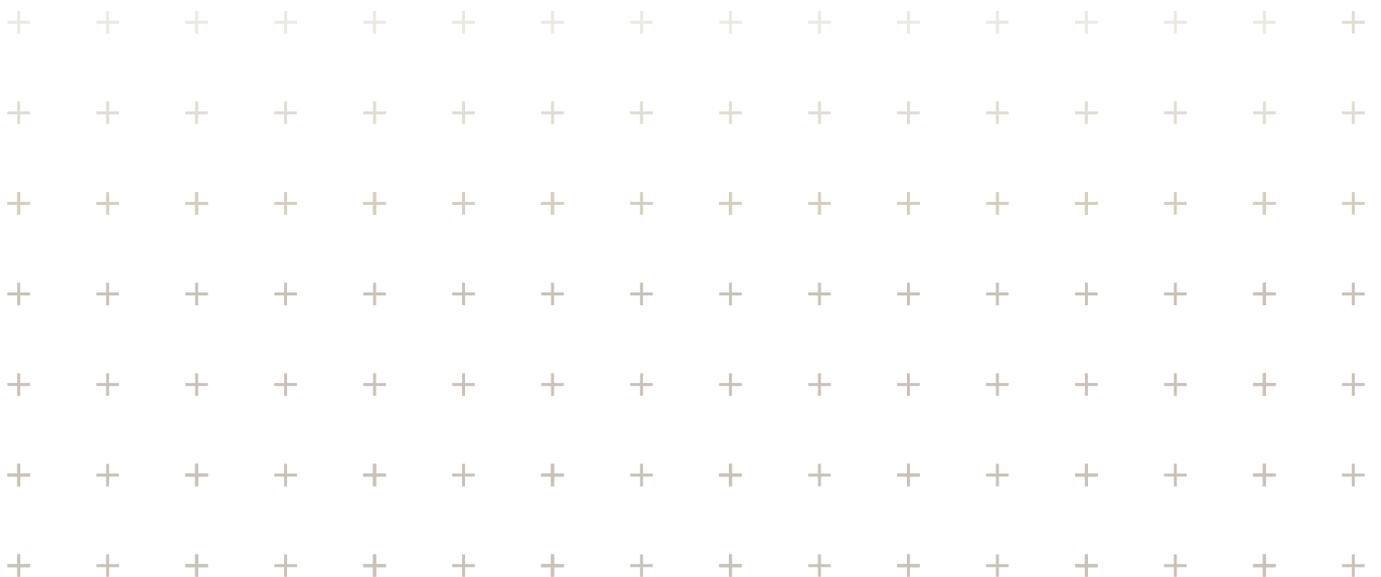
# THIS YEAR'S THEME

## The Stories, the Science, and the Significance of COVID-19

Over the past year, as we lived through and bore witness to the impact of COVID-19, we have slowly come to terms with the full significance of this event. It is safe to say that few if any human being alive today has been completely unaffected by the pandemic. As of January 2021, the global death toll has exceeded 1.8 million. Millions have lost loved ones, while millions more, having lost their livelihoods as a result of the pandemic, confront the spectres of poverty, starvation, and homelessness.

And not only so. When entire cities and nations entered and (re)entered into lockdown—when schools, workplaces, and social venues shuttered—people found themselves isolated from one another, forced to reimagine and reconfigure our work lives and their personal relationships. Meanwhile, at broader social scales, extant political institutions and ideologies are being challenged and tested in unprecedented ways. Under the pressure of the pandemic, long standing political issues—such as universal healthcare, affordable housing, systemic racial and gender injustice, and the value of privacy, democracy, and liberty—have taken on renewed significance and exploded onto the public scene. In many places, production has ground to a halt and consumption has dwindled, and the global economy has experienced resultant strains and shocks (and, paradoxically, boons) unseen since the Great Depression.

**For the 2021 Re:think Essay Competition, we want to invite you to document, to investigate, and to reflect upon the COVID-19 pandemic.** COVID-19 pandemic will likely be the single most significant event to affect our generation. Through writing about COVID-19, we hope that you can not only get a chance to think deeply and carefully about the impact of this historical crisis we are in, but moreover, we hope that through writing, you will also discover here a channel of creative catharsis—a chance to put into words, and thus shed light on, this dark moment we find ourselves in.



# ESSAY CATEGORIES



The title of this year's competition is "The Stories, the Science, and the Significance of COVID-19", and we have split up the competition accordingly into three broad categories.



1

## The Stories of COVID-19: Creative Nonfiction

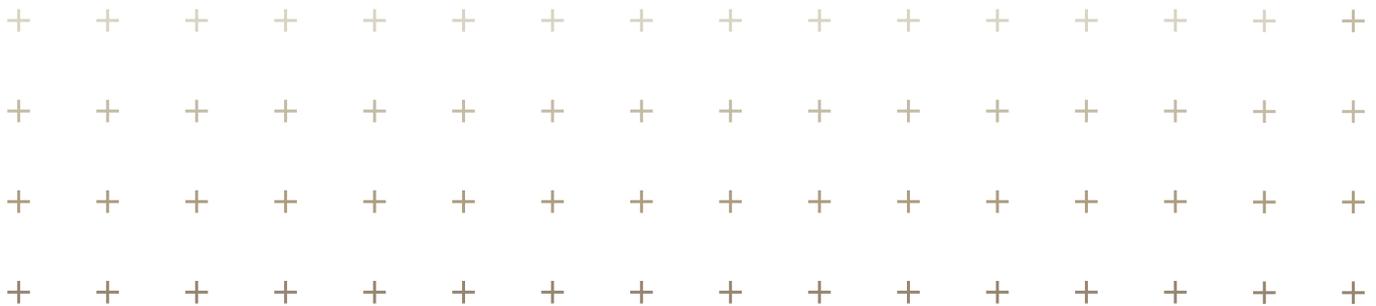
Life during the COVID-19 Pandemic will be remembered for being many things—tragic, lonely, exhausting, strange, but also, at times, inspiring, warm, and even beautiful. For this category, we want to hear your stories—learn about COVID-19 from the perspective of your lived experience, and the lived experiences of those around you. Your story does not have to be grandly tragic or heroic, though it could be. What we wish to hear is simply your story—your observations, experiences, and reflections.



2

## The Science of COVID-19: Popular Science

Perhaps more than any other historical event, the COVID-19 Pandemic has made clear just how invaluable science is for humanity. As we have learned, however, in many cases, the effective utilization of science is impossible without effective public messaging. So for this essay, we want you to choose one aspect of the science of COVID-19 and to write a popular piece that explains it to the public. This project could take a number of forms—you might, for instance, conduct a popular literature review of the latest vaccine science, or you might write a piece explaining the role of artificial intelligence in the COVID-19 response, or you might write a piece on the social psychology of mask-wearing. Whatever you choose to do, it should be a piece that works to explain some significant piece of COVID related science to the public.



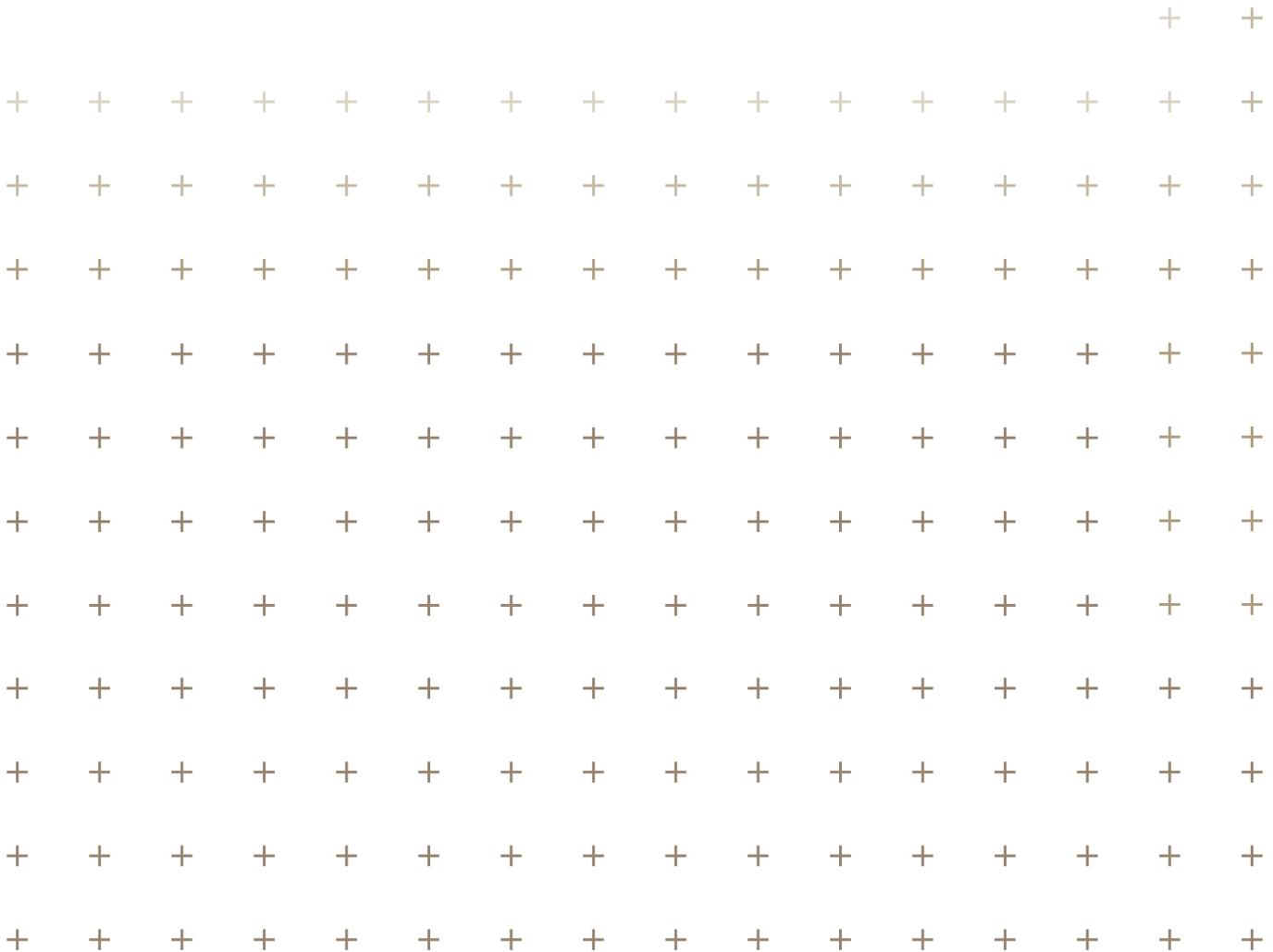
# ESSAY CATEGORIES



3

## The Significance of COVID-19: Humanities and Social Science

What will COVID-19 mean for humanity, moving forward? COVID-19 has already transformed our lives in wide-ranging ways. While some of these changes are hopefully temporary—such as remote learning and mask-wearing— others might be less so. Some have speculated COVID-19 may bring about certain basic changes to the way in which human beings relate to one another, while others have speculated that, as result of differentially effective responses between communities and nations, COVID-19 will bring about fundamental changes to the geopolitical and ideological landscape. For this essay, we want you to explore COVID-19's implications for the future of politics and society—for race, gender, global justice, climate change, democracy, and beyond. Discuss and reflect on one way in which you think COVID-19 will fundamentally alter the future of humanity.



# OUR JUDGES

It is our distinct honour to have three distinguished Cambridge scholars – **Dr. Tom McClelland** (Cambridge, Philosophy), **Dr. Hande Güzel** (Cambridge, Sociology), and **Dr. Daniele Casese** (Cambridge, Economics) – on our judging panel this year. Our judges hail from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and will work together to select the winners of this year’s essay competition.



**Dr Tom McClelland** is a lecturer in the faculty of Philosophy at the University of Cambridge, a consultant at Outstanding Global and the founder of the Mental Action Research Group. In his research, Dr. McClelland covers a range of topics in philosophy of mind, the philosophy of artificial intelligence, psychology, metaphysics, aesthetics and the philosophy of business. His new monograph, titled *What is Philosophy of Mind?* will be released by Polity Press this year.



**Dr. Hande Güzel** is a Research Affiliate and Teaching Associate in the faculty of Sociology at the University of Cambridge, where she also received her PhD. In her academic work, Dr. Güzel explores issues including the sociology of gender, the body, health and illness, sexuality, with a regional focus on Turkey and the Middle East. Her PhD thesis focuses on re-virginisation practices in Turkey, while her previous research includes physical education and orthodontic treatment.



**Dr Daniele Casese** is a lecturer in the faculty of Economics at University of Cambridge, the director of studies in economics at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and a Mead Fellow. In his work as an economist and mathematician, he focuses on game theory, mathematical modelling, and dynamical processes on networks. More recently, he has been interested in the potential applications of economic and mathematical tools in the domain of public health and epidemiology, and he has explored how these tools can be used to manage and understand COVID-19.

# COMPETITION DETAILS



## ESSAY REQUIREMENTS



- + **Word count:** The length of your essay **must not exceed 2000 words**, not including the references, footnotes, and bibliography. Essays that exceed the word count will be penalized accordingly. Note, however, that essays that fail to exhibit substance will be penalized regardless of length.
- + **Citation:** If your paper relies on any source materials, be sure to cite them. We leave it open to you to choose your preferred formal citation method you like, but however you choose to do your citations, do them in a way that is clear and consistent.
- + **Original Work:** While we are happy to consider your own past work, plagiarism of any sort will result in immediate disqualification. All submissions will be run through an online plagiarism checker.



## JUDGING PROCESS

- + **Six finalists** will first be selected—with **two from each category**.
- + Once the finalists are selected, our partnered Oxbridge faculty from the CCIR Academy will select **three overall winners** of the competition—with **one from each category**.
- + **All finalists will be invited to a conference**, where they will get the opportunity to share and discuss their papers with leading academics from the University of Cambridge and the University of Oxford. The conference is not intended to be a part of the selection process, but is rather simply a chance for the student's to share and discuss their work with one another and with leading academics in an intimate setting.



## PRIZES AND HONOURS

+ + + + + +

- + For each category, we will select one overall winner and one runner-up. + +
- + The overall winner for each category will receive a cash-prize of 150 GBP and a 1000GBP scholarship for a CCIR Academy Programme. + +
- + The runner-up for each category will receive a 700GBP scholarship for the CCIR Academy. + +
- + All finalists will be invited to a conference where they will get the opportunity to discuss their work with our judges. + +
- + All finalists will be offered automatic admission to any CCIR Academy programme of their choice. + +
- + All finalists will receive a certificate issued by CCIR Academy, signed by CCIR's director and the competition judges, to certify the student as a CCIR Re:think Scholar. + +
- + Finally, with our finalists permission, we will publish all the winning essays on our website, [www.cambridge-research.org](http://www.cambridge-research.org). + +

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# CCIR ACADEMY

## REGISTER NOW

To register for the competition, please fill out the registration form and submit the registration fee via our website at [www.cambridge-research.org/essay-competition](http://www.cambridge-research.org/essay-competition).

Once you have successfully registered for the competition, you will receive an email containing a dropbox link for submission.

## CONTACT US

For more information, please contact us at [essaycompetition@cambridge-research.org](mailto:essaycompetition@cambridge-research.org).

## ABOUT CCIR

The Cambridge Centre for International Research (CCIR) is a registered social enterprise in Cambridge, UK, founded by a group of Cambridge graduates whose mission is to promote the value and practice of academic research. To this end, CCIR has established a Think Tank, where it works with leading academics to spread ideas that matter, and an Academy, where it works with Oxbridge faculty members to cultivate the academic passions of talented high schoolers around the world.

