



## Terms & Conditions

(1) **The Harbinger Prize 2026 Competition** is open to all students in full-time, pre-university education, regardless of their country of residence, who have completed year 10 of education in the UK (or equivalent, in the UK or abroad).

Typically, that would mean participants are between **14 and 17 years-old** when submitting their entry. If you have any doubts about whether you are eligible to participate, please email [kimberly@hrbproject.org](mailto:kimberly@hrbproject.org) and describe your situation. Please allow five working days for your question to be answered.

(2) The competition is free to enter.

(3) Only one entry per person per year is permitted.

(4) Each work can have only one author.

(5) Submissions should be **in English**.

(6) The submission form will be available from **September 1, 2026**, at <https://harbingersmagazine.com/>

(7) The application deadline is Monday, **November 30, 2026**, at 12 noon BST. All submissions made before the deadline are final and cannot be amended.

(8) Shortlisted articles for each category will be announced no later than on **December 20, 2026**, in the [Harbingers' Weekly Brief newsletter](#).





(9) Shortlisted authors will be invited for a 15-minute interview (via Google Meets) conducted by a member of *Harbingers' Magazine* Editorial Board supported by a mentor from Harbingers' Project. Interviews will be held between **January 11 and 25, 2027**.

(10) Special guests will be invited to judge in the final decision-making stage. Special guests will be announced throughout the competition.

(11) *The Harbingers' Weekly Brief* newsletter will announce one winner for each category and the winner of The Harbinger Prize 2026 no later than **February 14, 2027**.

(12) Each of the seven winners will receive scholarships to start their journalism internships for the magazine with the option to join the Editorial Board.

(13) The overall winner of The Harbinger Prize 2026 will be invited to participate in an individual reporting trip with mentors from Harbingers' Project. We will cover all reasonable expenses, including tuition, travel, and full-board accommodation.

(14) Harbingers' Project will not provide the infrastructure (hardware, connectivity) necessary for participation in the winners' journalism internship and the reporting trip of the overall winner.

(15) All winning articles will be published in *Harbingers' Magazine*. Winners agree to accept their prizes as remuneration and that they are subject to completing the editorial requirements.

(16) Once submitted, applications are blinded. Members of the jury evaluating submissions will not know the identities of the authors. Participants' details are sealed and stored by Harbingers' Project.





(17) Members of *Harbingers' Magazine* Editorial Board and students enrolled with Harbingers' Project are barred from entering the competition.

(18) All written works will be tested for plagiarism. Please note that any attempt to submit work authored by someone else may result in interested institutions being notified.

(19) Winners – their names and titles of their works – will be published in *Harbingers' Weekly Brief Newsletter* and, subsequently, in *Harbingers' Magazine* social media.

(20) Haringers' Project is responsible for storing and processing the entrants' personal information in line with current legal requirements. This information will be stored only as long as necessary, and entrants can amend and request the deletion of their details.

(21) All matters unclear or not addressed in this regulation will be resolved by Stas Skarzynski, the CEO of Haringers' Project in a way ensuring that the competition is fair. He also holds the right to change or amend the Terms and Conditions if necessary for the proper conduct of the competition.

(22) The Harbinger Prize 2026 competition is organised by *Harbingers' Magazine*, registered in England, and its partners.

(23) The selection criteria of the shortlisted candidates is as follows:

- There are seven criteria: Relevance, Creativity, Coherence, Depth, Sourcing, Quality, and Connection.
- Each criterion is worth up to 20 points; total possible = 140 points.
- For each criterion, reviewers choose one of four levels: "meets fully" (20), "meets fairly" (15), "barely meets" (10), or "does not meet" (0). Shortlisted candidates can ask for their scores, once the winners are announced.

(24) Criterion-by-criterion explanation:

**Relevance** (Does the submission align with one of the prompts?)



- Full (20): The piece clearly and consistently addresses one chosen prompt (climate crisis, diversity, education, or technology) in every major section.
- Partial (15): The connection to the prompt is present but only partial or sometimes tangential.
- Barely (10): The entry only slightly relates or drifts into unrelated material.
- None (0): The piece is completely off-topic.

**Creativity** (Does it introduce original or surprising elements?)

- Full (20): Shows original thought—new angles, inventive framing, or innovative storytelling that enhances understanding or emotion.
- Partial (15): Some inventive elements exist, but much is conventional.
- Barely (10): Little originality; predictable or generic.
- None (0): Derivative or plagiarized.

**Coherence** (Are ideas arranged logically and clearly?)

- Full (20): Well-organized: paragraphs and sections build on each other; clear transitions; arguments progress logically to conclusions.
- Partial (15): Some structural or transition problems but generally understandable.
- Barely (10): Frequent jumps or confusing organization.
- None (0): Incoherent, disjointed content.

**Depth** (Does it analyze the topic beyond surface level?)

- Full (20): Demonstrates critical thinking—examines assumptions, offers layered analysis, and suggests feasible next steps or implications.
- Partial (15): Mostly surface-level with limited insight.
- Barely (10): Simplistic or shallow treatment.
- None (0): No substantive analysis.

**Sourcing** (Are claims supported with appropriate evidence?)

- Full (20): Uses reliable, relevant data/examples/research; evidence is well integrated and credited properly.
- Partial (15): Some supporting evidence but limited, weak, or not fully integrated.
- Barely (10): Little or no supporting evidence.
- None (0): Fabricated, uncited, or misleading claims.

**Quality** (Is the writing polished and appropriate for the audience?)

- Full (20): Strong writing—clear, correct grammar/punctuation/style; tone fits the intended audience; few or no errors.
- Partial (15): Noticeable errors but still readable; tone mostly appropriate.
- Barely (10): Frequent mistakes that distract from meaning.
- None (0): Unreadable or very poor writing.

**Connection** (Does the author show a personal stake or voice?)

- Full (20): Clear, compelling personal perspective or stake that enriches the topic (lived experience, reflection, motivations).
- Partial (15): Some personal elements but limited depth or relevance.
- Barely (10): Little or no personal voice or connection.
- None (0): Entirely impersonal or detached.

(25) For the interview process, shortlisted candidates will be evaluated based on a point criteria that will be added to their overall score. The following criteria is sometimes a tie-breaking.

- Four criteria: Engagement & presence, clarity of thought, depth of understanding, motivation & fit.
- Each scored 0–5 (0 = does not meet, 5 = excellent). Total possible = 20 extra points.

(26) Score each criterion independently based on the descriptions below. Add brief comments to justify each score.

**Engagement and presence** (Did the candidate show up prepared and engaged?)

- 5: Consistently punctual, well-prepared, attentive, makes eye contact, uses active listening, asks thoughtful questions; brings energy and professionalism.
- 4: Mostly punctual and prepared; engaged and responsive with minor lapses.
- 3: Adequately present but occasionally distracted or passive; limited initiative.
- 2: Frequently distracted or underprepared; minimal engagement.
- 1: Very disengaged; poor preparation; little interaction.
- 0: Did not participate/absent or completely unresponsive.

**Clarity of thought** (Are the candidate's answers logical and easy to follow?)

- 5: Answers are clear, well-structured, concise, directly address the question, and follow logical progression.
- 4: Generally clear with minor disorganization or occasional vagueness.
- 3: Understandable but sometimes unfocused or rambling; key points present.
- 2: Often unclear or confusing; difficulty answering directly.
- 1: Mostly incoherent answers with little logical structure.
- 0: No meaningful responses.

**Depth of understanding** (Does the candidate show insight into their piece and explain choices/themes/research?)

- 5: Demonstrates strong subject knowledge, can explain creative choices and research, connects themes, and shows critical reflection.

- 4: Good understanding with some deeper insights, though not consistently comprehensive.
- 3: Basic understanding; can explain main choices but limited analysis or nuance.
- 2: Superficial knowledge; struggles to justify choices or explain themes.
- 1: Very shallow or incorrect understanding.
- 0: No evidence of understanding.

**Motivation and fit** (Does the candidate show genuine commitment to writing/journalism and fit for the program?)

- 5: Clear, compelling motivation and well-articulated reasons why they'll contribute to the program; aligned goals and values.
- 4: Strong motivation and reasonable fit, with a few specifics missing.
- 3: Some motivation and potential fit but lacks clarity on contribution or long-term goals.
- 2: Weak or uncertain motivation; unclear how they'd fit or contribute.
- 1: Little motivation or poor fit.
- 0: No demonstrated interest or fit.

(27) The team of judges will meet to review scores, discuss editorial fit and diversity of perspectives, and select winners.