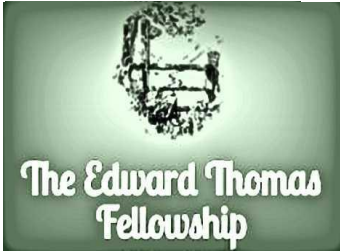


Year 12 & 13 Essay Competition



Win £100 and boost your UCAS form by writing a close reading of Edward Thomas's poem "The Glory"

Introduction

The Edward Thomas Fellowship's principal aim is to keep the poet's work widely read and enjoyed. The Fellowship is delighted to be running the competition for the fourth consecutive year, with a £100 cash prize for students currently in Years 12-13.

The essay competition is an excellent opportunity for you to explore a poem by one of English Literature's most celebrated poets and thereby deepen your understanding of early twentieth century poetry. If you're thinking about studying English at university, it's also a great way to enrich your UCAS application.

You can find the winning entry and shortlisted candidates for last year's competition here: <https://edward-thomas-fellowship.org.uk/close-reading-competition-2024-2025-results-page-and-competition-details/>

Edward Thomas...

... is regarded as an important WWI poet

... wrote 144 poems between 1914-1917 before his death in action in WWI

... takes a different approach to other WWI poets such as Wilfred Owen

... is concerned with the natural environment – highly relevant to discussions about climate change today.

Key Entry Details

The Poem: You can read “The Glory” on page 3 of this form.

Word count: 500 words minimum, 800 words maximum (*please note: entries may be up to 10% above the maximum word count – any words above 880 words will be disregarded*).

Deadline for submitting entry: 5pm, Sunday 30th November 2025

Format: Please send your entry with the title of the documents formatted as “[Full name] – [name of your school]” e.g. “Joe Bloggs – ABC School”. Please also include your full name, the name of your school and the word count at the top of page 1 of your entry document. Please use a clear font with font size 12 or above. Please send the entry as a Word document (docx.) or pdf.

Submit entries by email to Robert Woolliams at: etfessaycomp@gmail.com

Results announced: Monday 2nd February 2026

Prizes

- **First:** £100, publication in Edward Thomas Fellowship newsletter, one-year free print and digital membership of Edward Thomas Fellowship*
- **Two Runners up:** £50
- **Shortlist:** shortlisted students named in Edward Thomas Fellowship newsletter and on social media pages (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram)
- **All candidates:** one-year free digital membership of Edward Thomas Fellowship*

**Edward Thomas Fellowship membership includes newsletters, discounted events admission, information on competitions and more.*

The Judges

This year the competition will be judged by leading scholar of Edward Thomas, Professor Guy Cuthbertson.

Some Tips

Your entry should:

- Focus on a close reading of “The Glory”
- Explore what you find interesting about “The Glory”
- Look closely at what is special and distinctive about “The Glory”
- Have a clear sense of the poem as a whole, with discussion moving between the detail and the bigger picture
- Be written in a clear and simple style, using technical literary vocabulary when relevant.

The Glory

The glory of the beauty of the morning, –
The cuckoo crying over the untouched dew;
The blackbird that has found it, and the dove
That tempts me on to something sweeter than love;
White clouds ranged even and fair as new-mown hay;
The heat, the stir, the sublime vacancy
Of sky and meadow and forest and my own heart: –
The glory that invites me, yet it leaves me scorning
All I can ever do, all I can be,
Beside the lovely of motion, shape, and hue,
The happiness I fancy fit to dwell
In beauty's presence. Shall I now this day
Begin to seek as far as heaven, as hell,
Wisdom or strength to match this beauty, start
And tread the pale dust pitted with small dark drops,
In hope to find whatever it is I seek,
Harkening to short-lived happy-seeming things
That we know naught of, in the hazel copse?
Or must I be content with discontent
As larks and swallows are perhaps with wings?
And shall I ask at the day's end once more
What beauty is, and what I can have meant
By happiness? And shall I let go,
Glad, weary, or both? Or shall I perhaps know
That I was happy oft and oft before,
Awhile forgetting how I am fast pent,
How dreary-swift, with naught to travel to,
Is Time? I cannot bite the day to the core.