

Did you know?

Bill Bryson

A Short History of Nearly Everything



In 2005, the RSC sent a copy of Bill's book to every school in the UK. Bill donated all the money he made from those sales to start the Bill Bryson Prize.

Bill Bryson Prize 2013

Philip Robinson invites you to enter the competition and show off your science communication skills

You don't need to be an expert scientist to communicate science. Just look at Bill Bryson. He didn't study science at university or work in a lab – he's just a writer who thinks science is fascinating. And science should fascinate people, it's full of important discoveries and exciting stories, but as Bill himself has said: textbooks often leave all that fun stuff out.

So Bill decided to write his own book – *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, which explains science and the stories behind it in a way that's easy to understand. And people loved it.

The Bill Bryson Prize gives you the opportunity to do exactly the same. The competition is open to school students everywhere and it's a chance for you to show how good you are at explaining science. It's not about how much science you know, but how well you can tell the story.

Start researching

There are only two 'rules' for entries: they have to be about science (and the science must be accurate), and they have to be appropriate for the audience. Each year there's a theme to help you decide what to cover. For 2013 this is: *How science keeps us healthy*.

A good tip is to choose something that interests you – you have to use your enthusiasm to make your audience listen, to show them why something is exciting, why it excites you. If you don't care, why should your audience? And, just as important, before you can try to explain something to someone you need to understand it yourself. So you may need to do some research – ask your teachers, or Google and Wikipedia. The RSC has lots of resources you can use too.

Select your audience

The audience can be anyone except your own peers, so decide who you want to communicate with and think carefully about how to do it. Even within the same language, we communicate in different ways with different people. For example, if you talked to your grandparents using the words and phrases that your friends use, would they understand you? Possibly not (they may even be a bit shocked.) So you have to know your audience and keep them in mind at all times.

Be creative

Beyond those rules, the rest is up to you. Be as creative and imaginative as you like. There's certainly no winning formula – since the competition first started in 2006, each year the winner has been something different: poetry, presentations, videos, animation and good old books have all won the prize. And of course this year's winner, a cartoon, is different again (see p7). But although they have very different styles and formats, the winners do have something in common: clear explanations, interesting stories and a bit of creative flair.

Prizes!

The winners get £500 for their school and £100 to keep, but just entering the competition will give you valuable practice in developing your communications skills. And communication is a skill. Everyone does it every day, but being really good at it takes thought and imagination. Have you got it?

Get cracking!

All you need to know about the 2013 competition and how to enter:

<http://rsc.li/U7tvdy>

Send us your entry by
31 March 2013

Don't forget

Communication isn't just words. It's pictures and sounds too. Even empty space and silence can be used to communicate.



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