



ROYAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA

National School Science Essay Competition

Dear Principals/Science Teachers/Teachers,

Many of you may be aware of or may have entered the Royal Society of South Africa's annual Essay Competition which has been running since 1998 – so 20 years!! Every year we try to offer topics which are interesting and challenging and provide something for everyone.

It is our hope that through this deeper exposure to science, more pupils will be sufficiently excited by their discoveries whilst researching their chosen topic, to consider the study of the sciences as a future career choice. Our Country desperately needs more scientists. However, we cannot do this without the help and involvement of the teachers, so we do hope that you will encourage your pupils to enter.

To those who are new to the Competition – some good reasons to consider entering your learners:

1. Firstly, great rewards for the pupils and thus encouragement for them to try their best.
2. This is a very good exercise for learners in doing research and putting the gathered information together into a coherent and readable form in their own words
3. It is an opportunity to learn about how to do an assignment professionally to prepare pupils for tertiary education where proper referencing of written work is essential.
4. The topics offered are broadly in alignment with the project themes of the Department of Education's Curriculum thus could be considered as a 'Project'.

About referencing:

There are a number of systems and as long as the learner uses one of them consistently, then that is acceptable. We suggest the following guidelines:

References should be listed alphabetically at the end of the paper, in the format shown below. The full title of each journal must be given.

DARVILL, A. 2006. Tidal power. <http://home.clara.net/darvill/altenerg/tidal.htm> (accessed 3 May 2006).

MOLSKI, M. 1997. Is electric charge a superluminal particle? Physics Essays 10: 18–21.

MOREAU, R.E. 1966. The Bird Faunas of Africa and its Islands. London, Academic Press.

STOPFORD, J.S.B. 1938. The Manchester period. In Dawson, W.R. (Ed.) Sir Grafton

Elliot Smith, a Biographical Record by his Colleagues. London, Jonathan Cape. pp. 151–165. (Book reference)

TOBIAS, P.V., WANG, Q. & CORMACK, J.L. 2001. The establishment of palaeoanthropology in South Africa and China: with especial reference to the remarkably similar roles of Raymond A. Dart and Davidson Black. Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa 56: 1–9.

Footnotes should be avoided.

Finally we ask you PLEASE to be alert for plagiarised work – it is of no benefit to the learners if they just 'copy and paste' information off the Internet. They also risk being permanently disqualified from the Competition. Essays, especially winning essays, will be randomly checked for plagiarism.

We look forward to receiving many entries from your school,
Prof Ed Sturrock : Competition Convenor