

***Plus* new writers award 2006**

Guidelines for entrants

Researching your article

- Before you start, browse the *Plus* archive to get a feel for the kind of articles that are published in *Plus*, and the style in which they are written. If *Plus* already has an article that covers the subject you want to write about, then either try to present it from a new and interesting angle, provide new information or look for another topic.
- Keep track of your sources, whether they are books, papers, interviews, or web pages. Provide the details of your sources in a bibliography, to be submitted with your entry. Include: title, author, publisher and year of publication for books; author, title of article, title of periodical, volume and/or date, and pages for journal, magazine and newspaper articles; author (if available), title of page, date published (if available), institution (if available), date you accessed the page, and the URL for website and webpages; interview subject, location, date and time for interviews you have conducted.
- Take very special care with information from the internet as it may be incorrect. Always check various sources and try to assess their respectability — for example articles published in peer-reviewed scientific journals or on university research group sites are probably reliable, but text appearing on people's personal homepages or blogs may not be. (You can get some tips on using the internet for research from [UC Berkeley](#).) Try to base your final article on a number of reliable sources and give these in your bibliography.

Writing your article

- Entries must be no longer than 2000 words. When printed either as a word document or PDF file, single spaced with 12 point font, the article must be under 10 A4 pages in length.
- Your article should be suitable for publication in *Plus*. It should be on a maths-related topic, for example a mathematical idea or concept, an applications of maths, or on a historical topic such as an individual mathematician. Your article should shed some interesting light on the topic you are writing about, for example by presenting something that your audience is unlikely to know about and which may surprise them, or by explaining concepts that people may have heard of but have never understood.
- Your article won't be judged on the level of difficulty of the maths in it — you can say really interesting things about simple maths, too.
- You should assume that you are writing for an audience with only a basic knowledge of maths, not university level. It should be accessible to someone aged 16 studying maths at school, but keep in mind that *Plus* readers include students,

university academics and many people from the general public. Your article should be clear, concise, informative and inspiring.

- Keep the use of formulae to a minimum and don't use technical language unless absolutely necessary and you have made crystal clear what it means. Don't write to impress someone who knows more than you, rather write to inspire someone who knows less than you.
- Don't shy away from introducing complex and abstract ideas that are important to your topic, but make sure you present them in a clear and engaging way. Put them in a broader context, illustrate with an example or use analogies to explain difficult ideas and to capture their essence.
- Diagrams and illustrations are welcome, but please include them in the appropriate place in your article, with a number or caption. They should be of a reasonable quality to be reproduced on the web. If you use diagrams, images or illustrations that are not your own, then you must make sure that they are in the public domain or obtain written permission for their use from the copyright holder.
- Your article should be self-contained, do not rely on linking to external websites to explain details contained in your article. If there are links you think are relevant to your article, you can include them in a "Further reading section" at the end.
- When you're done, get a person with no interest in maths whatsoever to read your article. He or she may have some very useful criticism.
- The judges will be interested not only in the content of your article but also in the way you use language to bring it across. They'll be looking for clear, lively and inspiring prose. Make sure that your article is written in good English and that spelling and grammar is correct.

Submitting your entry

- Complete the entry form - either as a word document or print the PDF and write on it clearly. (Both can be downloaded from <http://www.plus.maths.org.uk>.)
- Complete and sign the copyright form, and if you are under 18 have a parent or legal guardian co-sign the form. If you are submitting your entry electronically, include a scanned version of the copyright form with your entry.
- Only include your name on the entry form and copyright form, do not include your name anywhere in the article. We will randomly allocate a number to each entry when it is received, to identify it. This is to ensure the judging is anonymous. Names will be linked back to entries after the judging has been completed.
- Post your entry to:
Plus new writers award 2006
Millennium Mathematics Project
Centre for Mathematical Sciences
Wilberforce Road
Cambridge CB3 0WA, UK
or email it to mmp@maths.cam.ac.uk with "Plus new writers award 2006" as the subject header.
- Check you have included the completed entry form, copyright form, your article

and bibliography. If you are emailing your entry, you need to send in a scanned version of the entry form (if you wrote on the PDF printout) and copyright form, and your article must consist of a single file (either a word document or PDF file) including any images, illustrations or diagrams.

- Closing date is September 30th, 2006.
- Good luck!

Plagiarism

- Plagiarism is defined in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as stealing and passing off the ideas or words of another as your own, without crediting the source. Plagiarism is a serious offense, whether occurring in published writing, submissions for school or university, or in the work place. As part of the entry form, you will be asked to sign (and have your parents cosign if you are under 18) a copyright form, which states that the work you are submitting is original and your own work. For more information you can read Cambridge University's plagiarism guidelines to students.
- Do not copy any text, whether from the internet or a printed source, without clearly marking it as a quotation and stating where it is from. If you are paraphrasing the work from another source, without significantly changing the content, you must also credit the source. Plagiarised entries will be disqualified and there is very reliable software for spotting such entries.
- If you produce an entry which is very much like one or more other published articles and does not contain any input by yourself then this article will also be considered as plagiarised. Input by yourself means that you have either added your own ideas or interpretations, that you have translated some very technical material into everyday language using your own words, or that you have brought together and put into context several other published sources, crediting sources where appropriate.