



St. Columba's College

English Department

Willis Memorial Prize for Shakespeare 2024

Open to Sixth, Fifth and Fourth Forms

An essay on an aspect of Shakespeare's writing chosen from the options below. It is to be completed by 9.00pm on Thursday 18th April, and handed in to Mr Girdham by then either by paper or scanned via Firefly (ask him to set a task for you).

It *must* be handwritten (unless a candidate also types for state exams), and must be completed in **a maximum of 4 sides of A4**.

You may use notes, the text, and critical works as you wish.

After completion, strong candidates will be interviewed by Mr Girdham and asked questions on their essay and on their play/s.

Choose **one** of the following statements and write on it (you may of course write on the play you have studied this year – *Hamlet* for Sixth, *King Lear* for Fifth, *The Merchant of Venice* for Fourth – or other plays). You can write on more than one play.

1. Shakespeare's greatness is that the stories he tells in his plays continue to be relevant centuries later.
2. In Shakespeare's plays there is often one single scene which is critical to the play, drawing together its central themes and characters. In at least one play, choose this scene and show how it relates to the rest of the text.
3. It is the level of Shakespeare's brilliance with language that makes him history's most powerful playwright.
4. Shakespeare is a master at evoking mixed feelings about his central characters. Examine at least one main character in at least one play in the light of this statement.