- If you quote directly from a source, you must use quotation marks and include a reference to the source of the quote.
- ***AI Tools are not permitted for any aspect of science writing.***
- Science Writing can be in a number of different genres:
    - Recount
    - Narrative
    - Explanation
    - Discussion
    - Response
    - Information Report
    - Procedure
    - Persuasion/Exposition
    - Description
    - Comic (graphic writing)
    - Infographic
- You may include pictures and graphic illustrations. However, if illustrations or pictures are copied you must include a reference next to the illustration or picture.
- Write or word-process your entry yourself. If there are special reasons for using help in typing or editing, then this help must be acknowledged after your reference list.
- The length of your Science Writing entry depends on your year level:
    - Year R–2: do not exceed 200 words;
    - Year 3–4 and 5–6: do not exceed 800 words;
    - Year 7–8, 9–10, 11–12: do not exceed 1500 words.
    - **A word count must be included on your entry** (please note: titles, labels and referencing are not included in the word count). *There can be up to 10% tolerance of the word limit*

In presenting your Science Writing entry (online submission ONLY):

The following documents will need to be uploaded for your project:

- Cover sheet with your Student ID details (your Coordinator will give you this)
- Electronic copy of your science writing entry.
- Entries will be accepted as PDF or Word documents only. We cannot guarantee judges will be able to access any other file types.

For full details on electronic submission, see: https://bit.ly/OSAOnlineSubmission

KEY DATES:

- **Friday 5 June - 28 June:** entry submitted online

Commemorative Science Writing Topic

80 years since the discovery of Spriggina

The Oliphant Science Awards, in partnership with the Flinders Ranges Ediacara Foundation, present a special commemorative Science Writing Topic celebrating 80 years since one of South Australia's most extraordinary scientific discoveries.

FLINDERS RANGES EDIACARA FOUNDATION

2026 Commemorative Science Writing Topic

Discovering Spriggina: South Australia's Window into Life's Beginnings

Back in 1946, Spriggina was uncovered in the Flinders Ranges. Imagine the excitement of that moment. Why was this discovery such a big deal for South Australia, and how did it change what scientists know about the first animals on Earth?

In the rugged hills of the Flinders Ranges, geologist Reg Sprigg discovered Spriggina, a tiny fossil that would transform our understanding of life's earliest beginnings. This ancient creature, preserved in rocks over half a billion years old, provided the first evidence of complex animal life from the Ediacaran Period—long before dinosaurs walked the Earth.

Through this topic, students are invited to explore the science behind fossils, geology, and evolution, while reflecting on how one South Australian discovery reshaped the global story of life on Earth.

Our Partner in Discovery

The Flinders Ranges Ediacara Foundation works to protect and share the story of the Ediacaran fossils found across the Flinders Ranges. By supporting education, research, and conservation, the Foundation helps ensure these remarkable windows into our planet's ancient past are preserved for generations to come. Learn more at https://ediacarafoundation.org/

Science Writing

Proudly sponsored by Flinders University

Budding journalists and science writers, here is your chance to inspire, impress and inform your readers.

2026 Science Writing titles:

- **Seeds of Science: How Plants Shape Our Lives** - *What if the next big breakthrough came from something growing in your garden? Explore how seeds and plants feed us, heal us, and inspire technology that's changing our world.*
- **Science for Peace: Small Discoveries, Big Changes** - *Can a simple invention change the course of a community—or a country? Investigate how science is helping build a more peaceful, fair and sustainable world.*
- **Inventing Tomorrow: Climate Solutions for a Cooler Planet** - *From cutting-edge farming to student-led inventions—how can we reduce CO_2 and fight climate change? Research bold ideas and share your own vision for a cooler, greener future.*
- **Next Giant Leaps: From NASA to Life Beyond Earth** - *How has space science—from NASA's past missions to future Mars plans—changed our world? Investigate key milestones in space exploration and what we're learning to help humans live beyond Earth.*
- **From Trash to Treasure** - *Can rubbish really power homes, build furniture or grow food? Investigate how science is turning waste into valuable new solutions—and what the future of waste could look like.*
- **If We Could Cure It: The Promise and Ethics of Stem Cells** - *Twenty years after the first breakthroughs in stem cell science, how close are we to curing paralysis, blindness or heart disease? Explore how stem cells work, what they could fix, and the ethical questions they raise about access, limits and the future of medicine.*
- **Chemical Reactions That Changed the World** - *How did a handful of molecules lead to life-saving vaccines, cleaner air—or explosions in the sky? Discover the chemistry behind world-changing breakthroughs.*
- **Bloom Trouble: What Toxic Algae Tells Us About Water Health** - *When do algae become dangerous? Investigate South Australia's own algal bloom crisis and what science reveals about water quality, climate, and keeping ecosystems safe.*
- **Listening to Country: What First Nations Science Can Teach Us** - *How do First Nations peoples read land, water, stars and seasons? Explore the deep science behind Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems and how they guide sustainable living today.*
- **My Backyard Biosphere** - *You don't have to go far to find wild science—sometimes it's under a log or in a schoolyard pond. Explore your own small habitat and describe what lives there, what it needs, and how it all fits together.*
- **Science as a Human Endeavour** (YEAR 11–12 LEVEL ONLY)

A successful SASTA Oliphant Science Awards Science Writing entry:

- **IS WELL RESEARCHED AND HAS ACCURATE SCIENCE CONTENT.**
- Will communicate ideas clearly.
- Will be original, innovative and your own work.
- Will have accurate punctuation and spelling.
- Will have a References section that acknowledges all sources of information (for students in Years 7–8, 9–10 and 11–12, this will include in-text referencing).

Rules for Science Writing Entries:

- You must write on one of the titles listed above. Please ensure the title is clearly identified on your entry.
- The Science Writing entry must be the work of one person (no group entries).
- You must include a reference list that contains all the sources of information that you used. This includes all books, websites, magazines, and any people you have interviewed.
- Appropriate "in-text" referencing is expected for students in Years 7–8, 9–10 and 11–12.