



John Locke Global Essay Prize 2025 Prompts Breakdown  
Economics Category - Key Issues and Questions to Address



---

## **Economics Q1**

What kinds of behaviour are engendered by the hope of profit? Is such behaviour better or worse, on balance, than the behaviour we should expect if all enterprises were owned by charities or governments?

### **Key Issues and Questions to Address**

To write a comprehensive essay on this topic, you'll need to contend with several fundamental issues:

#### 1. The Nature of Profit Motivation

How does the hope of profit affect human decision-making and behavior?

Is profit-seeking primarily self-interested, or can it align with broader social goals?

How do profit incentives influence innovation, risk-taking, and resource allocation?

#### 2. Efficiency and Resource Allocation

Do profit-driven enterprises allocate resources more efficiently than charities or governments?

What are the empirical outcomes of profit-driven versus non-profit-driven systems?



John Locke Global Essay Prize 2025 Prompts Breakdown  
Economics Category - Key Issues and Questions to Address



---

How do market mechanisms compare to central planning or charitable decision-making?

3. Ethical Dimensions

Is profit-seeking behavior inherently more or less ethical than altruistic or public-service motivations?

How do different cultural and philosophical traditions evaluate profit-seeking?

Can profit motives be reconciled with broader ethical concerns?

4. Alternative Models and Hybrid Systems

What examples exist of successful non-profit or government enterprises?

How do mixed economies balance profit-driven and non-profit sectors?

What institutional arrangements might capture the benefits of profit motivation while mitigating drawbacks?

5. Social Outcomes and Externalities

How do profit-driven systems address (or fail to address) externalities and public goods?



John Locke Global Essay Prize 2025 Prompts Breakdown  
Economics Category - Key Issues and Questions to Address

---



What are the distributive consequences of profit-driven versus non-profit systems?

How do different economic arrangements affect social cohesion and community welfare?

6. Human Nature and Institutions

Do humans naturally respond better to profit incentives than to other motivations?

How do different institutional arrangements channel human behavior?

Can institutions be designed to harness beneficial aspects of profit-seeking while limiting harmful ones?

7. Historical Context and Evidence

What historical evidence exists about the performance of different economic systems?

How have profit-driven and non-profit sectors evolved over time?

What can we learn from comparative studies of different economic arrangements?

8. Locke's Perspective



## John Locke Global Essay Prize 2025 Prompts Breakdown

### Economics Category - Key Issues and Questions to Address

---



How would Locke's philosophy of property rights and government inform this debate?

How does Locke's view of human nature relate to profit-seeking behavior?

Can Locke's ideas be applied to modern economic questions?

To construct a strong essay, students should establish a balanced evaluation framework. This framework should acknowledge both the strengths and weaknesses inherent in profit-driven behaviour. Following this, they must systematically examine evidence and arguments from various viewpoints, incorporating historical and contemporary sources. The essay should culminate in a nuanced conclusion. This conclusion should recognise the issue's complexity while offering a clear perspective on the overall balance between the benefits and drawbacks of profit-driven behaviour.