



John Locke Global Essay Prize 2025 Prompts Breakdown
Economics Category - Recommended Readings



Economics Q2

What will be the effect on socio-economic mobility of the UK government's plan to impose value-added tax on school fees?

Recommended Readings

Historical Sources

1. John Locke, "Some Thoughts Concerning Education" (1693)
 - Outlines Locke's views on education as fundamental to developing rational individuals
 - Emphasises the importance of education in creating moral and productive citizens
 - Provides historical context for debates about access to education and social mobility
2. Adam Smith, "The Wealth of Nations" (1776)
 - Discusses education as a public good and its relationship to economic development
 - Examines the role of human capital in economic productivity
 - Presents early economic arguments for public investment in education
3. Pierre Bourdieu, "Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture" (1970)
 - Introduces concepts of cultural, social, and economic capital in education



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- Examines how educational systems reproduce social inequalities
 - Offers a theoretical framework for understanding how private education affects social mobility

4. Anthony Giddens, "The Third Way" (1998)

- Discusses the balance between state provision and market mechanisms in social policy
- Examines how educational policy fits into broader social democratic frameworks
- Provides political context for education taxation policies

Contemporary Academic Research

1. Francis Green et al., "Private Schooling and Labour Market Outcomes" (2017)

- Analyses the wage premium associated with private education in the UK
- Examines career progression differences between privately and state-educated individuals
- Provides empirical data on the economic advantages conferred by private education

2. The Sutton Trust, "Social Mobility and Education" (2019)

- Documents educational inequality in the UK and its impact on social mobility
- Examines access barriers to high-quality education for disadvantaged groups
- Provides data on the relationship between school type and university access

3. Institute for Fiscal Studies, "The Effect of Taxes and Benefits on UK Inequality" (2021)



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- Analyses how tax policies affect income distribution
 - Examines the redistributive effects of different taxation approaches
 - Provides economic modelling of tax incidence and behaviour change
4. Sam Friedman and Daniel Laurison, "The Class Ceiling" (2019)
- Examines how class background affects career progression in the UK
 - Documents the advantages conferred by private education in elite professions
 - Provides qualitative and quantitative data on mobility barriers
5. Diane Reay, "Miseducation: Inequality, Education and the Working Classes" (2017)
- Analyses how working-class students experience educational inequalities
 - Examines the psychological and social impacts of educational stratification
 - Provides context for understanding potential effects of educational policy changes

Policy Documents and Economic Analyses

1. UK Treasury, "Impact Assessment of VAT on School Fees" (use most recent)
- Outlines government projections for revenue and behavioural responses
 - Presents official rationale and expected outcomes
 - Provides baseline assumptions for policy implementation
2. Institute for Public Policy Research, "The State of the State" (2022)
- Examines public service provision in the UK, including education
 - Analyses policy alternatives for education funding



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- Provides a progressive perspective on educational taxation
3. Independent Schools Council, "Economic Impact of Independent Schools" (latest report)
- Presents data on the economic contribution of private schools
 - Outlines scholarship and bursary provisions
 - Provides industry perspective on taxation impacts
4. Resolution Foundation, "Intergenerational Fairness" (latest report)
- Examines wealth and opportunity gaps between generations
 - Analyzes how educational advantages perpetuate across generations
 - Provides context for understanding long-term mobility impacts
5. OECD, "Education at a Glance" (latest edition)
- Compares educational outcomes and financing across developed nations
 - Provides an international context for UK educational policy
 - Examines the relationship between educational systems and social mobility
6. Social Market Foundation, "Private School Policy Reform" (most recent)
- Analyses different approaches to private school policy
 - Examines middle-ground policy options
 - Provides a balanced perspective on reform consequences



Media and Contemporary Commentary

1. Financial Times, "The Economic Impact of VAT on School Fees" (recent article)
 - Presents financial analysis of the policy's impact
 - Examines potential behavioral responses from parents and schools
 - Provides business perspective on policy implications
2. The Economist, "Education and Inequality in Britain" (recent article)
 - Offers economic analysis of educational stratification
 - Examines international comparisons of educational policy
 - Provides context on broader inequality trends