

Marshall Society Economics Essay Preparation

A 20-Week Programme in Economic Reasoning, Evidence and Policy Analysis

Explain an economic mechanism, test it against real-world evidence and develop a concise, independent answer to a competition question.

20 weeks, 20 sessions, 90 minutes per session. Four stages of five weeks each.

Rolling foundation training. Align question selection and final drafting with the next official competition cycle.

Planning baseline: official 2026 competition information. Future-cycle questions and rules must be confirmed before the final entry is prepared.

Stage and Progression	Wk	Session Topic	Core Content	Student Deliverable / Feedback
Stage 1 Economic Reasoning & Writing Foundations 5 weeks / 5 sessions Use economic concepts to explain behaviour, shocks and trade-offs clearly. Deliverable: Concept portfolio and a short economic commentary	1	Thinking Like an Economist	Diagnose subject knowledge and distinguish explanation, empirical claims and policy judgements.	300-word diagnostic and personal concept map
	2	Incentives, Markets & Welfare	Apply opportunity cost, marginal reasoning, market failures and distributional trade-offs.	Two mechanism explanations and an annotated diagram
	3	Macroeconomic Shocks & Policy	Trace inflation, output and employment effects; compare monetary and fiscal responses.	A policy transmission map with stated assumptions
	4	Using Models Without Overclaiming	Explain what a model predicts, what it assumes and when it may fail.	Model-assumption table and a real-world application
	5	Reading and Writing Economic Commentary	Analyse strong essays and turn a current issue into a focused economic explanation.	400-word commentary and Stage 1 progress report
Stage 2 Question Selection, Models & Evidence 5 weeks / 5 sessions Choose a focused question, suitable models and credible evidence with stated limitations. Deliverable: Research brief, evidence workbook and essay outline	6	Selecting the Competition Question	Compare official prompts for theory fit, data access and manageable scope.	Question comparison and a provisional or confirmed choice
	7	Choosing the Analytical Framework	Select the mechanisms, welfare criteria and short-versus long-run distinctions that matter.	Model plan and outline of causal mechanisms
	8	Finding and Checking Economic Evidence	Use official statistics and credible studies; record units, periods, definitions and limitations.	Source register and a labelled data/evidence workbook
	9	Causation, Comparison & Counterfactuals	Assess whether evidence supports the claimed mechanism; examine rival explanations.	Evidence-quality audit and counterfactual comparison
	10	Research Brief & Essay Design	State the answer, choose the strongest evidence and allocate a compact word budget.	500-word brief, detailed outline and Stage 2 report
Stage 3 Economic Analysis & First Draft 5 weeks / 5 sessions Connect theory, empirical evidence and evaluation in a compact, coherent argument. Deliverable: Complete economics essay draft and first review	11	Drafting the Theoretical Argument	Explain a relevant mechanism precisely and connect assumptions to predictions.	Theory section with cited support
	12	Integrating Empirical Evidence	Interpret data or cases and explain how strongly they support the argument.	Evidence section with calculations and source notes
	13	Evaluating Trade-offs and Alternatives	Compare affected groups, time horizons, institutions and competing policy options.	Evaluation section and conditional judgement
	14	Completing the First Economics Draft	Integrate theory, evidence and evaluation; answer the chosen question directly.	Complete first draft, references and word-count record
	15	Full Review I: Economic Logic	Identify faulty mechanisms, unsupported jumps and sections that do not advance the answer.	Written review, revision plan and Stage 3 report
Stage 4 Evidence Testing & Final Submission 5 weeks / 5 sessions Challenge assumptions, refine the judgement and verify the final entry. Deliverable: Final essay, evidence audit and submission pack	16	Testing Evidence and Assumptions	Recheck data, test alternative explanations and identify conclusions sensitive to assumptions.	Verified evidence workbook and rewritten weak sections
	17	Full Review II: Depth and Judgement	Strengthen the independent insight and calibrate conclusions to the evidence.	Second written review and revised full manuscript
	18	Writing Concisely Within the Limit	Cut background and repetition; improve analytical density and English precision.	Student-edited essay and final word-budget sheet
	19	Full Review III: Accuracy and Attribution	Audit numbers, sources, bibliography, format and all required assistance declarations.	Third written review and submission candidate
	20	Final Defence & Submission Preparation	Explain the model and evidence; check eligibility, exclusivity, file and submission form.	Final essay, submission pack and Stage 4 report

What Students Complete and Receive

- One final economics competition essay.** Student-authored Word master and PDF answering one official prompt. The 2026 limit is 1,500 counted words; bibliography and data tables are excluded, while other text, including footnotes, counts.
 - One economic research dossier.** A 500-word brief, detailed outline, model-assumption table, causal mechanism map and comparison of competing explanations.
 - One verified evidence workbook and reading portfolio.** Source records, definitions, units, periods, calculations where relevant and limitations; six reading analyses spanning economic essays, studies and data sources.
 - Three full reviews and four progress reports.** Written tutor feedback at three manuscript stages, a student revision log and one parent progress report after each five-week stage.
 - One submission-readiness package.** Final PDF, reference and word-count checks, record of assistance for disclosure, eligibility review and a check that this entry is not submitted to another competition.
- For pre-university students interested in economics, PPE or public policy. Students should be comfortable with basic graphs, percentages and sustained English reading.
- Allow 5-7 hours of independent study each week, rising to 7-9 hours for data verification and draft revision. The courses prepare competitive entries; awards are decided independently by the competition organisers.
- Entry check: confirm the next-cycle rules, disclose assistance and reserve this essay for Marshall only under the current exclusivity rule.
- Official reference: <https://marshallsoc.org/marshall-society-essay-competition-2026/>