

# Audio description as creative writing

## Competition on the Parthenon sculptures in the British Museum for KCL students

Audio description (AD) is used throughout the cultural sector for blind and partially sighted people, providing a vivid, verbal description and translation of the visual and sensory elements of theatre, dance, sports, and museum artworks. AD may also be used on the radio or in podcasts, when the presenter is aware that the listener cannot see what they are referring to. Recent research has explored the benefits that sighted people may gain from listening to an AD *while* viewing an image or object, as 'guided looking'.

Similarly, in classical art, art history, and related studies, *ekphrasis* looks particularly at the relationship between poetry and image. Beyond providing a formal analysis of the visual, ekphrasis can focus on the sensory or cognitive *impact* of the artwork – the emotional or intellectual impression that it leaves on the speaker. This perception is therefore a subjective process, shaped by the character and identity of the speaker.

KCL students are invited to submit an audio description or *ekphrasis* based on the Parthenon marbles in the British Museum. We welcome all genres (poetry or prose), and applicants from groups traditionally marginalised in a museum setting are particularly welcome.

### Prizes

**First prize:** £200

**Second prize:** £100

**Third prize:** £50

**A longlist will be assessed by a panel from the Departments of Classics and English.**

**Terms and conditions:**

- Open to KCL students from all Faculties at all levels (UG, PGT, PGR).
- Submissions must be based on the Parthenon sculptures and galleries in the British Museum.
- Submissions can be audio MP3 file with Word/PDF transcript provided, or just a Word or PDF document.
- Maximum 1,000 words for prose or 50 lines of poetry. Submissions that exceed the word limit will be excluded.
- Maximum two submissions per person.
- You can co-create a submission with another person (or small team); any prize money would be split evenly.
- Participants must send the submissions from their KCL email address.
- While KCL is keen to support students to become AI-literate, this competition focuses on the human voice and so the use of generative AI is inappropriate in this context.
- On receipt of your work, you will be invited to submit a survey on your experience of composing this piece – this feedback will be anonymous and optional.
- Results will be announced in late spring/early summer 2025.
- Submissions to be sent to Dr Ellen Adams at [ellen.adams@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:ellen.adams@kcl.ac.uk).
- If you need this advert in an alternative format, please contact Dr Ellen Adams at [ellen.adams@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:ellen.adams@kcl.ac.uk).
- Deadline **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2025, 5pm.**

**Advice on approaches:**

- For guidance, please see the resources suggested online here: <https://mansil.uk/kcl-competition>. This webpage will be updated if/when more resources are found, so do keep an eye on it.
- In terms of focus, you can consider the entire monument, a single sculpture, or anything in between, just so long as it draws from the Parthenon.
- You can help someone visualise the sculptures through ‘thick description’ (AD).

- You can take a more historical or interpretive overview, focusing on a single element, such as the history of the building, the architecture, themes in the sculptural programme, or the history (and ethics) of the collection (while including some AD).
- You can create a more abstract, imagined reconstruction or flight of fancy, but it should be clear which sculptures are being referred to.
- You can also consider your own very personal, subjective response to the sculptures (again, with some clear reference to specific sculptures). These may include protected characteristics (for example, sexuality, disability, race, age, religion and belief etc).
- Submissions are short, so you are advised to think carefully about vocabulary and how you express your thoughts.
- It will not be possible to offer personal advice to individual participants regarding your submission: the exception is if you need this advert in an alternative format.
- Other responses will be added in a FAQ section online here:  
<https://mansil.uk/kcl-competition>.

Deadline **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2025, 5pm.**

Guidance website: <https://mansil.uk/kcl-competition>

Contact: Dr Ellen Adams, Department of Classics  
[ellen.adams@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:ellen.adams@kcl.ac.uk).