



Premier's Debating Challenge

2022

The Premier's Debating Challenge is open to all NSW government schools with the aim of developing the reasoning and public speaking skills of students from Years 5 to 12.

What age groups can compete in the Premier's Debating Challenge?

The Premier's Debating Challenge has four different state-wide age divisions: Years 5 and 6, Years 7 and 8, Years 9 and 10, and Years 11 and 12.

How do the debates work?

Every debate in the challenge is a one hour preparation debate. Teams do not know the topic or which side of the debate they are on until one hour before the debate starts. Once the preparation time is up, three speakers from each team take turns to speak, with a fourth teammate helping out during both preparation and the debate. Debates can be held in-person or over Zoom to suit the schools involved.

How long do the students speak for?

The speaking times differ in each age division of the challenge as outlined below.

Age division	Warning bell	Speaking time	Continuous bell
Years 5 and 6	3 minutes	4 minutes	5 minutes
Years 7 and 8	4 minutes	6 minutes	7 minutes
Years 9 and 10	6 minutes	8 minutes	9 minutes
Years 11 and 12	6 minutes	8 minutes	9 minutes

How many teams can a school enter?

Schools can enter up to two teams in each of the age divisions. Many schools choose to enter two teams in the Years 11 and 12 division, two teams in the Years 9 and 10 division, and two teams in the Years 7 and 8 division so that a large group of students throughout the school can be involved and work together on their skills.

Who can be in the debating team?

In any given debate a team will field four members. Those members can change from debate to debate, so a team can in fact be made up of a large squad of students. The students can be from any year equal to or below the age division in which the team is entered (for example, a Year 10 student can debate in a Years 11 and 12 team). When a school enters two teams in the same age division, a student cannot appear for both of those teams, so Team (A) needs to have a different and separate squad from Team (B).

How do schools enter the challenge?

Schools can enter the challenge by simply completing the online entry forms at www.artsunit.nsw.edu.au before the deadline. For the Years 11 and 12 age division, that deadline is Monday 14 February 2022. The deadline for the other divisions is Tuesday 1 March 2022. We'll email you as soon as we've processed your school's entries.

How much does the challenge cost?

The entry fee for the Premier's Debating Challenge is \$95.00 per team. Schools will automatically be debited for this amount once they submit their entry form. Please advise your school's finance department that this will occur, and note that fees are due on entry and cannot be refunded even where teams might subsequently withdraw.

How does the Years 11 and 12 age division run?

To alleviate some uncertainty surrounding Term 1, this age division is changing a little to make it easier to get involved, faster to work through, and more flexible in case your school's circumstances change or your debate team just gets too busy.

Teams will compete in a knockout competition. They will be matched up against another team for their first debate as soon as they are entered, and they'll debate online over Zoom with The Arts Unit providing the adjudicator. If they win that first debate, they'll move on to round 2 and be paired up against another winner. If they lose, each team will have 1 life, so they won't be eliminated but won't progress to round 2 either – they'll just be paired up against another team who needs a round 1 debate. Teams can use their life at any time during the first 4 rounds. If they lose a second debate they'll officially be eliminated, but we'll continue to match up eager teams for as many friendly debates as they'd like.

If 2 teams can't agree quickly on date and time, the organisers will find them different opponents, and if things get too busy or the team starts to feel overloaded, teams can drop out without having to forfeit and cost someone else a chance to debate. The competition will begin in February with the state final to be held in early August.

How does the Years 9 and 10 age division run?

Teams will be organised into zones of six (occasionally fewer depending on entries) and will receive their draw before the start of Term 2. Each team will complete 3 debates against other teams from their zone whenever suits them before mid-Term 3. Once those 3 rounds are completed the team(s) with the best record will be declared the zone champions and will compete in a knockout finals series to determine the state champion. The state final will be held in November 2022.

How does the Years 7 and 8 age division run?

Teams are organised into zones and complete 3 rounds of debates just as they do in the Years 9 and 10 division from the start of Term 2 until mid-Term 3. Zone champions move on to a regional knockout finals series following which the 10 regional champion teams attend a 3-day championships tournament in Sydney to determine the state champion. The championships will run in early December 2022.

How does the Years 5 and 6 age division run?

Teams will be organised into zones of six or more. Each team will complete 4 debates against other teams from their zone at times and dates that suit the schools involved. Zone debates will occur from the start of Term 2 until mid-Term 3. Once those 4 rounds are completed the team(s) with the best record will be declared zone champions and will compete in a regional knockout finals series. Following that, the 10 regional champions will attend a 3-day championships tournament at Stanwell Tops to determine the state champion. The championships will run in mid-November 2022.

What are the prizes?

All students involved in the challenge will receive a certificate acknowledging their participation. Certificates of congratulations will then be awarded to teams who win their zones. Medallions will be awarded to teams who reach the state final, and a perpetual trophy will be awarded to the state champions in each age division.

Contact details

If you have any questions about the Premier's Debating Challenge please contact the Speaking Competitions Officer on (02) 8512 1172 or debating@det.nsw.edu.au. You can also check out our website at www.artsunit.nsw.edu.au