



# Premier's Debating Challenge

Years 11 and 12

Welcome back to the Premier's Debating Challenge for Years 11 and 12 for the Hume Barbour Trophy! This document includes all the rules for the competition, some advice on organising and running your debates, and a form for the chairperson and reporting results. If you have any questions about the competition, please don't hesitate to contact us at [debating@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:debating@det.nsw.edu.au) or (02) 8512 1172.

## Revised structure of the Years 11 and 12 competition

- Instead of a fixed zone draw with 3 rounds of debating, this will be a knockout competition where the teams have 1 life. Teams will be matched up against each other for their first debate as soon as they enter, and they'll debate online over Zoom with The Arts Unit providing the adjudicator. The team that wins the debate will move on to round 2 and be paired up against another winner. The team that loses has 1 life, so they won't be eliminated but they 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 if they're still keen to keep debating we'll match them up with someone else for a friendly debate as many times as they like.
- If 2 teams can't quickly find a suitable date and time, we can just find them different opponents. Most importantly, if things get too busy or the team starts to feel overloaded, they can drop out without having to forfeit and cost someone else a chance to debate.
- The knockout finals series will end in a state final to be held in the Great Hall of the University of Sydney on Friday 5 August (circumstances permitting). The winning team will receive the Hume Barbour Trophy to display at their school for the following year. If health advice allows schools will be welcome to attend the final.

## Deadlines and topic areas

We'll let teachers know a deadline whenever we email them with a new opponent, but we'll basically be asking teams to hold a debate within 4 weeks of it being announced. Teams will be expected to have completed at least 2 debates by the end of Term 1, and another 2 by mid-Term 2. The topic areas for the first 5 rounds are as listed to the right, with all debates after round 5 being general topics. Note that if a team loses its first debate, they'll stay in round 1 and receive a new match-up and new topics on the round 1 topic area. They'll only progress to the next round and a new topic area with a win.

Round 1	Education
Round 2	Sport
Round 3	Politics
Round 4	The media

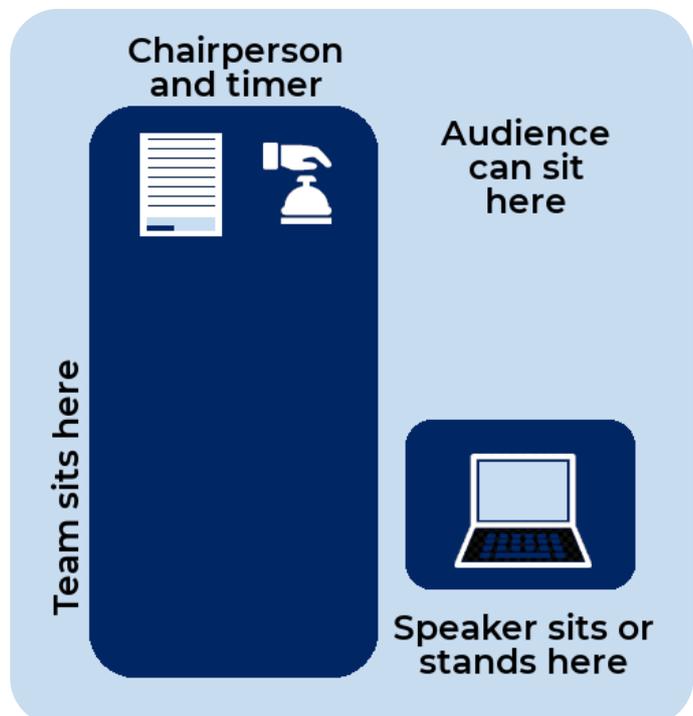
## Organising your debates

- Both teams are responsible for contacting each other to begin organising a debate.
- There will hopefully be opportunities to debate in-person as the year progresses, but to keep schools safe all debates will be online to begin the competition.
- Once arrangements have been made for a debate, teams should try to give at least 48 hours' notice if they need to postpone. A suitable alternative should then be organised by the team that postponed.
- If any problems arise which prevent the organisation of a debate, please contact us as soon as possible for advice. We can help sort out most timing issues before they blow up, or we can change the match-ups so that the teams have new opponents with better-matching calendars. Just email [debating@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:debating@det.nsw.edu.au) with any questions or call (02) 8512 1172 as soon as you look like hitting a snag.



## Setting up for an online debate

- Most online debates are conducted using Zoom, but if both schools are more familiar with Microsoft Teams or Google Meet then those platforms are fine as well.
- The teachers involved should determine which of them will be hosting the online meeting, and that teacher should then head to [www.artsunit.nsw.edu.au](http://www.artsunit.nsw.edu.au) to send us the details of the debate so that we can appoint an adjudicator. Note that we just need the start time of the actual debate – not the time you'll be meeting online to begin topic selection which will typically be 1 hour 10 minutes earlier.
- Next, the teacher who's hosting should set up an online meeting for the date and time the teams have agreed upon. Some technical instructions are available on our website, but the most important thing is to ensure that you can "Sign in with a registered Zoom Account" (you'll need to change the default setting from "Sign in with DoE Single Sign-On.")
- Remember that teams will need to meet up online 1 hour 10 minutes before the debate in order to select the topic and determine the affirmative and the negative.
- Finally, send an invite to the online meeting to the other school and to [debating@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:debating@det.nsw.edu.au). We'll pass it on to the adjudicator we appoint.
- After topic selection, both teams should stay onscreen (but muted) throughout preparation time. If your team is unable to stay onscreen, you need to discuss this with the other teacher prior to the debate.
- It's fine to set up the room and the space however works best – the only thing we really need is for the debater speaking to be close to the microphone and for the team to sit near to where the sound comes out.
- Here's a sketch of what would work best for a simple laptop connection. Note that we're recommending both teams have their own chairperson and timekeeper. It's fine if a teacher fills those roles as long as both venues have someone responsible for keeping time and ringing the bell for their debaters.
- It's a good idea to have the debater who is speaking move away from their team – the team isn't allowed to help during the speech.
- As the debater who's finished speaking leaves they can simply mute the laptop and turn it around to face towards the team at their desk and the chairperson. Then when the next debater comes to the front they can turn the laptop back towards them and unmute it.
- If schools have a wall-mounted set-up like a smartboard then obviously that will be fine too – just focus on having the debater speaking near the microphone and the team near wherever the sound comes out.
- Be sure to put the laptop window in whatever layout shows a big picture of the person speaking (typically a "speaker view" as opposed to a "gallery view") and remember to mute the laptop when the other team is delivering their speeches.





## Trouble-shooting an online debate

- In the past two years thousands of debates have run over Zoom with only a very small number of technical glitches, but just in case, here are a few simple tips in case the technology causes problems.
- If a speech starts to break up in a way that makes it difficult to hear, the adjudicator or the other teacher should unmute and interrupt. The timer should stop, and then the speaker should re-start the chunk of their speech that broke up, with the timer making generous allowance for the break.
- If it seems like the internet is spotty, teachers can try turning off their cameras so that they are only transmitting sound. Often that cleans up the sound and it's really all that's needed for the debate to work. Honestly a simple conference call on the teachers' phones will work in a pinch.
- If the technology fails and the debate needs to be abandoned for the day, then the teams should retain all their preparation work and contact us for advice on how to proceed.
- If the problem is with the adjudicator's connection, one teacher can record the meeting and then upload the recording to their Google Drive through the portal. Invite us to view the video of the meeting by emailing [debating@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:debating@det.nsw.edu.au) and we'll record our adjudication and feedback and send it to both teams.
- Call us on (02) 8512 1172 at any time for advice on any aspect of the technology.

## General rules of the competition

- 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 in this Years 11 and 12 competition can be from any year in high school, though it is expected they will generally be seniors. Where a school has entered two teams, a student must not appear in both of those teams, so Team (A) must have a different and separate squad from Team (B). Once a student has appeared for Team (A) they may not appear for Team (B) at any stage of the competition and vice versa.
- Of the four members of the team, three will speak and one will act as the team adviser in the preparation room and during the debate.
- The speaking time for the Years 11 and 12 competition is 8 minutes. There will be a warning bell at 6 minutes, two bells at 8 minutes and a continuous bell at 9 minutes.
- Teams will have 60 minutes in which to prepare their case.
- Teams are not allowed to take mobile phones into the preparation rooms. These should be handed to a teacher before preparation begins for safe-keeping.
- Teams must not take any notes or research into the preparation rooms. Only pens, blank paper and cards, stopwatches and a dictionary are allowed (though teams are discouraged from using the dictionary to define the topic).
- Any disputes regarding any aspect of the conduct of a debate must be forwarded in writing to the Speaking Competitions Officer within a week of the problem arising.
- Finally, just a reminder that when a team suffers their first loss they won't be eliminated – they'll just be paired up with another team for another chance to progress. If they lose a second debate they'll be eliminated, but if they remain eager to debate and practise their skills their teacher can email us and we'll continue to provide them with match-ups against other similarly keen eliminated teams.



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## Topics and the coin toss

- Topics for each debate will be sent as a password-protected attachment to one of the teams involved in the debate. The other team will be emailed the password.
- Once both teams are present online, the teachers should work together to open the topics and share them with the teams.
- Only the students involved in the debate may take part in topic selection, and teachers aren't allowed to be part of the process in any way.
- Teams will rank the topics from 1 to 3. Both third choices will be eliminated and the highest-rated topic chosen. Where two remaining topics are equally popular, a coin toss will decide the topic.
- The toss of a coin will also decide which team is the affirmative and which the negative. The winner of the toss is always the affirmative.
- The host of the meeting can use [wheelofnames.com](http://wheelofnames.com) to conduct the "coin toss." Simply close the ads (it's a free, non-educational website but the sponsor links can be closed), enter the names of the two schools into the space on the right of the screen, share your screen so both teams can see it and finally spin the wheel. The winner will be announced and they're the affirmative.
- 'Wheel of Names' allows you to tailor the set-up a bit. We recommend you click 'Customize' at the top of the page, shorten the spin time to 5 seconds and change the winner message to 'We have an affirmative!'

## Reporting your results

- Both teams should use the included chairperson form to help run the debate, record who won at the bottom and send a copy through to [debating@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:debating@det.nsw.edu.au)
- It's also fine to just email through the names of the teams, the topic, the adjudicator and the result.
- Don't worry if you forget some of these details – just email us what you remember and we'll figure it out.
- We'll send regular emails to update you on the competition's progress and give you an idea of how many rounds are left to the state final.

Thank you for being part of the 2022 Premier's Debating Challenge for Years 11 and 12. We know that takes a lot of commitment from teachers to make extra-curricular competitions like this work, so thanks for going the extra mile to give your students the opportunity. If you have any questions about the competition or need any support at all, please don't hesitate to contact us using the details included below, and best of luck for your debates.

Justine Clarke  
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The Arts Unit, NSW Department of Education  
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E: [justine.clarke@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:justine.clarke@det.nsw.edu.au)



# Premier's Debating Challenge

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**Negative Chairperson**

Welcome to the \_\_\_\_ round of the Premier's Debating Challenge for Years 11 and 12!

Today, each speaker may speak for 8 minutes. There will be a warning bell at 6 minutes and 2 bells at 8 minutes. There will be a continuous bell at 9 minutes.

The adjudicator for this debate is: \_\_\_\_\_

Our negative team for this debate is: \_\_\_\_\_

Our first speaker is: \_\_\_\_\_

Our second speaker is: \_\_\_\_\_

Our third speaker is: \_\_\_\_\_

And our fourth speaker is: \_\_\_\_\_

Over to you, affirmative chairperson!

Thanks! Our affirmative team is: \_\_\_\_\_

Our first speaker is: \_\_\_\_\_

Our second speaker is: \_\_\_\_\_

Our third speaker is: \_\_\_\_\_

And our fourth speaker is: \_\_\_\_\_

The topic for this debate is: \_\_\_\_\_

Finally, please take a moment to make sure all mobile phones are switched off.

Now, please welcome the first speaker of the affirmative to open the debate.

**Affirmative Chairperson**

From this point on, each chairperson should take turns introducing their speakers when the adjudicator gives them a wave. When it's over the adjudicator will take some time to make their decision and then they will unmute and announce the result of the debate.

After they've spoken the winning chairperson should call on their fourth speaker to deliver the thank-you speech, and then the other chairperson should call on their fourth speaker to deliver their thank-you speech.

**Results**

Teacher's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Winning team: \_\_\_\_\_

**Email this completed form to: [debating@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:debating@det.nsw.edu.au)**