



Premier's Debating Challenge

Years 9 and 10

Welcome to the Premier's Debating Challenge for Years 9 and 10 for the Teasdale Cup. This document includes all the rules and information for the competition, some advice on organising and running your debates, and both an in-person and online chairperson and results form. If you have any questions about the competition, please don't hesitate to contact us at debating@det.nsw.edu.au or (02) 8512 1172.

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 9 and 10 competition can really be from any year at the school except Years 11 and 12.
- 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 must 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 9 and 10 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. For in-person debates, the home school must ensure that both teams have a quiet space in which they can prepare without interruption.
- 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 one week.
- Teams have been organised into zones where they will compete in three debates.
- The team or teams with the best record in the zone will proceed to a state-wide knockout finals series.
- The knockout finals series will end in a state final to be held in the Wilkins Gallery of the NSW Department of Education Parramatta offices on Monday 7 November (circumstances permitting). The winning team will receive the Teasdale Cup to display at their school for the following year. All schools are welcome to attend and will receive an invitation closer to the date.

Deadlines and topic areas

Round 1 to be completed by 27 May (end Wk 5 T2), Education topics
Round 2 to be completed by 1 July (end Wk 10 T2), Science and environment
Round 3 to be completed by 12 August (end Wk 4 T3), Politics topics
Knockout finals from August through October, General topics
State final to be held on Monday 7 November, General topics

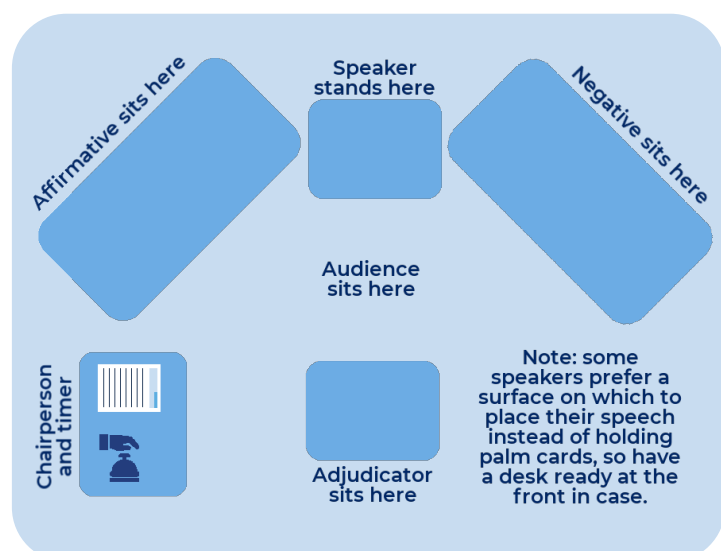


Organising the zone debates

- The home team (which appears on the left-hand side of the draw) is responsible for contacting the other team to begin organising a debate, and is also responsible for arranging the adjudicator.
- No team can be forced to travel, so a debate will need to be conducted online if that's the preference of either team.
- If it suits both teams to hold the debate at the away school instead of the home school, or to hold two debates on one day, or even to hold the debates out of order, that's absolutely fine.
- For online debates, schools should use the [booking form on our website](#) to send through details so that we can assign an adjudicator. For in-person debates in metropolitan areas, each zone has an assigned adjudicator. Teams should use that adjudicator for any in-person debates. In other regions, a list of adjudicators available for in-person debates will be sent out with this information.
- 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 a debate has not taken place by the due date, it may be awarded as a forfeit to the team deemed to be disadvantaged by the other team's unwillingness to debate. Note that it's typically fine to miss earlier deadlines as long as teams can catch up.
- A forfeit counts as a win. Teams should be aware that a forfeit disadvantages all the teams in the zone, so every effort should be made to complete the debates.
- 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 and also help find an adjudicator if that's the problem. Just email debating@det.nsw.edu.au with any questions or call (02) 8512 1172.

Setting up for an in-person debate

- The home school is responsible for organising the adjudicator either by contacting the one assigned to their zone or by using the list of qualified people in the area.
- It's also fine to hold an in-person debate but have the adjudicator Zoom in, in which case teachers can use the adjudicator booking procedure outlined below for online debates.
- Here's a rough sketch of how to set up the debating space.
- Note that the host school will also need to provide two quiet preparation spaces where the teams can work without interruption for the hour before the debate.
- Finally, it's a good idea for the home school to have 2 students ready to act as chairperson and timekeeper. It's fine if a teacher ends up doing those jobs but it's a good opportunity to get younger students involved.



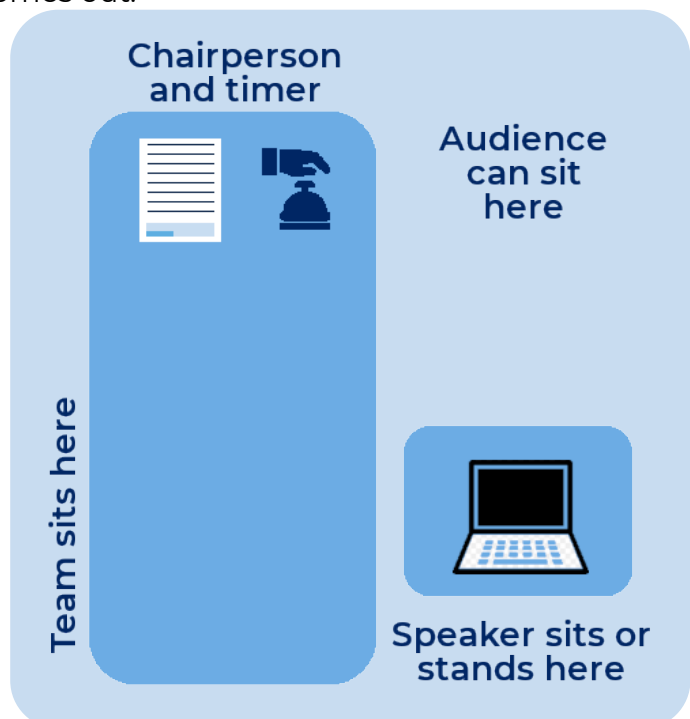


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Setting up for an online debate

- 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 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 that teams will 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 people can 'Sign in with a registered Zoom Account' (the meeting host will 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. We'll pass it on to the adjudicator we appoint.
- After topic selection, both teams should stay onscreen (but muted) throughout preparation time. If a team will be unable to stay onscreen, their teacher needs 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 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.

Topics and the coin toss

- Topics for all three debates will be mailed out to schools in sealed envelopes. All schools are responsible for keeping those envelopes secret and safe.
- The envelopes are sealed with a sticker that says what round they're for and which teams are involved.
- Once both teams are present, online or in person, they should open the appropriate envelopes.
- 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.
- For online debates, the host of the meeting can use 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 the 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 users to tailor the set-up a bit. We recommend clicking 'Customize' at the top of the page, shortening the spin time to 5 seconds and changing the winner message to 'We have an affirmative!'



Reporting the results

- For in-person debates, the host team should use the included 'Chairperson and results form for in-person debating' to help run the debate. Once the debate's over they should record who won at the bottom and send a copy through to debating@det.nsw.edu.au
- For online debates, both teams should use the other included 'Chairperson and results form for online debating' and both of them should send the result through. There's no need to fill in the part that refers to the other team's students.
- It's also fine to just email through the names of the teams, the topic, the adjudicator and the result.
- Don't worry if some of those details are missing – we'll figure out what we need to from the emails we receive as long as we get the result as soon as possible.
- We'll send regular emails to update schools on the wins and losses in the zone. If it looks like we're missing a result, teachers can just reply with any information they remember about the debate we're missing.

Thank you for being part of the Premier's Debating Challenge for Years 9 and 10. 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!

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