



Education
Public Schools

The Premier's Debating Challenge 2017 Information Guide

The Premier's Debating Challenge is open to all NSW government schools, with the aim of developing the public speaking and reasoning 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 4 different state-wide age divisions: Years 5&6, Years 7&8, Years 9&10, and Years 11&12. In addition, there is a fifth division for Year 11 students in metropolitan Sydney. Year 11 students outside Sydney should compete in the state-wide Years 11&12 age division.

How do the debates work?

Every debate in the challenge is a 1 hour preparation debate. Teams do not know the topic or which side of the debate they are on until 1 hour before the debate starts. Once the preparation time is up, 3 speakers from each team take turns to speak, with a 4th silent speaker helping out during preparation and during the debate.

How long do the students speak for?

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

Division	Warning Bell	Speaking time (2 bells)	Continuous Bell
Years 5&6	3 minutes	4 minutes	5 minutes
Years 7&8	4 minutes	6 minutes	7 minutes
Years 9&10	6 minutes	8 minutes	9 minutes
Year 11 Metro	6 minutes	8 minutes	9 minutes
Years 11&12	6 minutes	8 minutes	9 minutes

How many teams can a school enter?

Schools can enter as many age divisions as they like. In each age division, schools can enter up to 2 teams, who will be designated "Team (A)" and "Team (B)" on the draws for the secondary age divisions. Primary school teachers must provide appropriate nicknames for their teams, e.g. "Swans" and "Demons", to distinguish their teams. Many schools choose to enter 2 teams in the Years 11&12 division, 2 teams in the Years 9&10 division, and 2 teams in the Years 7&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&12 team). When a school enters two teams in a division, a student cannot appear in both of those teams, so Team (A) would need 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 Year 11 Metro and Years 11&12 divisions, that deadline is Wednesday 15 February 2017. The deadline for the other divisions is Monday 27 February 2017. Please ensure that you include contact details for the teacher who will be looking after the team. All teachers involved should provide a direct email address (preferably your "@det.nsw.edu.au" address) to help with our organisation. We'll email you as soon as we've processed your school's entries to confirm your details. If you have any questions about entering the challenge, please don't hesitate to contact us at debating@det.nsw.edu.au.

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.

When does the Premier's Debating Challenge run?

The Years 11&12 division runs from March to August, with the zone debates completed by the end of May. The other divisions run from April to November, with the zone debates completed by the end of June (a little later for the Years 5&6 and 7&8 divisions). All schools who enter will receive invitations to attend the Years 11&12 state final (The Great Hall, University of Sydney, Friday 4 August 2017) and the Years 9&10 state final (William Wilkins Gallery, NSW Department of Education, Bridge Street, Sydney, Friday 10 November 2017).

How are the debates organised?

Once your school has entered, we'll organise all of the teams into draws and then email the draw to you with a timetable. At the first stage of the challenge, teams are organised into zones of four or more who debate in a round-robin competition against each other. You'll cooperate with the other schools and the adjudicators to organise the times and dates of your debates to suit your availability. Once all of the zone debates are completed, the zone champions face each other in a knock-out competition until we have a state champion. It's a little different in the Years 5&6 and Years 7&8 divisions, where the 10 teams who win their regions meet at a three-day debating tournament to decide the state champions. (Teams reaching these tournaments should be aware that they will incur travel and accommodation costs).

Who adjudicates the Premier's Debating Challenge?

In Sydney areas, adjudicators are generally appointed to each zone. Outside of Sydney, you'll need to contact an adjudicator from the list of qualified people we'll provide you with. Often you can just send them an email. If you have any difficulty locating someone, each region of NSW has a regional debating coordinator who knows the area and can help you appoint an adjudicator. You can also email us at debating@det.nsw.edu.au and we'll help find someone for you.

Can we debate over connected classrooms?

We have now held a great many debates over connected classrooms and they work well. If your school is in a remote area, or is just having trouble finding the time to travel to a debate, you can always organise to hold a debate over connected classrooms. We're set up in Lewisham with the standard conferencing equipment, and will be happy to help you organise connected classroom debates and adjudicate them ourselves.

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.

Sponsors and support

The Premier's Debating Challenge is supported by the Faculty of Education & Social Work in the University of Sydney and by Western Sydney University.

Contact details

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