



### General Information

The Debating Science Issues debate rounds will each consist of 2 senior cycle secondary school teams with 2 students on each team. Team members can be changed from round to round if necessary. The debate will be split as follows:

#### Speeches:

1. Intro speeches: 5 minutes max. Total 20 minutes.
2. Judges (max 3) post 3 questions to each team. Each team can decide which of the 3 questions they would like to answer.
3. Closing speeches: 3 minutes max (team captain only). Total 6 minutes.

#### Adjudication:

Judges take 15 minutes to review notes in private chambers and agree the winning team.

### Debate Structure

1. Speaking Order:
  - a. Opening Speeches (5 minutes max per speaker):
    - i. The affirmative team will begin with an introductory speech from any of its members.
    - ii. The opposition team will then present an introductory speech.
    - iii. The affirmative team will deliver their final opening speech.
    - iv. The opposition team will then deliver their final opening speech.
  - b. Once the opening speeches are complete, the judges have the opportunity to ask the affirmative team a maximum of 3 questions (1 per judge). The affirmative team can choose which of the 3 questions they would like to answer. One or both team members can speak. Once the questions have been answered, the chair then invites the judges to ask 3 questions of the opposition team who, like their opponents, must answer at least 1 question.
  - c. Closing Speeches – One closing speech per team will be delivered. The speech must be made by the team captain. The speaking order will remain the same for the Closing Speeches as for the Opening Speeches i.e. the affirmative team will begin.

*Note: The debate chair will also act as timekeeper and shall give a time signal at the end of the fourth minute for opening speeches. The timekeeper shall give a signal at the end of the second minute for the closing speeches. The timekeeper will call time when the speakers' time is up. Speakers may lose points for speaking past the allocated speaking time.*



### 2. Content:

- a. Opening Speech: this speech can be prepared in advance; you can even read references from a prepared text if you want. During these speeches, teams can also respond to arguments and points made in their opponents' opening speeches.
- b. Question time: the judges may challenge you but are not trying to trip you up! The purpose of the judges' question and answer session is to make the debate a little more interactive and to give you the opportunity to show how much your understanding of the topic has developed while researching the debate. Speak freely, openly and don't be afraid!
- c. Closing Speeches summarize your position and make any final responses to rebuttals made by your opponents during their opening speeches or points made by them in the Q&A sessions.
- d. Repetition: In both the openings and closings, there should be as little repetition as possible. Don't rehash arguments you've already made unless you have something new to add.

Note: From the regional final onwards, the audience will be invited to ask questions of both teams after the judges Q&A sessions.

### 3. Tips for scoring:

- a. Listen carefully to the speeches of others. Repeating their material is also not a good idea. Build on their arguments instead, providing new examples or new counterpoints.
- b. Common Sense Stuff: No character attacks – arguments should focus on arguments instead of people.
- c. Dropped Points: When the opposing team makes an argument, you should respond to it. Failing to respond to a point will cost everyone on your team points, so listen carefully and take notes if you have to. However, make sure that you and your teammate are on the same page: if one of you responds to something from the other team's arguments, then no one else needs to do so (unless there is something new in the response).

### 4. How grading works:

The judges will be evaluating with a detailed advice sheet with a scheme of positive marking, and taking points off for mistakes. Using a rubric, judges seek to examine the framing of the issue, organization of evidence, demonstration of understanding and interpretation, the effectiveness of challenging arguments, accuracy and logic, rhetoric style, response to the questions posed, and, emotion and ethics. The number of points they remove for errors will depend on its magnitude. Coherence is very important, so if they notice that the argument is not consistent, they will probably remove more points than if you were to get a relatively insignificant detail wrong when presenting evidence.

### 5. Works cited:

Materials referenced outside of those in the Student Packs must be provided on the day of the debate for the perusal of the judges for accuracy and legitimacy.