

THE DEBATING COMPETITION

Each team may have 4 members, who may be rotated.

If, for any reason, a team of 4 loses 2 team members once the competition has begun and neither of them can be replaced, the team will be permitted to continue to debate with the first and third speaker being the same person.

If, for any reason, a team of 3 loses a team member once the competition has begun and cannot be replaced, the team will be permitted to continue to debate with the first and third speaker being the same person. Any debate in which one team is debating with only 2 team members may be won by the 2-member team, but it will be recorded as a forfeit for that team (score 0 points) and as a win for the opposing team (score 2 points).

The Debating competition will be run using the Rules and Guidelines of the West Australian Debating League Inc. Resources are available at <https://wadl.org/resources/>. Use the SDC handbook, which outlines how to debate in the WA Schools style.

Competition Format & Scoring

Ideally, each division will participate in a round robin and places will be decided by wins over losses. Teams will be ranked based on the number of points they have after the preliminary rounds.

Scoring as per the WA Debating League

- 2 points for a win or for receiving a forfeit.
- 1 point for a loss
- 0 points if forfeit

RANKINGS DECIDED BY:

1. Highest number of points after the preliminary rounds
2. Higher winning margin
3. Successful team in previous debate

1) If there are two teams with the same number of points, the team that was the winner of the debate between the two equally ranked teams will be ranked higher.

2) If there are three teams with the same number of points, or if two equally ranked teams did not debate against each other, then the order of teams will be determined by their Average Winning Margin. The team with the highest AWM will be ranked first. The AWM is calculated using points scored 'for' a team and 'against' a team.

Team A: 224 points for and 223 points against is a AWM of +1.

Team B: 224 points for and 225 points against is a AWM of -1.

3) If two equally ranked teams have the same AWM, then the order of teams will be determined by their average speaker score (the team with the highest speaker score will be ranked first) which will be calculated as a total. For example, if a team received 225 in debate 1, 228 in debate 2, 227 in debate 3 and 229 in debate 4 their Speaker Score is 909.

Teams should nominate in the appropriate division for their experience and expertise.

- A division is for more experienced debaters.
- B division is for less experienced debaters
- C division is for novices.

The organisers reserve the right to cancel any division in which there are not enough entries. Medallions for first to third place will be awarded in each division.

The affirmative and negative team in ALL debates will be decided by a coin toss before the topic is given. The toss will be made by the organiser. The team which wins the toss can choose to argue the affirmative or the negative case.

Speaking Times

All three speakers in each debate will speak for the same length of time.

Division	Warning Bell	Final Bell
A	5 minutes	6 minutes
B	4 minutes	5 minutes
C	4 minutes	5 minutes

Debate Topics & Preparation

All teams will take part in impromptu debates for the duration of the competition.

It is anticipated that the WADL will provide two adjudicators during prep time on Monday and maybe Tuesday to guide teams to prepare their arguments.

If deemed necessary by the WADL schools will be sent a glossary of words taken from the debate topics, such as 'boycott' or 'patent', to help students to prepare.

Impromptu Debate Topic topics will be given to schools 60 minutes before the start of each debate. For each impromptu debate, all speakers of both schools must be present for the topics to be given out i.e., one school cannot begin to prepare before the other.

However, after 5 minutes, if only one team has all members present, both teams will be given the topic to start prepping the debate. The team with less than three members present will be at a disadvantage.

In the case of all team members of one team being late the Speech Awards Coordinator will toss a coin with the team in attendance to decide the affirmative/negative teams and then give the team in attendance the topic 5 minutes after the time both teams were meant to be at reception to receive the topic.

Topics will be given to teams in the prep room. No teachers will be permitted to attend the receiving of topics. No student will be permitted to leave the prep room until it is time to move to the room in which their debate will take place. All team members will be permitted to take part in the preparation.

ONLY STUDENTS PREPARING for debates are permitted to be in the prep area.

The use of the internet and electronic devices is not permitted during the preparation time. Mobile phones, smart watches and other electronic devices will be collected by the organiser at coin toss.

Any team found with an electronic device in the prep area will automatically be disqualified from winning but will still participate in the competition. **TEAMS MAY USE A HARD COPY DICTIONARY AND A HARD COPY THESAURUS ONLY.** No information booklets, such as the WADL handbook, may be used.

Debate teams must be seated in the room allocated to their debate 5 minutes before the start of the debate. For every half minute a school team is late there may be a penalty of half a point.

Note: Palm cards may be used

Preparing the Wrong Topic

If a team prepares wrong side of the argument, they will be given 20 minutes **ONLY** to prepare the correct argument / topic.

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Topics used 2023 - 2024

THBT: This House believes that
THR: This house regrets
THW: This house would

A division

- THR the norm of digitally recording experiences (i.e. taking lots of photos/videos at concerts, holidays, social gatherings etc.)
- THW ban schools from expelling or suspending students.
- THBT non-violent criminals should never be imprisoned.
- THR celebrities being vocal on social/political issues (e.g. BLM, the Russia/Ukraine war)
- [RAC] INFO SLIDE: A 'walkable' neighbourhood is designed to prioritise pedestrians over car users (e.g. amenities like shops and schools within walking distance of homes, wide footpaths and narrow roads, space prioritised for gardens or parks instead of carparks and driveways). **TOPIC:** THW significantly decrease rent in walkable neighbourhoods.

- INFO SLIDE: The commercialisation of feminism refers to the popularity of marketable feminist ideas within the mass media (e.g. companies using feminism in advertising, selling items with feminist slogans, films and TV shows featuring woman-centric narratives and being marketed as feminist). **TOPIC:** THR the commercialisation of feminism.
- THW ban employers from looking at prospective employees' social media accounts as part of their recruitment process.
- THW introduce speed awareness education programs in schools.
- TH, as a teacher, would not punish a student for cheating.
- THR the prominence of online activism.
- THW introduce speed awareness education programs in schools.

B Division

- THW legalise graffiti.
- THW prefer a world with a single common language.
- THR the trend towards 'relatable' politicians.
- THW elect politicians using a lottery system.
- INFO SLIDE: 'Automating healthcare' refers to allocating significant responsibilities in healthcare to non-human entities, such as artificial intelligence or robots. **TOPIC:** THS automating healthcare.
- INFO SLIDE: Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to the ability of machines/computers to do tasks which would normally require human intelligence. AI can currently comprehend and produce speech and images, solve complex problems, and operate across most spheres of the workforce. **TOPIC:** THW ban the further development of artificial intelligence technology.
- THR NAPLAN.
- THR the use of group assignments in schools.
- THW implement mandatory speed-limiting technology in all vehicles.
- THR TikTok
- THW put a curfew on all children under 16.
- [RAC] INFO SLIDE: A 'walkable' neighbourhood is designed to prioritise pedestrians over car users (e.g. amenities like shops and schools within walking distance of homes, wide footpaths and narrow roads, space prioritised for gardens or parks instead of carparks and driveways). **TOPIC:** THW significantly decrease rent in walkable neighbourhoods.
- INFO SLIDE: Alternative dispute resolution is a civil legal process in which a third party helps people resolve their conflict, as an alternative to civil litigation. It involves both parties discussing their issues and reaching a mutually agreeable solution. There are no lawyers or judges involved in ADR, just a neutral mediator. **TOPIC:** THS mandatory ADR.

C Division

- THBT consuming online content is a waste of time (e.g. social media, YouTube, streaming services)
- THW ban children under 16 from using social media
- THS a 4-day school week.
- THBT being a bystander to bullying should be treated as equivalent to bullying in schools.

- [RAC] THW introduce a mandatory minimum prison sentence for those convicted of dangerous driving crimes (e.g. severe speeding, driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, running red lights)
- [RAC] THBT environmentalists should encourage individuals to reduce their car ownership over encouraging them to own electric vehicles.
- THR the automation of jobs which were once done by humans (e.g. self-driving cars, self-checkouts at supermarkets, automated production lines in factories)

NOTES RE ADJUDICATION FEEDBACK

PLEASE note that receiving feedback from different adjudicators which emphasises different technical skills is not necessarily the same as receiving conflicting feedback. WADL adjudicators prioritise their feedback for each debate based on the things they feel would be most important for students to fix or develop. This is firstly so that they go into their next debate with the best chance of doing well, and secondly because it can be very confusing and demoralising being told that many different things need to be improved before their next debate.

If students receive feedback early in the competition that emphasises working on rebuttal and are told after their next debate that structure and signposting are important, this is likely because their rebuttal improved, and the adjudicator will focus on what they see as the next most important thing for the team to work on!

None of the feedback students are told to focus on should be taken in isolation - feedback is a cumulative process of development, and it is important for students to remember that just because they are not given repeated feedback, does not mean that their early feedback was not also important.