



Student Debate Competition Anna De Noailles French School Bucharest – Romania

1. Why have debate competitions in the 11th grade?

Debates based on arguments encourage the development of listening and critical thinking skills. Pupils will be required to organise their ideas in their chosen language and clearly express the facts of their argument. Through this, pupils will deepen their knowledge of science in the context of the current topics proposed.

The competition will encourage students to get involved in a fun, intellectually stimulating activity with classmates and other schools.

2. General organisation of the competition

- > Schools will be able to enter up to 5 teams
 - > Only pupils from the 11th grade can compete
 - > There will be four pupils per team (with an additional 5th person as reserve, should a last minute replacement be necessary).
 - > The debates will be judged on the following criteria:
 - Command of the English/French language - 10 points
 - Oratory skills - 10 points
 - Quality of scientific arguments - 10 points
- A total of 30 possible points. The team with the highest score will win.

Scientific topics for discussion:

For the heats :

- This House would ban advertising for junk food.
- This House would shut down fast food restaurants
- This House believes that water should be treated as an economic good.

For the semi-finals :

- This House believes that the human race isn't responsible for climate change
- This House believes that biofuel is a threat to food security

For the final :

- This House believes that genetically modified organisms seeds can be the cornerstone to generate a new green revolution in Africa and in other developing regions.

- > The duration of the competition is 2 days:
 - The first day, Monday 25th January, will be the group stage
 - The second day, Tuesday 26th January, will host the semi-finals and the final.

3. Competition rules

1. Before each debate, a draw shall be made in order to decide on the competing teams, then the motion and lastly the sides (proposition or opposition).

2. The preparation time is 20 minutes. The teams can use their documents during the preparation.
3. The debates are in the parliamentary format. The team defending the motion (or "question") is called the proposition and is the first to speak. The other team is called the opposition. After the first speaker of the proposition has spoken, it is the turn of the first speaker of the opposition to speak back (rebuttal) and so on, until the fourth speaker of the opposition has spoken.
4. Each debate lasts for a maximum of 30 minutes. Each competitor can speak for 3 minutes at the most. These 3 minutes include his or her answer(s) to the question(s) put by the opposite side. If the speaker speaks without any interruption, the chair will ask him or her to make his or her concluding remarks after 2 minutes in order to leave the opposite side enough time for questions.
5. Each speaker can be asked at least one question (point of information) by the opposite side but he or she can refuse to be interrupted while speaking. In that case, he or she shall take at least one question at the end of his or her presentation. No speaker has to answer more than one question.
6. The floor (the audience) can ask one or two questions at the end of each debate (i.e. after the last debater of the opposition has spoken). These questions, of a general, nonpartisan kind, shall be intended for - and answered by - both teams.
7. Speakers will be allowed to read from their notes. However these notes shall not contain complete sentences but only an outline with keywords or phrases. These notes shall be controlled by the Chair just before the actual debates. Should they contain complete sentences, they shall not be used during the debate.
8. The teams may refer to themselves as "we" or "our side/team". They may refer to their opponents as "you", "your side/team".
9. In the heats, in the event of a draw between all three teams, a sparring match shall enable the jury to decide between them. All three teams shall prepare a presentation about the same motion (arguments, possible counter-arguments and conclusions) and take it in turns to carry it out before the jury.

4. Resources and useful websites to introduce students to controversial debates

- > <http://debatevideoblog.blogspot.com/>
The site of Alfred F. Sneider, a professor at the University of Vermont and director of the World Debate Institute. The videos clearly show the parliamentary form of debate.
- > Coaches' Handbook and Manual of Debating prepared by G.Pepall, R. Ray and R. Shepherd, the Ontario Student Debating Union)
- > <http://www.idebate.org/>
This site provides a great source of current and archived debates