

How to host an IAPS debating competition

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1. Planning and running your District debating event

Venue requirements

- Main hall
 - Welcome
 - Results
- Debating rooms
 - 4 teams per room

Equipment checklist

- Debating rooms:
 - Seating and tables for 8 debaters (4 vs 4)
 - Judges' chairs and tables
 - Optional: screen/timer display
 - Bell or buzzer
- Laptops/iPads (1 per team, AI access blocked)
- Timing bells
- Stopwatch or timer
- Judging sheets and clipboards
- Printed motions
- Headed paper for score sheets
- Optional: Packed teas/supper for visiting schools
- Optional: Refreshments (upon arrival and between rounds)
- Signage and site access arrangements
- Trophies

Staff and helpers

- 1 or 2 judges per debate room
- 1 or 2 chairs/ timekeepers (to ring bells and manage timings)
- Volunteers to assist logistics (local senior schools may help)

Site planning

- Parking for minibuses – confirm access and availability in advance
- Visitor registration – provide a site map or welcome pack
- Spectator policy – confirm in advance how many guests each school can bring
- Safeguarding – ensure adults supervising teams are DBS-checked

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Registration timeline

Date/time	Activity
3-4 months before	Open entries
2 months before	Close entries
2 months before	After close of entries, contact schools to balance numbers/ encourage B teams, etc
4 weeks before	Confirm event details with schools
1 week before	Share motion for Round 1 and group draw

Example event day timetable

Day of event	Activity
12:00	Set up debate rooms
13:30	Schools arrive
13:50	Welcome and event opening
14:00	Round 1 debates begin (5 mins per speaker)
15:00	Return to main hall for break
15:10	Announce Round 1 winners and release second motion
15:15–15:45	Teams prepare for Round 2
15:45	Round 2 debates (Championships, Trophy - Plate & Shield) begin
16:45	Results
17:00	Schools depart

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2. Marking considerations for judges

You will need one or two judges per room. Judges should be members of staff or adults who are familiar with the format of debating and feel confident assessing the pairs against the criteria outlined below. You may wish to use senior school pupils who have debating experience to act as a second judge.

1. Content

- Relevance of arguments
- Use of evidence/ examples
- Ability to address counterarguments

2. Structure

- Clear intro and conclusion
- Logical flow and organisation

3. Delivery

- Clarity, volume, and pace
- Eye contact and audience engagement

4. Teamwork

- Coordination between speakers
- Support for team points

5. Persuasiveness

- Convincing tone and logical argument

6. Time management

- Speaking within the time limit

3. Hosting costs and reimbursement

To support schools hosting a District Debating Competition, IAPS will reimburse reasonable material costs associated with running the event. Reimbursable expenses may include essential items such as printed materials (e.g. judging sheets, motion papers) and other resources required specifically for the competition.

All costs must be agreed with IAPS in advance and reimbursement will be processed upon receipt of an invoice addressed to IAPS.