

IAPS Debating Competition Format 2025

Introduction

IAPS is pleased to introduce a debating competition for pupils in Year 7-8.

The competition aims to develop:

- Oracy
- Critical thinking
- Teamwork
- Confidence in young speakers

The competition uses a modified Parliamentary-style debate format, with each school entering one team of two speakers. A fee of £15 per team will be charged to help contribute towards the costs incurred by host schools in delivering the events.

Districts are invited to host their own event, with the winning team progressing to a national final.

How IAPS will support host schools

In return for Districts hosting a debating competition, IAPS will:

1. Collate entries on our website
2. Promote the events to schools in your District
3. Provide support and guidance to host schools
4. Share and celebrate your event on social media

Entry fee

A fee of £15 per team will be charged. This contribution helps support host schools with the costs of delivering their District events.

Competition timeframe

Autumn term

- Confirm list of host schools, one per District
- Open entries after October half term

Spring term

- Districts to host their event

Summer term

- Finals – date tbc

Competition format

Event structure by number of schools

The event is designed to work best with either 8 or 16 teams.

Eight-school competition

- Eight schools participate in total.
- The event will be divided into two debates, with four schools per debate.

Sixteen-school competition

- Sixteen schools participate in total.
- The event will be divided into four debates, with four schools per debate.

To maintain an even number of teams and preserve the structure of the debates, schools may invite a 'B Team' if required.

Alternatively, if the number of teams is fewer than 8, or between 9 and 15, the format can be adjusted so that some of the debates have one team per side.

Rounds

There will be two rounds on the day of your District event:

- Round 1: A pre-announced motion will be shared with schools in advance to allow for preparation.
- Round 2: A new motion will be revealed after the conclusion of Round 1. Teams will have 30 minutes to prepare their arguments.

The winning school will progress to the finals. Date TBC.

Debate structure

- Four speakers will argue for the motion (Proposition),
- Four speakers will argue against the motion (Opposition).
- Each speaker will speak for five minutes.

- The first and last minutes of the speech are protected, during which no interruptions are allowed.
- Points of Information (POIs) can be shared from the end of minute 1 to the end of minute 4.
- There is no need to accept all of the POIs, although a failure to engage with any POIs is likely to count against that speaker.

Examples

Motions

- Round 1 (pre-announced): This house believes that the voting age in England should be lowered to 13.
- Round 2 (announced on the day): This house believes that video games have a positive influence on learning.

Teams and speaker order

Role	School
1st Proposition	School A
1st Opposition	School B
2nd Proposition	School A
2nd Opposition	School B
3rd Proposition	School C
3rd Opposition	School D
4th Proposition	School C
4th Opposition	School D

Judging and progression

Marking criteria

Speakers will be assessed on the following categories:

- Content
- Structure
- Delivery
- Teamwork
- Persuasiveness
- Time management

Prizes and progression

[Advancement to Round 2](#)

After Round 1, judges will rank teams based on scores and announce how schools proceed to Round 2:

Progression path to Round 2		
	8 Schools	16 Schools
Top 4 teams	Cup Final	Cup Final
Next 4 teams	Plate Final	Plate, Bowl, Shield Finals

Round 2 will follow the same format as Round 1.

Winners of the Cup Final will receive the Championship trophy and be invited to the IAPS National Finals. Depending on the number of teams, additional finals (e.g. Plate, Bowl, Shield) may be used to ensure all teams get a second debate.