



# ISA

Debating  
Competition

Open to KS3 - KS5  
Saturday 29 November 2025  
TASIS England, TW20 8TE

Spaces are limited, don't delay your entry.

## DEADLINE

Thursday 23 October 2025

Competition open to ISA Members' schools only  
Visit the ISA website for more information

[isaschools.org.uk](https://isaschools.org.uk) | [isaarts@isaschools.org.uk](mailto:isaarts@isaschools.org.uk)

ISA  
ARTS

### Eligibility

Only schools whose Head is a Member with ISA are eligible to enter ISA competitions. Any pupils competing must be on the main school's admissions register, on the date of the event.

Open to Year 7-13. Our year groups are based on the UK national curriculum, for more information and to check the correct year group for your students see [here](#). Please ensure you enter pupils according to the UK system, even if your own school's age group system differs.

This will be a full day's programme with prizes being given at the end of the day.

At ISA, we are committed to making our opportunities accessible. We welcome applications from all pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities. If your pupil(s), those with an EHCP or on the school's SEND register, are working at a level that differs from their age group's key stage, or if your school or student focuses on development and skills rather than year groups, please contact us.

Alternative formats of these guidelines are available on request. Please notify us at the earliest opportunity so we can provide the document accordingly, if required.

### Competition categories and first debating topic

Schools can submit only one team in Key Stage 3 and only one team in Key Stage 4-5.

- Key Stage 3: This house regrets the increased prominence of large streaming platforms (eg. Disney+, Apple, Netflix) creating and distributing their own films and TV series.
- Key Stage 4-5: This house would never televise live trials.

### How to enter

Entries must be submitted via the entry form on the ISA website by **Thursday 23 October 2025**. Please regard entries as a definite commitment to attend the event.

Please remember that late cancellations mean that other schools miss out on opportunities and cause considerable inconvenience to the organisers. **Please note: Entry numbers are limited and will be first come, first served. You will be informed if the competition is fully booked and will have the opportunity to join a waiting list. You may then be contacted in the event of cancellations.**

### General information

- We will send you a timetable for the day prior to the event.
- The first debating topic is given in these guidelines for the schools to prepare in advance. The side for each team will be given on the day of the event. The second and final topics will be provided on the day. You will have time to prepare for them.
- On arrival, your team will be shown to a preparation room where they will be based for the day.
- Each debate will take place simultaneously, so it is very important we run on time to ensure the day finishes promptly.
- Only one member of staff is permitted in the room during preparation time for the debates.
- Audience members/ parents won't be able to attend this competition due to limited space, please contact us if you have any question.
- Participants are required to bring their own laptops and packed lunch.
- Dress code: school uniform or business attire.
- We encourage schools to have a reserve team in case of last-minute changes.
- While we recognise the potential benefit of AI, we kindly request that participants are using it for inspiration and support and in line with their schools policies on its use, rather than using it to generate their debate arguments.

### Debating rules

The debates will follow the extended mace format.

Although debating can be a stressful and fast-paced activity, speakers must be mindful to respect other participants (including other speakers, judges, chairs, teachers and staff) at all times. Any language or behaviour that is deemed offensive or badgering to others will be penalised, or in severe cases will result in disqualification.

- Each team is to have 3 speakers.
- Before each debate the teams will have half an hour to prepare. Use of internet is allowed for research.
- While we recognise the potential benefit of AI, we kindly request that participants are using it for inspiration and support rather than using it to generate their speech.
- During the debates, teams may use laptops, phones or other devices for timekeeping and note reading only. No research must be conducted during the debate.
- We encourage students to bring water bottle with them for the debates.

### **KS4/5 Speeches:**

- Each speaker has a five-minute time limit for their speech.
- One minute into each speech a bell will sound to allow for Points of Information from the opposition.
- Each speaker must accept a minimum of one POI during their time.
- Four minutes into the speech the bell will sound again to mark the speaker's final minute. (Points of Information are not allowed in the last minute)
- On the fifth minute a double bell will sound to mark the end of your time. The speech must end within a few seconds of this double bell sounding or your team will be penalised.

### **KS3 Speeches:**

- Each speaker has a three-minute time limit for their speech.
- After 30 seconds into each speech a bell will sound to allow for Points of Information from the opposition.
- Each speaker must accept a minimum of one POI during their time.
- 2 minutes into the speech the bell will sound again to mark the speaker's final minute. (Points of Information are not allowed in the last minute)
- On the third minute a double bell will sound to mark the end of your time. The speech must end within a few seconds of this double bell sounding or your team will be penalised.

### **Points of Information:**

Each speaker must accept a minimum of one POI during their time.

If the judge considers any team to be badgering (making too many POIs in order to disrupt the speaker), their score will be penalised.

### **Concluding speeches:**

- Once all three team members have spoken for the proposition and opposition it is time for each team's concluding speech.
- The concluding speeches are to be made by either the first or the second speaker of each team.
- The proposing team make the first concluding speech.
- The concluding speech is to last maximum 5 minutes for KS4/5 and maximum 3 minutes for KS3 students.
- No points of information are allowed during the concluding speeches.
- A bell will sound to mark you have one-minute left. Then a double bell will sound to mark the end of your time. The speech must end within a few seconds of this double bell sounding or your team will be penalised.

### **Final:**

Each school will have the opportunity to debate twice, with the two highest-scoring teams from each age group making it through to the final.

The final motion will be given on the day. Students will have 30 minutes to prepare. Everyone else will be welcome to watch the final debates. Prizes will be given at the end of the day.

### **Judging Criteria**

The debates will be marked to a points system including the following criteria:

- Style
- Content
- Strategy
- Overall argument

If you have any questions, please contact [isaarts@isaschools.org.uk](mailto:isaarts@isaschools.org.uk)