

## In general

### 1. The World Schools Debating Championship

#### a) History

The World Schools Debating Championships have their genesis in Australia's bicentennial year. Members of the Australian Debating Federation were aware that the world universities competition was coming to Sydney in January 1988. There was no similar event for secondary school pupils, yet the world universities championships showed the enormous potential for an international debating competition involving students from all around the world. The Australian Debating Federation had long organised a national schools debating competition and decided to organise an international schools championships in which the Australian team could compete against representatives from other countries.

And so "the Bicentennial International School Students Debating Championships" were born.

Teams from 6 countries contested the first Championships: Australia, Canada, England, Hong Kong, New Zealand and the United States. Now, more than 30 countries take part in this event each year, and it has been hosted in recent years by Canada, Israel, Bermuda, England, Scotland, Peru, Singapore, Germany and the US.

This year, the World Schools Debating Championships will take place in Wales from **4 to 14 July**. It was previously held in Wales in 1995, and, as then, the Championships is being organised and hosted by the Welsh Centre for International Affairs.

#### b) Charter

The stated aims of the World Schools Debating Championships are:

- To achieve excellence in debating
- To encourage debating throughout the world.
- To promote international understanding.
- To promote free speech

#### c) The debates

Although there is a wide diversity of schools debate formats around the world, the World Championships has over time developed its own unique structure, which is a mix of Australian, Canadian and British approaches. The format for debates in the

Championships requires **three speakers** a side with only **two teams** in each debate. After all speakers have spoken once, the first or second speaker for each side gives a reply speech, with the opposition reply going first and the proposition second.

Speaking time for speeches is 8 minutes, and for reply speeches 4 minutes. The chairperson of the debate is assisted by a timekeeper who ensures that no speaker speaks for more than their allotted time. To assist speakers, judges and audience members, the timekeeper signals when a minute has elapsed, when there is a minute left of each speech, and when the time is up. The method of signalling timing for speakers is at the discretion of the host, although is typically by hand bell, or clap.

You can find all the WSDC rules, guidelines, and notes for adjudicators on the World Schools Debating Championships permanent website:  
[www.schoolsdebate.com/guides.asp](http://www.schoolsdebate.com/guides.asp).

#### **d) The Championship rounds**

Every team debates 8 times in the opening rounds, against seeded opponents to ensure a fair distribution of teams. 4 of these debates are on prepared motions, which teams receive about a month in advance. They are told whether they must propose or oppose each motion only a week before the tournament begins. The remaining four topics are “impromptu”: the teams are given the motion an hour before the debate and must prepare by themselves. They may only take a dictionary and a general almanac into their preparation rooms, and cannot access the internet, consult other teams, or talk with their coach before the debate begins. Teams are marked by 3 international judges (please note that the host school does not need to provide any judges) on 3 main criteria: Style, Strategy and Content. Judges mark individually and decide which team they believe has won the debate, and the winner is the team with the greater number of judges voting in its favour.

After the 8 debate rounds, the 16 teams with the most number of judges’ votes continue into the knock-out stages of the tournament, known as the “break”. The first break rounds are the octo-finals, in which the first-placed team debates against the sixteenth-placed team, the second against the fifteenth, third against the fourteenth, and so on. The octo-finals are followed by the quarter-finals, semi-finals and then the Grand Final. A diagram outlining this structure is provided in this information pack, with space to follow competing countries from the break onwards.

#### **e) The national teams**

It is up to each country to decide how they select the national teams which participate at the World Championships, although typically they are recognised as the best debaters in their home countries, as determined by individual or team tournaments. The Welsh team is made up of the school team of 2 speakers that wins the Wales Schools Debating Championships, combined with 3 individual speakers selected through a special day-long trial process. Most countries bring a squad of 5 debaters to the Championships, so that their debaters can rest by sitting out some debates, although the full squad is allowed to prepare for impromptu debates.

Key teams to watch out for in this year's Championships include Australia (who have won the last 3 World Championships), South Africa (who were runners-up at the 2004 World Championships in Stuttgart), Sri Lanka (who participated in the tournament for the first time in 2005), England (runners-up in 2005 and 2000), Scotland and Ireland (who have regularly placed in the top four teams, and have both won the Championships in the past). A mark of the Championships, however, is the potential for any team to win a debate against any another: past champion nations are regularly beaten during the tournament. Greece, Pakistan, Peru and Argentina have been some of the best teams registered as English as a Foreign Language (EFL) participants in the past; all of them have reached the knock-out stages of the competition. The eastern European teams are increasingly strong, particularly the Czech Republic, Estonia, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Lastly, but by no means least, look out for the Welsh team: having participated in every tournament since 1991, the national team has a long and successful history at the World Championships, and the support of a home crowd may boost its chances even further.

## Being a host school

### 2. Why hosting is good for your school

#### a) A great opportunity

Over 130 debates will take place during the 2006 World Championships, the majority of these in schools and colleges. Hosting provides a fantastic opportunity for your pupils to watch world-class debaters in action.

We expect 250 debaters, coaches and judges to attend this event. Each year, the World Championships attract 16-18 year-old students from over 30 countries, of high academic calibre and with an international perspective. Previous competitors have progressed to high-profile careers in law, civil society and politics. Therefore, the event presents a great experience and an excellent opportunity for schools and pupils in Wales to see debates, and to develop a long term interest in debating.

Your pupils will also have the chance to talk to other young people from different countries, which could interest them further in global issues, and encourage them to look at issues from alternative perspectives.

#### b) Workshops

The Welsh Assembly Government, one of our partners in the organisation of the event, is funding us to provide debating workshops led by international judges. You can book a workshop during the event (maximum group size 30), and give your pupils the chance to learn about the skills needed to become great debaters.

#### c) Teaching materials

We are developing special teaching materials to tie in with the World Championships. These will be sent, **free of charge**, to all schools.

#### d) Media coverage

Very few World Championships, of any competitive activity, are hosted in Wales. The tournament, therefore, provides a unique opportunity to showcase your school to local media outlets. As organisers of the tournament we will be publicising the tournament centrally, but you are encouraged to get in touch with the local medial outlets that might specifically be interested in your school. We will forward an example press release to you in the weeks before the tournament, which you may use as a template, or you may want to create your own release.

## During D-Day

You will be hosting Championships debates on **Thursday 6 July**. During that day, the morning debate (Round 3 of the tournament) will be on a prepared motion, and the debate in the afternoon (Round 4) will be on an impromptu motion. 4 teams will attend your school. Each team has 5 debaters, and a coach. Further, 3 judges mark each debate, so a total of 6 judges will accompany the debaters. A small number of organisers may accompany the teams.

You should, therefore, expect about 25-30 people to arrive.

Before the day, we need the name of one main teacher to keep in touch with and ideally a team of senior teachers (for instance, the headteacher or heads of year) who will have the main responsibilities on the day.

We will send you more informations about the people coming specifically to your school (the names of the debaters, judges and the countries they come from) in the weeks before the tournament.

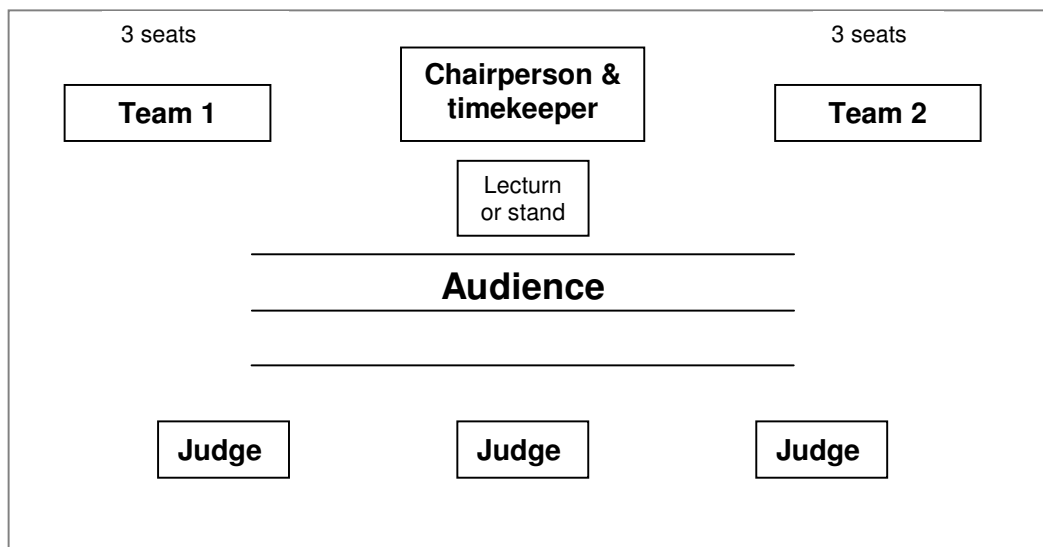
We will send you a precise schedule for the day by the end of April, but you should anticipate the arrival of tournament participants at around 9:30 am, and they will depart at around 4:30 pm. In order to welcome the participants, we strongly encourage all hosts to arrange some form of opening ceremony, perhaps involving a welcoming speech from the headteacher or head pupils, and a music, drama or poetry performance from school groups. We're keen to demonstrate the vibrancy of Welsh culture to our visitors, and a 15-25 minute ceremony is a good way to introduce their hosts for the day. Ideally the headteacher of the school should be present throughout the day.

### 3. What to provide

#### a) Rooms and material

A classroom or hall (depending on the size of the audience) is required **for each debate** so you should allow for two rooms of this size, as well as a reception area for for visitors (a place for tea, coffee and biscuits). As you are hosting impromptu debates, you will also have to provide a small preparation room for each of the four teams for an hour in the afternoon (this room doesn't have to be very big).

To set up the debating rooms, please follow the diagram overleaf:



Within the debating room (the biggest one), you should provide water and glasses for the debaters and judges, a stop watch and possibly a bell, or arrange some other way for the timekeeper to make time signals.

### b) Help and audience

An **audience** for each debate is required, and should be as big as possible. Pupils of all ages are more than welcome, as well as their parents, the rest of the staff of the school, or anybody who wants to see the debates. We may also invite some people ourselves, such as local councillors, AMs or MPs. Where possible at the end of a debate, there will be a floor discussion in which the audience can ask questions or make short speeches.

Further, we would like :

- 1 or 2 people to welcome the debaters at the door
  - 1 or 2 people per country to be guides for the day (to help guests find their way around the school)
  - a teacher to accompany the audience
  - a timekeeper
  - a chairperson
  - possibly 3 other general assistants
- } for each debate

### c) Food and refreshments

We need a room where the teams can have tea and coffee (it would be very much appreciated if these are Fairtrade) and cakes or biscuits, and where they can relax for a few minutes between events in the day. Obviously, this room should be open to the pupils from your own school that will be assisting throughout the day. We also would like the school to provide lunch (ideally in the same room); a buffet would be ideal. Please

note that your school **will not have to pay** for participants' food and refreshments, as Newport City Council is funding this aspect of the day. Food and refreshments should cost a maximum of £5 per person.

#### 4. Optional

We would encourage you to get the school newspaper to cover the event, and perhaps contribute to the press release. You could include a quote from your head-boy or head-girl, or school council representative.

Further, you may want to invite some local personalities, school governors, parents, or other members of the PTA.

Another optional extra is for the school to give a small memento to each visitor, such as a badge, school pen or prospectus.

#### 5. Other things to be aware of

- Please inform us **in advance** if you have any security requirements, concerns or problems with any of these requirements.
- Some debates may straddle two lessons, or may end after the end of the school day. Please be aware that audience members may not leave while a speech is being delivered, and should preferably stay until the end of the debate.
- You are most welcome to take photos and films during the day. However, close-up photography of debaters while speaking should be kept to a minimum.

For more information on any of these points, please contact David Penny (davidpenny@wcia.org.uk) or Martin Pollard (martinpollard@wcia.org.uk).
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## **Examples of debate motions**

### **All used at recent World Championships**

This House believes that the costs of space exploration outweigh the benefits

This House believes that political parties should receive state funding

This House believes that Turkey should join the European Union

This House would make use of GM crops to feed the world

This House believes that religion has no place in state schools

This House believes that the world is facing a clash of civilisations

This House believes that professionalism has ruined the Olympic Games

This House supports missile defence

This House believes that cultural treasures belong at home

This House would end the war on drugs

This House believes that the sovereignty of nation states  
is an outdated concept