

Debate Mate x COBIS

Virtual Debating Competition

December 2023



About Debate Mate	p.2
Dates & Times	p.3
Daily Schedule	p.4
The Debate Format	p.5
Scoring and Leaderboard	p.6
Judging Criteria	p.7
Frequently Asked Questions	p.10

About Debate Mate



Debate Mate is an innovative global social business that employs elite debate mentors to teach the skills of communication and leadership across the globe. With over 15 years of experience, we run one of the world's largest debating programmes.



In recent years we have run in-person and online programmes with children, schools and businesses across the UK, China, Japan, South Korea, Nepal, Jamaica, the UAE, Oman, the United States and beyond.



We equip people of all ages and backgrounds with the core confidence to communicate effectively and think critically. Visit our website to find out more about our Virtual Debating Clubs:



www.debatematevirtual.com

Timings & Leagues

The competition is open to students aged 16+. For Day 1 and Day 2 of the competition, schools will be split across two leagues (morning and afternoon) to accommodate different time zones. You will be able to choose your league time when you register.

The top scoring teams from across Days 1 and 2 will be invited to compete in the finals on Day 3. All finalists will compete at the same time on Day 3, regardless of their chosen league. See times below:

Friday 1st December

Red League: 08:00–13:00 GMT

Blue League: 14:00–19:00 GMT

Saturday 2nd December

Red League: 09:00–13:00 GMT

Blue League: 15:00–19:00 GMT

Sunday 3rd December

Finals (both leagues): 8:00–13:30 GMT

Schedule

Day 1 – Friday 1st December

Launch, Orientation and Welcome

Debate 1 – Prepared Motion

Debate 2 – Unseen Motion



Day 2 – Saturday 2nd December

Debate 3 – Prepared Motion

Debate 4 – Unseen Motion

Finalists Announced



Day 3 – Sunday 3rd December

Quarter-Finals – Prepared Motion

Semi-Finals – Unseen Motion

Plate Final & Grand Final – Unseen Motion

Closing Ceremony

NB: Prepared motions will be shared with schools at the start of November. Unseen motions will be shared with students 20 minutes before the beginning of each debate.

The Debate Format

Squads of 6 will have **20 minutes** of preparation time for each debate. Students won't know which side they are arguing for until the start of preparation time. Preparation time should be entirely independent, meaning students should not use the internet or receive support from teachers.

Substantive Speakers: Speakers 1 to 6 are substantive speakers. Their speeches are 5 minutes long, including 1 minute of protected time at the beginning and end, where no Points of Information can be offered.

1st Proposition Speaker: The 1st speaker for Side Proposition is also responsible for defining the motion, clearly setting out the parameters of the debate and defining any key terms.

Floor Questions: After the 6th speaker, the chair will ask each team 2-3 thought-provoking questions from the floor.

Summary Speakers: The final two speeches for each team are 3 minutes long and are all protected time. Summary speakers respond to the floor questions and explain why their team won. Proposition always opens and closes the debate.



Scoring & Leaderboard

How are teams scored?

Judges score individual speakers against the judging criteria on pages 7–9. Individual speaker scores are combined to create a team total. The highest scoring team total wins the debate. Team totals from each debate are combined to create a running total throughout the competition.

How does the leaderboard work?

Numerical scores will never be shared with students, but team positions can be viewed on the Competition Leaderboard throughout the weekend. The Leaderboard will be updated after the end of each debate.

The 8 highest scoring teams from across both leagues will progress into the Quarter-Final Debates on Day 3. From the Quarter-Finals onwards, the competition becomes a knock-out. This means that the 4 winning Quarter-Final teams will automatically progress into the Semi-Final debates.

The 2 winning teams from the Semi-Final debates will compete for 1st and 2nd place in the Grand-Final. The 2 losing teams from the Semi-Final debates will compete for 3rd and 4th place in the Plate-Final.

If your team does not get through to the finals on Day 3, you will be invited to watch the Grand-Final Debate.

Judging Criteria

Content (40%)

- The quality of the arguments presented.
- How thoroughly these arguments are justified.
- The quality of the rebuttal offered.
- The coherence of the speech structure.
- The relevance and reliability of examples given.
- Analysis of key stakeholders within the debate.

Upper Band: At the top end the arguments and rebuttal made by the speaker are of outstanding quality. They demonstrate a coherent progression of logic and consequences are explained with reference to real world examples and key stakeholders. Rebuttal is concise, focused and effective at taking down the underlying premise of the opposing case whilst simultaneously supporting the substantive case of the speaker. The speaker shows a highly nuanced understanding of the motion.

Middle Band: All basic requirements are done successfully. Arguments are convincing and there is a clear attempt to explain why arguments are true and important. The speaker gives references to appropriate real world examples and there is a clear attempt to structure arguments persuasively. Rebuttal is relevant but may not tackle the underlining premise of the opposing team's case. The speech may feature arguments or rebuttal which are asserted but not fully explained, or may fail to reference relevant stakeholders.

Lower Band: Arguments are irrelevant or poorly explained. Arguments may be difficult to decipher or there may be gaps in the logic provided. Attempts to rebut the other side do not successfully disprove the preceding arguments offered.

Judging Criteria

Style (40%)

- Fluent and confident delivery with consistent eye contact.
- Confident body language and suitable hand gestures.
- Deliberate variations in emotion, volume, tone and pace.
- Stylised language choices e.g. dramatic language or the rule of three.

Upper Band: At the top end the speaker's delivery is faultless. They successfully use deliberate stylistic techniques to make their case more persuasive to an audience. The speaker is extremely confident, with no hesitation or uncertainty. There is a deliberate attempt to vary tone and pitch throughout, and advanced stylistic techniques are employed to prompt an emotional response from the audience.

Middle Band: The speaker is confident and committed to their case throughout. They employ persuasive language and make successful attempts to vary tone and pace for dramatic effect. The speech is easy and enjoyable to listen to, but may not prompt an emotional response from the audience. There may be minor inconsistencies in the speaker's style, including small instances of hesitation or uncertainty, which are swiftly recovered from.

Lower Band: The speaker lacks confidence. Parts of their speech may be delivered monotonously and the speaker may seem unsure about some of their arguments. The speaker may read from notes, lacking fluency and using limited eye contact.

Judging Criteria

Strategy (20%)

- Evidence of strong teamwork and a clear through line.
- Offering regular, well-considered Points of Information.
- Accepting POIs and responding confidently to them.
- Fulfilling the specific speaker role criteria.
- Strategically prioritising arguments throughout.

Upper Band: The speaker shows an advanced awareness of which arguments to prioritise and allocates time to each argument accordingly. The speaker shows a sophisticated understanding of the requirements of their role and fulfills it expertly. There is a strong sense of teamwork, with a consistent through line demonstrated by all speakers. POIs are offered concisely and tactically and are accepted with unwavering confidence and precision.

Middle Band: The speaker shows awareness of which arguments are most important in order to win the debate and understands how to use their time effectively. There is clear evidence of teamwork, although speakers may at times diverge from a consistent through line. The speaker is involved in successful Points of Information, although arguments may be repetitive, imprecise or of limited relevance to the motion.

Lower Band: There is limited awareness of the importance of certain arguments. Time is poorly managed, with the speaker either finishing early or rushing their final arguments. There is some evidence of teamwork, but a clear team through line is not consistent throughout. Points of Information offered may be muddled or tangential. Responses to POIs may prove disruptive to the flow of the speech or lack structure and clarity.

FAQ's

How many students are in a debate team?

Students can prepare in squads of 6, with 4 speakers and 2 squad members who are present during preparation time.

Which order should we speak in?

Students are free to change the order of speakers for each debate. They should let the Debate Mate Mentor know which order they will be speaking in towards the end of preparation time.

How long are speeches?

Substantive speeches (speakers 1-6) are 5 minutes long, including 1 minute of protected time at the beginning and the end. Summary speeches (speakers 7-8) are 3 minutes long and are entirely protected time.

How long is preparation time?

Students have 20 minutes to prepare for each debate. You should not use any additional resources during preparation time. Students believed to be using the internet or receiving support from teachers will be penalised by their judge.

What is a Prepared Motion?

Schools will be emailed Prepared Motions 1-month in advance, but will not know which side they are arguing for until the start of preparation time. To prepare for Prepared Motions, plan arguments for both sides of the debate.

What is an Unseen Motion?

Unseen Motions won't be shared with students until the beginning of Preparation Time. Students should think on their feet to generate independent arguments. To prepare for Unseen Motions, familiarise yourself with the Debate Mate crib sheet in your Student Handbook.

FAQ's

How will we access the competition?

The competition is hosted on Zoom Events. Schools will receive the Zoom details via email the week of the competition. Students are asked to join from individual devices, although will be permitted to join from a shared device if absolutely necessary.

Does a teacher need to be constantly present?

No, it is not compulsory for teachers to be present throughout the competition, as a DBS checked Debate Mate mentor will be hosting each Zoom room.

Who do we contact if we are running late?

If you are running late or experiencing any trouble connecting, please email virtual@debatebate.com and a member of the team will do their best to help you to get online.

What are the prizes?

All students will receive a certificate of participation. The winners of the competition will also receive a free Virtual Debating Masterclass delivered by a World Champion Debater.

We won all of our debates. Why are we not in the finals?

The Quarter-Finalist teams who are invited to compete on Day 3 are the 8 highest scoring teams from across both leagues of the competition. This means that you could win all 4 of your debates, but still not place in the 8 highest scoring teams. Alternatively, you could lose multiple debates, but still score highly enough to place in the top 8 at the end of Day 2.