

# LONDON DEBATE CHALLENGE

Participant Handbook  
2018



**ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION**  
discovering voices



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**THE LONDON DEBATE CHALLENGE**

The ESU founded The London Debate Challenge (LDC) to bring the benefits of debating to all maintained schools in the capital. We offer training to all such schools across London’s thirty-three boroughs and, in the years since the LDC’s launch in 2002, debating has been taken up with enthusiasm by schools and local authorities across the city.

The competition is open to pupils from Years 7 to 9. All participants receive some introductory training to competitive debating and the invaluable opportunity to improve their analytical skills, logical reasoning, and confidence in public speaking.

Each borough hosts an initial round of the competition which includes a training session delivered by some of the ESU’s most experienced mentors, followed by at least two debates. These debates are in the Extended Mace format, which is explained later in this booklet.

The winning team from each borough proceeds to the LDC Regional Finals in June. Winners of the Regional Finals will then attend the LDC Final Day where they will compete against other Regional Champions from all over London.

**FORMER WINNERS**

- 2017** The Tiffin Girls' School, Kingston Upon Thames
- 2016** The Tiffin Girls' School, Kingston Upon Thames
- 2015** Harris City Academy Crystal Palace
- 2014** Jewish Free School, Brent
- 2013** Wallington County Grammar School, Sutton
- 2012** Hayes School, Bromley
- 2011** Clapton Girls, Hackney
- 2010** Crown Woods School, Greenwich
- 2009** Bishop Justus’ C of E School, Bromley
- 2008** Latymer School and Turin Grove, Enfield
- 2007** Coombe Girls’ School, Kingston Upon Thames
- 2006** Heathland School, Hounslow
- 2005** Latymer School, Enfield
- 2004** Claremont High School, Brent
- 2003** St Ursula’s Convent School, Greenwich
- 2002** St Bonaventure’s RC School for Boys, Newham

**BOROUGH HEATS**

The borough heats of the competition will be hosted in schools within each borough, and feature debates between the teams within that borough. The debates will be preceded by an introductory coaching session led by one of our experienced mentors. These heats take up a full school day.

The following is a recommended timetable for a round:

<b>9:30-10.00</b>	Introductions and Ice Breakers
<b>10.00-12.00</b>	Coaching Session
<b>12.00-12.30</b>	Lunch
<b>12.30-15.00</b>	Debates and Feedback
<b>15:15</b>	Announcement of Finalist
<b>15.30</b>	Home time

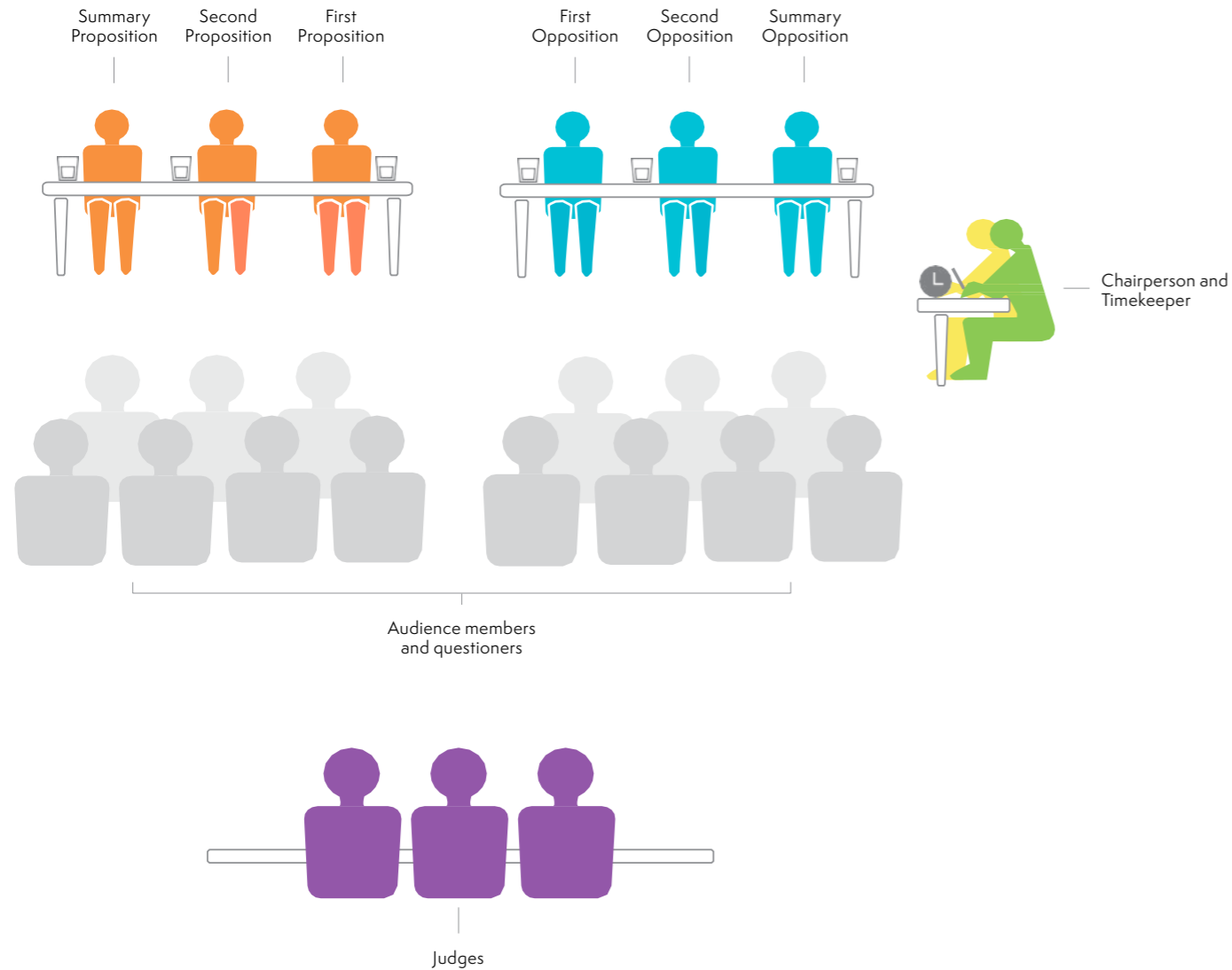
This timetable is variable, and more information on both training resources as well as dates and timings will be sent to participant schools as venues are confirmed.



## EXTENDED MACE FORMAT

All debates within the London Debate Challenge will take place in the Extended Mace format, a modified version of the format used for the ESU Schools' Mace competition.

Further information on the mace format and schools' debating can be found in the ESU Schools' Mace Handbook.



## THE LONDON DEBATE CHALLENGE

Each team comprises 3 to 5 members who will all prepare together. Three students speak in each debate. The members of the team speaking can then be rotated from one debate to the next, allowing all team members a chance to actively participate. Below is a glossary of terms used in this document.

Each debate runs as follows: first proposition; first opposition; second proposition; second opposition; floor debate; opposition reply speech; proposition reply speech.

The first two speakers for each side speak for up to four minutes. The first and last thirty seconds of each of these speeches are 'protected' from points of information (explained in the glossary). During these periods, POIs cannot be offered from the opposing side. There will be an audible signal at thirty seconds from the judges to indicate that the first period of protected time has finished, and another at three minutes thirty seconds to indicate that protected time has begun once again. There will then be a final audible signal at four minutes to indicate that speakers should have stopped speaking, or should finish their speeches shortly.

Each of these speakers is expected to offer two or three new arguments that seek to show why they believe their side wins the debate.

The first speaker is expected to offer a definition of the key terms and a mechanism, meaning how the policy will be carried out. Each of the other speakers is additionally expected to offer rebuttal to the other side's arguments. Rebuttal is an opportunity to respond to the arguments of the other side, showing why they believe these arguments are not true, irrelevant, or are of less importance than the arguments introduced by their own side.

Following these four speeches there will be a floor debate. During the floor debate, questions can be offered by the audience to either the Proposition or Opposition. The teams will not reply to these immediately, but rather the summary speaker is expected to offer responses as part of their summary speech.

Summary speeches are three minutes long, and POIs cannot be offered at any time. Speakers are expected to draw out the key themes of the debate and offer an account as to why they believe their team won, as well as replying to questions from the floor debate.



## GLOSSARY

First Proposition	First Opposition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defines the motion</li> <li>• Outlines what the Proposition case will be</li> <li>• Delivers 2 or 3 main arguments</li> <li>• Summarises what those arguments have been</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outlines Opposition case</li> <li>• Rebutts Proposition arguments</li> <li>• Delivers own arguments</li> <li>• Summarises debate so far</li> </ul>
Second Proposition	Second Opposition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rebutts First Opposition, and rebuilds First Proposition</li> <li>• Recaps debate so far</li> <li>• Delivers own arguments</li> <li>• Summarises debate so far</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rebutts Proposition</li> <li>• Outlines what their case will be</li> <li>• Delivers own arguments</li> <li>• Summarises debate so far</li> </ul>
Third Proposition	Third Opposition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarises debate</li> <li>• Refers to own case and floor debate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarises debate</li> <li>• Refers to own case and floor debate</li> </ul>

<b>Protected Time</b>	The period of time during which POIs may not be offered.
<b>Points of Information (POI)</b>	A formal interjection which may be made during an opposing speaker's speech. A POI is offered when a speaker stands up and addresses the current speaker saying 'on a point of information' or 'on that point.' POIs may be accepted or declined by the current speaker. If declined, the speaker offering the POI must resume their seat. If accepted, the speaker offering the POI may make a brief point, after which they must resume their seat and the current speaker continues with their speech. This may not turn into a conversation or back and forth.
<b>Rebuttal</b>	The term given to an argument made in direct response to a contrary argument put forward by an opposing speaker.
<b>Mechanism</b>	The mechanism is the means by which the Proposition expect the policy in the motion to be carried out. For example, if the motion is This House Would Legalise All Drugs, the mechanism could include the fact that drugs would be sold by licensed pharmacies, and only to citizens over 18.
<b>Definition</b>	The definition sets out the range of the debate by defining key terms and how the debate will operate. For example, if the motion is This House Would Legalise All Drugs, the definition could be that by all drugs we mean that all drugs which are currently sold illegally on the street, such as cannabis and heroin. We could also include the location in which the debate is taking place - the UK or Western Liberal Democracies - and who will be controlling this: the British Government or the NHS.

## JUDGING CRITERIA

Criteria	First Proposition	All Other Main Speeches	Summary Speeches
Expression and Delivery	10 marks	10 marks	5 marks
Organisation and Prioritisation	10 marks	10 marks	5 marks
Reasoning and Evidence	15 marks	10 marks	5 marks
Listening and Response	5 marks	10 marks	5 marks

### Reasoning and Evidence

**Features:** *Relevancy of arguments, relevant empirical evidence to support ideas, analysed arguments from premise to conclusions*

Speeches that score highly under this criteria are highly relevant and well-constructed, providing logical and persuasive arguments for their side. They work through from basic assertions to well justified conclusions, making use of evidence that supports their case. Arguments are not only relevant and well analysed, but also must have their importance demonstrated, and weight given in reference to other material in the debate.

### Organisation and Prioritisation

**Features:** *Marked out arguments, signposted ideas, internal structure, ranking of most relevant ideas, preference best ideas*

Speeches that show strong organisation and prioritisation are exceptionally clear in communicating ideas. They introduce the most relevant ideas and make use of them without rushing through or introducing every possible relevant argument.

Arguments are signposted well (e.g. 'In my speech, I will be talking about X, Y and Z. Now for my first point...'), and it is clear when a speech moves from one idea to the next.

### Listening and Response

**Features:** *Rebuttal and points of information, relevance to arguments, level of response given, prioritisation*

Speeches that score well in terms of listening and response show a strong ability to engage with the very roots of the case presented by the opposing side. Rather than tackling simply examples or evidence, they undermine the principles or concepts on top of which arguments are built. Speakers will aim to undermine the most important material in rebuttal, points of information, and the opposing bench's main constructive material. They will be flexible in their approach to the debate and will weight their own ideas in reference to the opposing bench.

### Expression and Delivery

**Features:** *Eye contact, hand gestures, stance, emotive language, rhetorical devices and questions, pacing*

Speeches that score highly on expression and delivery demonstrate a clear awareness of rhetoric and attempt to engage an audience. They make use of tools such as eye contact, hand gestures, and emotive language to engage with the judges. They may make use of notes, but only as a prompt rather than to rehearse or read the speech.

## OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE ESU

### Discover Your Voice workshops

Every educator understands the value of being able to express yourself clearly and concisely. Discover Your Voice workshops help hone critical thinking and logical analysis skills as well as building confidence for public speaking.

Our experienced mentors create an encouraging environment where everyone is motivated to speak up and learn to support their ideas through engaging games and activities. We offer half and full day public speaking and debating workshops for primary and secondary school level for both beginners as well as the more advanced. We'd also love to work with you to organise a competition day in your own school to help boost enthusiasm and confidence about debating.

For more information or to make a booking, email the DYV team at [dyv@esu.org](mailto:dyv@esu.org).

### Continued professional development

Teachers, who give up their time to coach teams, run clubs and attend competitions, are integral to the spread of oracy. We recognise that they are our biggest asset when it comes to developing the skills of an increasing number of students.

We've recently expanded our CPD offer for teachers and schools, and are happy to offer a range of sessions including:

- Running a debate club
- Debating in the curriculum: using oracy in your lessons
- Advanced training: helping good debaters to excel
- Training students for public speaking

For more information or to make a booking, email the DYV team at [dyv@esu.org](mailto:dyv@esu.org).

*"Thank you for a superb day of training on debating. Everyone in the English Department rated the training very highly indeed. This has taken us forward greatly and everyone is excited now about debating. Thank you."*

Head of English Department

## THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION

The ESU is a unique global educational charity and membership organisation that brings together people of different languages and cultures. Through our programmes, we seek to develop confident communicators, critical thinkers and empowered citizens.

We believe that international dialogue and cultural exchange are essential to individual, community and global development and this is reflected in the diversity of work that our alumni and members engage in around the world.

Our aims, as laid out in our Royal Charter, are:

- To promote education across the English-Speaking world and beyond, respecting the traditions and heritage of those with whom we work, whilst acknowledging the current events and issues that affect them.
- To use English as a means of international communication of knowledge and understanding.

The ESU is a non-political organisation, working with people regardless of nationality and background, and from all walks of life.

For more information on our education programmes please visit [www.esu.org](http://www.esu.org)

*"The debating workshop was really excellent - so much so that we have been meeting twice a week to continue debating since! We have also now entered a team in the Oxford Schools debating competition as well as the Mace and the ESU public speaking competition."*

Teacher

English-Speaking Union, Dartmouth House,  
37 Charles Street, London, W1J 5ED  
0207 529 1550  
[www.esu.org](http://www.esu.org)  
UK registered Charity 273136