

# ESU TEACHING RESOURCE



## The Questioner

Questioning is often seen as combative (think of Prime Ministers' Questions) but this is not the case in the Public Speaking Competition. To understand the role of questioner, it can help to think that the questioner is there on behalf of the audience - to ask the questions to which everyone would like answers and discover what else the speaker can add to what has been said already. It should not be confrontational, although the questioner may suggest an alternative line of thought to the speaker for comment.

Students should think of the event as a public meeting where they will help draw out the speaker's thoughts so the audience can best understand them - like a friendly interviewer, the best questioners are those that draw the most interesting material from the speaker, not those who scare them off!

### Successful questioners are students who:

- have clearly listened carefully to the speaker
- refer directly to what the speaker has said rather than simply going through a prepared list of questions
- are polite and engaging in their questioning
- may compliment the speaker on the speech, but do not offer judgement on its presentation (that is for the judges)
- encourage speakers to explain points which could have been clearer, whilst maintaining a positive and friendly approach
- seek further examples and evidence from the speaker on key aspects of their speech
- ask the speaker's views on alternative view-points
- ask follow-up questions where an answer has not been as clear as it might have been (judges like spontaneity)
- vary the length and type of their questions
- realise that this is not a private conversation with the speaker, but that they are asking questions on behalf of the whole audience

