

SENIOR FINALS TOPIC SELECTION

1. Introduction

All Senior A and B Grade finals are secret topic debates. Teams are given a choice of three topics, following the procedure of the National Schools' Debating Championships. This guide is intended to assist teams with the topic selection process.

2. Process

Each team will be provided with a list of three topics at the beginning of their preparation time.

Teams will have two minutes to rank the topics in order of preference from one to three (one being the preferred topic). Teams rank topics by writing the numbers next to the topics. Teams are not allowed outside assistance when ranking topics.

After ranking their topics the teams return their forms to the Zone Steward, who will determine the topic for the debate using the process set out below.

- Topics that have been ranked three are vetoed.
- If after eliminating the third ranked topics there is only one topic left then that topic will be debated.
- If the two third ranked topics are the same and the two first ranked topics are the same then the first ranked topic will be debated.
- If the two third ranked topics are the same but the two first ranked topics are different then a coin toss will be conducted to determine which of the first ranked topics will be debated.

3. Advice

3.1 *Rank topics in order of knowledge*

Teams should rank topics in order of what they know the most about. Even though particular topics (or sides of topics) may at first appear difficult, upon further examination it is often not the case. By ranking topics in order of knowledge teams give themselves the best opportunity to be able to build a case in their allotted preparation time.

It is better to pick a topic that one person knows a lot about rather than a topic that everyone knows a little bit about – the person who knows a lot can help the others during preparation time. The team's total level of knowledge, rather than how evenly that knowledge is distributed among the team, should be the primary consideration.

3.2 *Prioritise the knowledge of examples*

Teams should place particular significance on the knowledge of examples. It is generally easier to develop arguments from examples, as opposed to trying to think of examples to support arguments.

3.3 *Be decisive*

Given the strict time constraints Teams should first decide which topic to number three, as this topic will not be debated.

The team Captain should manage the topic selection process and quickly resolve disagreements between team members.