

## Junior A, Round One

**TOPIC:** *that students should have to learn a musical instrument.*

### 1. Type of Topic

This is a normative/model debate.

This means that the affirmative should propose a 'model' (a policy on how this idea would be implemented). This model should be clearly described to outline what changes the affirmative team will make to the status quo (the current world), and how these changes will be enacted. The negative team can either support the status quo or propose a counter-model. This counter-model must be different from the status quo, but also different from the model the affirmative team is suggesting. The negative team should ensure they clearly identify whether they are supporting the status quo or proposing a counter-model. The debate then depends on both teams arguing about why their model/decision leads to a better world than the opposition's.

Assuming the affirmative and negative both provide reasonable models, neither team can argue the opposition's model is infeasible or would not be able to be implemented; each team is allowed to implement their model without questions of feasibility so long as they clearly explain their model and it is not completely unreasonable.

### 2. Background / Context

Most schools in Australia teach music in primary schools, usually as a requirement of their primary school curriculum, and most schools also offer it as a choice for students in secondary schools. However, it is rarely the case that schools will require students specifically learn a certain musical instrument even in these music classes. Often the learning of a musical instrument is the choice of a student or parent and is learnt either outside of school hours or during set times during a school day.

This differs from sport for example, where schools will often require students to enrol in and participate in a co-curricular sporting activity such as cricket or netball which involves training and competition outside of school hours. In some secondary schools, these sporting co-curriculars can be taken as timetabled classes.

The affirmative must argue and propose a model suggesting that students should be required to learn a musical instrument as apart of their education. The affirmative may propose a model suggesting it is structured similarly to co-

curricular sport, or requiring it as a class within school hours, or something else entirely. The negative must argue that students should not be *required* to learn an instrument in any way the affirmative may suggest.

In some countries such as Denmark and Norway, music education is a co-curricular endeavour like sport is in Australia; these may be useful examples to investigate. It may also be useful for both teams to consider the current required co-curriculars and lessons students have and the positives and negatives of these.

### 3. Questions for Consideration

- What are the current musical education requirements in Australian curricula?
- What are the arguments for and against current co-curricula requirements such as sport?
- In what ways can learning a musical instrument be a useful skill?
- What examples exist around the world for either side of the topic?
- Are students currently learning enough or too much? In what ways and why?
- How effective is extra-curricular learning?
- Are there benefits to learning musical instruments further than just gaining this skill?
- Why do some students currently learn musical instruments whilst others don't? Is it simply due to interest, or are there other reasons?

© The South Australian Debating Association, Inc. 2024 This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission from the South Australian Debating Association, Inc. Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be directed to the President, The South Australian Debating Association, Inc., GPO Box 906, Adelaide, SA 5001.