



**J.A. THOMPSON**  
**HISTORY DEBATING**

**COMPETITION  
GUIDELINES  
2023**



## RULES FOR THE COMPETITION

### 1. ORGANISATION OF INTER SCHOOL DEBATES

Schools are normally organised in pools and will debate against each of the other schools in their pool. Debates in each pool will be held on the one day at a venue chosen either by the competition convenor or by mutual agreement amongst the participating schools in each pool. The date and time of each debate will be the responsibility of the host school but should be agreed upon by the visiting schools to ensure that all schools are available to participate. Once a date and venue has been organised the host school must inform the convenor.

The pool debates must be organised and completed by the date determined by the draw and the competition convenor.

The appointment of adjudicators is primarily the responsibility of the host school but visiting schools may be asked to supply an adjudicator if one cannot be sourced. For schools who complete Preliminary Round debates individually, the Affirmative school must pay for adjudication. If schools opt to conduct a pool day, costs must be split evenly between all schools based on the number of debates they are competing in. Costs for all debates with a panel must be split evenly between the competing schools. Adjudicators are paid a minimum of \$50 for each debate, with a \$20 supplement to be provided if the adjudicator travels more than 30 minutes to reach the host school.

One adjudicator will preside over Preliminary Round debates. A panel of three adjudicators should be used for Quarter Final debates. If this is not possible, an experienced adjudicator should preside over the debate. A panel of three adjudicators must be used for the Semi Final and Grand Final.

Since the topic and side to be taken is known in advance “preparation time” on the day of the debate is not necessary.

Speaking times for the preliminary rounds and Quarter Finals will be 8 minutes with a warning bell at 6 minutes. Speaking times for the Semi Final and Grand Final will be extended to 10 minutes with a warning bell at 8 minutes.

NOTE: Should any speaker exceed their allotted time by more than one minute, the bell will be rung continuously until the speaker resumes their seat.

The host school must notify the convenor of the results of each debate.

## **2. DUTIES OF CHAIRPERSON AND TIMEKEEPER**

- a) The functions of chairperson and timekeeper may be exercised by the one student, but there are good reasons for dividing the responsibility.
- b) The chairperson should see that the room arrangements (seating, tables and glasses of water for speakers and adjudicator, bell, stopwatch) are satisfactory, meet the visiting team, and meet the adjudicator.
- c) When both teams are in position for the debate (the Affirmative on chairperson's right), the chairperson is to announce the competition, welcome the visiting team and the adjudicator, introduce the speakers of both teams, announce the subject, declare the speaking times, ask the timekeeper to demonstrate the ringing of the bell (one bell at warning time, two bells at full time), and then call the first Affirmative to open their team's case.
- d) After each speech, except the last one, the chairperson is to await a sign from the adjudicator before calling the next speaker. After the last speech, the chairperson should wait for a signal from the adjudicator, and then invite the adjudicator to deliver the result of the debate. Once the adjudication has been delivered, the chairperson should invite the captain of the losing team to give a brief speech of thanks, and then the captain of the winning team to do likewise. The chairperson should then announce the conclusion of the debate and invite teams, their teachers, and the adjudicator to afternoon/morning tea.
- e) The timekeeper's duty is to keep the times of speeches by means of a stopwatch, to ring bells clearly at the correct times, and to note the total time taken by each speaker in case the adjudicator should ask for it. It is essential that the timekeeper attends strictly to his/her duty, as the ringing of the bell at the wrong time, an accidental brushing against it, or the ringing of one bell instead of two, or two bells instead of one, may adversely affect a speaker's performance and create an adjudication problem.

## **3. COMPOSITION OF TEAMS**

Each team consists of three speakers. A fourth member may be used (as an adviser) to assist in the preparation of the team's case and to sit with the team during the debate. While the competition is for Year 9, 10 and 11 students, schools may include students in younger year groups.

#### **4. DUTIES OF TEAMS AND SPEAKERS**

The two teams are known as the Affirmative and Negative (not Government and Opposition, used in Parliamentary style debating).

Teams should analyse the topic of the debate in order to decide its reasonable meaning and to see whether there are key words or phrases which control the argument.

The Affirmative has to prove the position expressed in the subject of the debate, while the Negative has to disprove it. The onus of proof (or disproof) is important. It is not enough for the Affirmative to state its case without trying to prove it, for the Negative to deny that case without trying to disprove it, or for the Negative to argue that the Affirmative has failed to prove its case.

Teams are to be warned against attempting to argue an individual line, which is one avoiding the issue under discussion or denying the other team the right to develop its case. They are also warned against attempting refutation by means of a single obvious example, as that reduces a debate to absurdity. Simply presenting a truism is not a sufficient form of argument.

Adjudicators are instructed to record the key “team” arguments presented by each side and note if they are challenged. History debating involves presenting and defending your arguments and attacking those of your opponents.

Team lines are permissible but are NOT required in this competition. Greater emphasis should be placed on the logical communication of ideas, arguments and historical evidence throughout the debate.

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that persistent conflict is vital to debating. The mere expression of two different viewpoints which do not come in to persistent conflict is not debating. Once the first Affirmative has spoken the debate must take the form of a continuous encounter. It is the duty of each of the five succeeding speakers to refute the basic opposing case before developing or summarising their own. Refutation must never be left merely to the two third speakers.

The first Affirmative is concerned with definition, development of a basic theme or “line”, allocation of significant aspects of their team’s case to themselves as well as their second speaker (not actually to their third), argument in support of their own allocated argument, and a brief summary of what was argued at the end of the speech.

The first Negative must accept or amend the Affirmative’s definition, show why the

Affirmative's line is unacceptable, substitute a basic Negative line for it, and then proceed as above from allocation through to summary. If 1st Negative fails to capture the initiative from the Affirmative, they will create difficulties for their team later in the debate.

The second Affirmative, should they fail to recapture the initiative from the Negative, will make their team's task extremely difficult. 2nd Affirmative must refute the basic Negative case, which the Affirmative is hearing for the first time, before developing and summarising their own case.

The second Negative should spend more time refuting their opposite number's particular arguments than attacking the basic case, for the latter task should have been carried out by the first speaker. But they must reinforce the basic Negative line, and recapture the initiative, before developing their own argument.

The third Affirmative must discharge their duty with precision in view of the fact that the other team will have the final say. Rarely can a third Affirmative afford to develop their team's case further. They must review both teams' cases and contrast them to that the advantage lies with the Affirmative. A mixture of general and detailed rebuttal should lead to a final summary.

The third Negative is not allowed to introduce new material except briefly by way of refutation to support a point, but even then it should not invite a reply which can no longer be given. The structure of their speech should otherwise be as set out for the third Affirmative.

It must be emphasised that third speakers must attack the central points of their opposition, they are to be discouraged from simply restating arguments presented previously by their first and second speakers. The best third speakers will address the key issues of the debate at hand, rather than how they wished it had occurred.

It is worth noting that inter-school debates have often been lost rather than won, as certain speakers have failed to discharge their duties properly. There are many instances of first Affirmatives omitting to establish a sound line of argument, of first Negatives not seizing the opportunities presented to them, of second Affirmatives demanding an answer, of second negatives not atoning for their first speaker's shortcomings, and of third speakers on either side neglecting to carry out a contrast of cases showing their own advantage.

## **5. HISTORICAL MATTER (50% of final mark)**

Matter is the content of a speech, or what a speaker says. It must always be relevant to the team's basic line.

Matter begins with the first speaker's definition. It may be necessary for teams to explore various meanings, ideologies or concepts during their prior research, before settling on a particular interpretation. The overall meaning of the subject is always more important than the meaning of individual words. The team's definition must be reasonably acceptable to both teams, in order to genuinely attempt to avoid a definitional debate.

Matter covers the quality of historical argument, and of rebuttal of opposing argument. Important aspects are clarity, logical development, soundness, use of accurate illustration, and absence of faulty reasoning. Evidence of historical research through primary and secondary sources must be seen wherever possible.

Illustration is particularly important, as many school debaters make statements which require support before they can be accepted. Illustrations must be on a historical and not hypothetical basis. Evidence of historical research must be seen.

Other common reasoning errors which detract from matter are as follows: attacking the speaker instead of their argument; arguing that one thing is the result of another when it merely follows it in time and no causal link is shown; using analogies which are too loose for reliable conclusions to be drawn from them; substituting emotion for reason, particularly by use of emotionally toned words; and appealing to doubtful authority.

Faulty arguments and inaccurate historical facts are penalized even if the other team fails to pick it up (though not so heavily compared to a team which does pick up on such an error), for otherwise error would gain un-deserved reward. A team which exposes faulty argument should be in a position to profit substantially from doing so.

In history debates simple assertions do not amount to argument unless they are supported in some fashion e.g. appeal to logic, precedent, documentary or statistical evidence, historical authorities etc. An assertion alone and unsupported does not amount to "Matter".

## **6. MANNER (20% of final mark)**

Manner is the individual way in which a speaker presents their matter, how they use their individual personality to reinforce their argument. It is the quality best employed to win and hold audience appeal.

Impressive manner will not win debates if it is allied to poverty of argument and lack of historical proof. Strong manner will, however, assist to reinforce and effectively deliver a well-constructed argument.

The parts of manner are as follows: eye contact with the audience as individuals; limited or no use of notes; good conversational English; clear articulation and effective voice projection; variations in pitch, pace, pause, tone and volume; good deportment; natural and unobtrusive gestures; projection of satisfying personality.

Sincerity, warmth, persuasiveness, and a sense of personal involvement are important aspects of manner.

NOTE: That manner is the least important of the three components. Nevertheless, debating is about clear verbal communication. In addition to the marks specifically allocated to manner, good manner has its own reward, allowing both the adjudicator and audience to follow the speakers' arguments more clearly, thereby gaining more marks for Matter and Method.

## **7. METHOD (30% of final mark)**

Method is the organisation of a speech within itself, as part of a team effort, and in refutation of an opposing case. It concerns not only what is planned beforehand but also what has to be planned as the debate develops.

A speech must be arranged so that the right amount of time and emphasis is given to each part of it. Each point should follow naturally and purposefully from the one before. No material should be inserted in the wrong place, such as fresh development after a final summary. Rebuttal, particularly, must precede development. It cannot be stated in advance how much time any speaker should give to each aspect of a speech. A first Negative or second Affirmative, for example, may need to spend more time than usual on rebuttal if a strong case has been built by the other teams' opening speaker.

Method also covers the arrangement of material to accord with the duties laid down for each speaker. It likewise covers any necessary rearrangement of material to make up for a previous speaker's omissions.

A third speaker's chief duty is to contrast the two cases and show why on a final analysis, their team's case should be preferred to the others. However, their method may show considerable freedom. A third speaker may refute in 1-2-3 or 3-2-1 order as they see fit, or in any logical order chosen. They may interweave refutation in a contrast of cases. The third Affirmative must refute particular points made by the second Negative, but the third Negative may dispense with particular refutation, except to review it, if third Negative feels that this has been adequately performed by the two previous speakers.

## **8. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS**

Schools are able to enter two teams in each division (Year 9, 10 and 11) of the competition. If both of those teams progress to the knockout stages of the competition, the knockout draw will be constructed so that two teams from the same school would debate each other no later than the Semi Final if they were to both progress to this stage of the competition.

Schools are asked not to forfeit a debate unless every alternative to doing so has been examined and found unacceptable.

As listening is a valuable educational activity, and as speakers need suitable audiences in order to be effective, it is expected that debate audiences will be chosen with care. There should be no doubt that they will listen appreciatively (which they cannot do unless they are of an educational standard roughly similar to that of the debaters, display good manners, and refrain from showing partisanship).

Team members must also display good manners. Necessary conversation during a debate must be conducted quietly.

Debates must be free from interruption. External noise should be kept down, and the room is to be shut off from the school communication system during debate.

The Grand Final may be filmed so schools must consider this when registering teams for the competition. Other debates may also be filmed at the discretion of the two competing schools.

# ADJUDICATION

## 1. ESSENTIALS

The adjudicator must be given the topic of the debate in advance so that they can become familiar with relevant historical content. Teams that base their argument on inaccurate historical research must be penalised. Adjudicators cannot be employed (for example as a teacher) by either school competing in the debate.

Because the adjudicator awards a mark on a matter-manner-method basis, they must assess each speaker under those three headings, though the total marks awarded to a speaker should reflect the general impression instead of being merely a combination of marks under various headings.

To maintain a sense of relative values an adjudicator must compare the marks given to each speaker with those given to previous speakers in the debate. It is reasonable, and probably necessary, for an adjudicator to adjust marks during a debate in order to correctly reflect the quality of performance.

The maximum mark which may be awarded to any speech is 100:

50 for Historical Matter, 20 for Manner and 30 for Method

Marks should neither be very high or very low. Marks in the nineties suggest that there is little room for improvement, while low marks may discourage debaters whose real problem is poor coaching. If 75 is taken as the average mark, it can be expected that marks will sometimes rise to the eighties or fall to the sixties.

Adjudicators are required to take a firm stand against reading of speeches. This is NOT debating. Teams of “readers” must not be allowed to win debates except against markedly inferior opposition. Debaters have to convince an adjudicator and audience, and to do this they must communicate directly. They must maintain as much unbroken eye-contact as possible with as many individual members of the audience as possible.

Adjudicators are required to reduce a speaker’s total mark for overtime or, more usually, undertime. Debaters should learn to tailor their material so that it approximately fits the time allowed. As a general rule no penalty is to be imposed unless overtime exceeds half a minute. With undertime, the adjudicator should use discretion about an additional penalty, as the natural penalty is that a speaker has likely not presented enough material to attain a good mark to begin with. When a reduction or limitation of the total mark is made, it must relate to all three of matter, manner and method, and it must bear some relation to the

proportion of total time involved. The view is NOT to be taken that a good short speech deserves a good mark, for adjudicators have to judge what they see and hear, not what they imagine they might have seen and heard if the speech had run its full time. Speakers who fail to make full use of their time forfeit the opportunity to gain a full range of marks.

Adjudicators must not favour diction at the expense of debating. Communication of ideas with a view to winning an argument is above all the skill to be looked for and rewarded.

Adjudicators must not penalise debaters for errors for which they are not responsible, such as faulty time-keeping or a disruption to a Zoom call. Allowances should be made for the fact that speakers may be thrown off balance by unforeseen interruptions or by the reactions of a partisan audience.

## **2. JUDGING HISTORICAL MATTER**

Matter is the content of a speech, or what a speaker says. It must be relevant to the team's basic line of argument supported by accurate historical evidence, and be clear enough to be followed by the opposing team, the adjudicator, and by a suitable audience to the standard which can be expected in each division. Matter may be poor through being historically inaccurate, confused, unnecessarily difficult to follow, irrelevant, or illogical.

In judging matter, adjudicators must consider three basic aspects:

1. Definition, link with theme, and statement of basic theme (which especially concern the two opening speakers);
2. Argument (use of historical illustration, historiography clarity and depth, logical development, soundness);
3. Refutation of opposing argument (except the first Affirmative) aided by historical proof and evidence where applicable.

Argument, to be sound, must be free from errors of reasoning. Common reasoning errors which reduce the worth of matter are as follows:

1. Gross Historical inaccuracies;
2. Attacking the speaker instead of their argument;
3. Arguing that one thing is the result of another when it merely follows it in time and no causal link is shown;
4. Using analogies which are too loose for reliable conclusions to be drawn from them;

5. Substituting emotion for reason, particularly the use of emotionally toned words;
6. Appealing to doubtful authority;
7. Relying on unsupported assertion.

Faulty argument, especially inaccurate historical illustrations, must be penalised even if the other team fails to detect it, for otherwise any sort of error may be allowed to get by. If the error is not detected by the other team, an adjudicator should consider the situation very carefully. If the error is detected and attacked by the other team, that team may expect to gain from an encounter which the team using faulty argument had unwisely invited.

A special kind of faulty argument which must entail automatic defeat for the team using it is invalid argument. Under no circumstances is it possible for a team to win if its case is basically a denial of the other team's right to put forward a case. Negative teams have often been known to try by this means to place pressure on their opponents by switching the ground of argument, without realising that the ground already established must first be shown to be unacceptable. Affirmative teams have sometimes made the mistake of constructing a case which is impossible to refute. Teams on either side have occasionally used invalid argument for part of the time only, and then adjudicators have to decide what degree of persistence in this error produces automatic defeat.

## **Assertions**

Adjudicators should be quick to recognise what is variously called a sweeping statement, unsupported opinion, or generalisation. The truth of each statement must be shown with historical evidence before it can be accepted.

The quotation of some authority for a statement is not necessarily proof of its correctness. If quotations are used, they should be brief enough for the speaker not to risk a penalty by reading them. The aptness of the quote and the validity of the authority should be clearly established.

If one team fails to construct a worthwhile case, the other may have little to refute, and the level of refutation will naturally be impacted by this. It must be recognised that there can only be refutation of such opposing argument as is put forward.

### 3. JUDGING MANNER

The various aspects of manner are as follows:

1. Eye contact with the audience as individuals;
2. Limited or no use of notes;
3. Good conversational English;
4. Clear articulation and effective voice projection;
5. Variations in pitch, pace, pause, tone and volume;
6. Good deportment;
7. Natural and unobtrusive gesture;
8. Projection of a satisfying personality (which may be described as a pleasing union of sincerity, warmth, and vigour, allied to a desire to communicate effectively).

In judging manner, adjudicators must consider five basic aspects:

1. Eye contact;
2. Use of language;
3. Use of voice;
4. Deportment and gesture;
5. Personality.

NOTE: In History Debating manner is a significant factor but unlike English Debating or Public Speaking the quality of argument far outweighs manner. Adjudicators should never award a debate on the basis of manner alone.

#### THE MEDIUM IS NOT THE MESSAGE!

Adjudicators are advised to review the nature, development and consistency of a team's argument with meticulous care in order to establish a basis for deciding a close debate, rather than deciding it on manner because:

1. Assessment of 'pleasing' manner is more subjective and personal than any other aspect of adjudication.
2. Adult adjudicators should be capable of recognising distinctions between arguments developed and presented by Year 9, 10 or 11 students.

#### 4. JUDGING METHOD

Method in debating is the organisation of a speech in the following ways:

1. Within itself (internal structure);
2. As part of the overall case;
3. In refutation of an opposing case.

It concerns not only what is planned before the debate begins but also what has to be planned as the debate develops.

Method is not a vague associate of matter. Method is often the deciding factor in a debate between two capable teams.

While the internal structure of a speech may be readily assessed, special care is needed in assessing its organisation as part of a teamcase and in rebuttal of an opposing case. In deciding the degree of success with which a speaker has discharged their duties in a particular position in a team, the adjudicator should realise that a speaker in half a dozen debates may have to organise material in half a dozen different way in order to meet the demands of each occasion in furthering their own case and destroying the other. For example, definition sometimes needs to be explored in great detail before an effective line can be stated, length and force of rebuttal should vary according to need, and a crucial point may require to be hammered again and again.

A third speakers' speech is, of all speeches, the one where method must be judged by effectiveness. It must not be held that a third speaker should discharge their duties in a fixed order. With final speeches the demands of the occasion are paramount. The only standard requirement a third speaker has to fulfil is to finish with a summary of their own team's case.

It used to be held that a third speaker should spend five to six minutes replying to the other side's arguments, and the remaining two minutes reviewing their own side's case. The only thing which need be said about this idea is that its adoption often loses debates to capable teams. Refutation by the Negative of particular points should be undertaken by the first and second speakers; and as much particular refutation by the Affirmative as possible should be carried out by the second speaker. This allows the third Affirmative to refute points raised by the second Negative and then to combine all-important contract of cases, into which they can weave significant general refutation.

Adjudicators are asked to observe third speakers' method very closely. An apparent lack of order shown by a capable third speaker must not be confused with the genuine lack of order which may be shown by an unskilled third speaker.

An experienced third speaker often interweaves not only their own material but also, in a sense, their individual matter and method. Adjudicators must be able to separate matter and method well enough to award a valid mark for each.

## **5. POSSIBLE DIFFICULTIES**

It is reasonable to award a close debate to one team rather than the other for such a reason as that it was superior in conflict, its line pursued with greater consistency, its rebuttal was more effective, it made more convincing use of historical illustration, better use of historiography, its third speaker gave a better contrast of cases, or its members communicated their arguments more directly and persuasively.

It is not reasonable to award a close debate against a team on a minor point such as slight overtime, failure to win by addressing the chairperson, rather much colloquialism, or on a subjective point such as the adjudicator's personal dislike to the team's line. It must not be awarded against a team on punitive grounds, for alleged smugness or exhibitionism, or for not keeping voices down while opposing members are making their speeches.

## **6. HINDSIGHT**

A team may choose to argue part of their case based upon the views of a particular time in the past - however neither they nor the adjudicator can deny the other team the right to argue from hindsight.

Hindsight is the essence of historical judgment, it is the consequence of a continuous search for new evidence and a reassessment of old evidence and assumptions.

A team might appeal to the contemporary circumstances and values of a period in order to explain or even mitigate actions or decisions, but they cannot reject the perspectives and insights granted to historians by time. Teams should take particular care in Ancient History debates that they do not apply contemporary standards that did not exist during the context presented by a topic.

## **7. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ADJUDICATORS**

Adjudicators are asked to record the key aspects of each team's arguments.

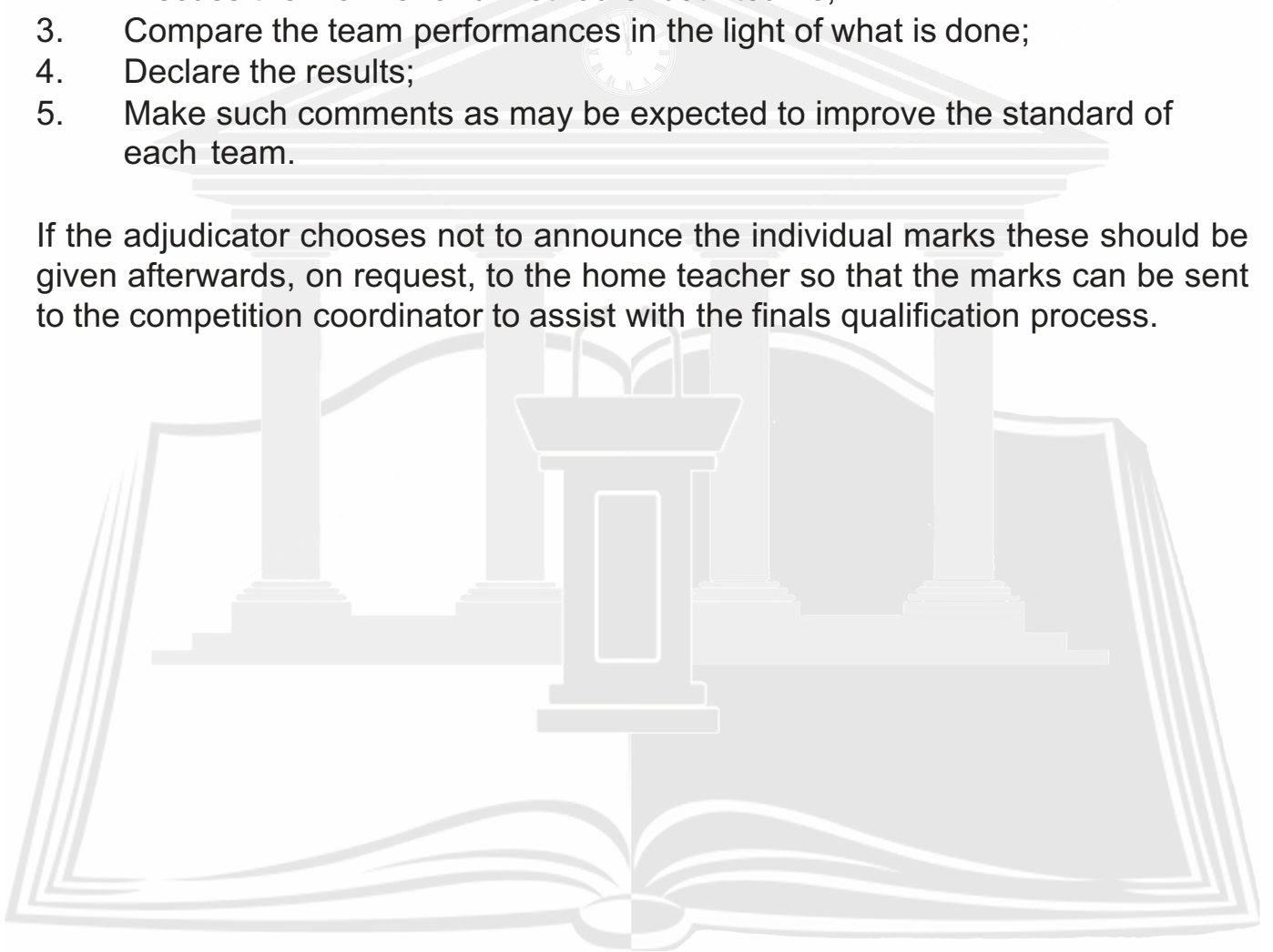
Note also the arguments that are challenged and those that are unchallenged.

## 8. DELIVERING THE ADJUDICATION

The adjudicator must do five things:

1. Review the matter of the debate by going over the two cases from definition through development to conclusion, with emphasis how each case was maintained against the other;
2. Discuss the manner and method of both teams;
3. Compare the team performances in the light of what is done;
4. Declare the results;
5. Make such comments as may be expected to improve the standard of each team.

If the adjudicator chooses not to announce the individual marks these should be given afterwards, on request, to the home teacher so that the marks can be sent to the competition coordinator to assist with the finals qualification process.



# USING TECHNOLOGY TO COMPLETE DEBATES

A strong preference is maintained that debates are completed in a face to face format. However, allowances are made that in specific circumstances, it may be preferable for schools to conduct debates online using tools such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Such circumstances where a school may wish to consider conducting debates online might include those similar to the context of the covid-19 pandemic, or where there are significant distance issues in the preliminary rounds of the competition, such as schools in rural NSW travelling several hours to complete one Preliminary Round debate.

The following guidelines should be adhered to for schools who elect to conduct debates online:

1. Individual debates cannot be recorded, unless otherwise agreed in writing between both schools in a debate, with the exception of the Grand Final.
2. The onus is on the affirmative school to create the Zoom link. In the event that the affirmative school does not have access to Zoom (or similar), they may request that the negative school create the link instead.
3. The only three parties that should have access to the Zoom link are the affirmative school teacher, the negative school teacher, and the adjudicator. If other parties (for example an additional teacher or class not in the same room) require the link, please ensure that this is communicated to the opposing school before the debate starts.
4. The link must be shared with both the teacher from the opposing school, as well as the adjudicator at least 24 hours before the debate.
5. Each team must be present at their own school in order for the debate to take place. Debates should not be conducted if students are unable to be physically present at their own school.
6. During the debate, there must be a teacher present in the room that the debate is taking place in at each school. The teacher must remain in the room for the duration of the debate and remain for feedback afterwards should their team wish to seek it.

7. The teachers involved at each school need to ensure that the adjudicator can see and hear the speaker unimpeded. This should be checked at the start of the debate, and possibly again before each speaker begins their speech.
8. The Affirmative school will need to organise a chairperson and timekeeper for the debate. An adjudicator may be asked to act as chairperson, though a script should be provided to them.
9. As normal, names of speakers and their times should be recorded in the chat box. At the start of the debate, the timekeeper should test whether or not the Negative school can hear the bell. If hearing the bell is proving difficult, the timekeeper should sit next to the laptop/microphone being used. Using a sign to indicate that a speaker has reached the first, second or continuous bell time may also assist. If the bell still cannot be heard by the Negative school, the Negative school will need to time their own speakers. All times should be recorded in the Zoom/Teams chat at the end of each speech.
10. In setting up the laptop/device for the debate, it is ideal that the team can be seen by the adjudicator and opposing team whilst their opponents are speaking. Speakers may, however, elect to move the laptop to a more suitable angle when they are delivering their own speech, so that they can face any audience members at their own school. The height and angle of the laptop should be considered and adjusted to best suit the debaters.
11. If a debate is conducted online, the adjudicator should not be present at either school involved in the debate. The adjudicator may elect to work from another site or venue of their choosing (such as but not restricted to their home or university campus). The venue or site selected by the adjudicator must allow them to be undisturbed for the duration of the debate as well as their adjudication and feedback to teams. The venue must also have a stable internet connection.
12. In the event that a panel is used to adjudicate via zoom, each adjudicator should be muted throughout the debate, except to indicate that they are ready for or can hear the next speaker or to indicate another issue. At the conclusion of the debate, each adjudicator should be invited to a breakout room. Once they are in the breakout room, each adjudicator should only unmute their laptop once they have made their decision and written this down in front of them. A regular discussion about who has won and the feedback they wish to collectively give to the audience should then be conducted. The adjudicators should only return to the main meeting once they are ready to deliver the adjudication and result. The adjudicators must remain undisturbed in the breakout room.
13. Schools may have an audience present in their own room if they choose to.
14. The debate must be completed in one attempt. It cannot be split over multiple days.

15. If the internet drops out from any party partway through a speaker's speech, the timekeeper should pause their timer. Once the internet connection has been re-established, the speaker must be permitted to restart the point that they were making, and then to complete the remainder of their speech. An adjudicator must not deduct marks because a speech was interrupted by internet connection issues.
16. If any issues arise that are not covered by the above points, please inform the convenor of what happened and any actions that were taken at the time.

