

## PREPARING FOR PREPARED TOPIC DEBATES

### 1. Introduction

This guide provides advice on how to prepare for a prepared topic debate. This guide should be read in conjunction with the other resources on the SADA website, in particular the *Guide to Preparing Secret Topic Debates* and the *Guide to Definitions Models and Tests*. Teams may wish to use a combination of the strategies outlined across these guides when preparing their debates.

### 2. First team meeting

#### 2.1 *Prior to the first team meeting*

Teams should arrange to meet two to three weeks before the debate. This meeting could be during lunchtime, before or after school, or on the weekend. Team members should make sure they have the phone number and email address for each other team member and are easily contactable.

Before the first meeting all team members, regardless of whether they are speaking in the debate, should think about and research the topic, and write down as many ideas as they have to take to the first meeting.

#### 2.2 *The first meeting*

The first meeting should proceed much in the same way as a secret topic preparation would:

- if team members have not had a chance to brainstorm prior to the meeting they should take 5-10 minutes to do so;
- team members should then share their ideas and make a note of each other's ideas (one person may want to act as scribe and use a whiteboard, but the

aim is for everyone to have a complete list of the team's ideas at the end of the meeting);

- the team should then consider the definition of the topic and a model or test;
- the team should then discuss and divide up their arguments and any examples.

Debaters should refer to the *Guide to Preparing Secret Topic Debates* for more detailed information about this process. By the end of this meeting, which should take 1-1.5 hours, all team members should have documented their team's ideas and an outline of their case.

### **3. Speech preparation**

Speakers should individually work on their speech based on their team's discussions. At this stage more research may be required.

Team members should continue to communicate with each other whilst writing their speeches. Drafts of speeches and feedback should be circulated by email.

### **4. Second team meeting**

Approximately one week before the debate teams should talk through the first and second speakers' speeches and discuss any necessary changes. It is important that each member of the team contributes to, and is familiar with, each argument. This ensures consistency between speakers and that each point is thoroughly developed. This meeting should take around half an hour.

### **5. Final touches**

Teams may wish to meet in the day or two leading up to the debate for 10-20 minutes to discuss any changes made following the second team meeting.

At this point teams should also consider strategic issues such as how to respond to potential opposition arguments.