



South Australian Debating Association Inc

Intermediate B, Round 2

“That public schools should stream students based on ability”

1. Type of Topic

This is a normative debate. This means that the affirmative team should propose a ‘model’ (a policy on how this idea would be implemented). This model should clearly outline what changes the affirmative team will make to the status quo, 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.

2. Background / Context

- Streaming students based on ability is where students are put into different classes based on their academic ability
- Often, this involves higher achieving students being put into classes that move at a faster pace, with the aim to challenge them and extend their knowledge beyond what might usually be taught at their year level
- Similarly, students who struggle more with a subject may be put into classes that take more time to cover topics to help them better learn the content
- In most places where streaming based on ability has been implemented, students can move between streams based on ongoing academic performance

3. Specific Questions for consideration

- What are some different ways of streaming students based on abilities?
 - Where has this practice has been implemented? How many streams have been used in these instances? Has streaming based on ability been successful in these instances?
- Principally, what issues might there be with streaming students based on ability?
- What different groups of students can you identify in this debate?
 - How is each group of students affected?
 - Is one group in particular benefitted?
 - Is one group in particular harmed?
- What impact is this likely to have on students’ academic achievement?
- Socially, how might streaming based on ability impact students?

- How might this practice impact students' mental health?
- How might streaming based on ability impact teachers?
- What effects might this practice have on parents?
- How does this practice affect students outside of school and after they leave school?
- What consequences might streaming based on ability have on the workforce?

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