

Junior B, Round 4

“that learning the local indigenous language in school should be compulsory”

1. Type of Topic

Topics that require teams to argue that something should or should not be done, or in this case that schools should require students to learn the local indigenous language, are a normative (model) debate. This means that the affirmative team should propose a ‘model’ (which provides a method or way of how this idea would be implemented). The 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. If the negative team chooses to support the status quo, they should make it clear what the status quo is, thus enabling both teams to debate on it. If the negative team chooses to support a counter-model it 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.

In running their model the affirmative should clearly explain what they think the school curriculum would look like if the learning of the local indigenous language was made a compulsory element of the school curriculum. Affirmative and Negative teams alike should ensure they engage with the best case version of each other’s case (and win on that ground as well as their own) whilst also analysing the incentives of key stakeholders to demonstrate why the opposition’s counterfactual might not unfold the way the opposition envisages.

2. Background / Context

Schools provide their students the environment and opportunity to learn, to develop skills and knowledge which equip them for life. The Australian Curriculum provides a framework to ensure equity in learning opportunities and skills for all students by outlining a framework which ensures the same standard curriculum content is available to every student regardless of where they live and reflects the priorities and expectations held for students. It is designed to help them become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens. The Australian Curriculum framework outlines what is to be taught and the quality of learning expected as they progress through school. Many schools offer LOTE (Languages other than English) which may also include Indigenous Languages. In Australia, there are approximately 250 local

Indigenous Languages. LOTE offered at a school may not be compulsory and may vary as to the school's community, tradition or resources.

3. Specific Questions for consideration

What is the role of the education system?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of making the compulsory learning of an indigenous language in schools?

How would it be implemented and maintained?

Consider the impact upon the key stakeholders on introducing the compulsory learning of an indigenous language:

- Teachers
- Students
- School/education system
- Community.

Have other schools/countries introduced compulsory learning of an indigenous language – if so, why or why not?

Please note that this Topic Resource Guide is a guide only and should not take the place of your own research and discovery.

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