



Fundraise for your Program: Host Big Questions Debates!

What is Big Questions?

The National Speech & Debate Association received a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to create a new national debating format called Big Questions. Schools and tournaments may receive up to \$1,700 for hosting a Big Questions division at their tournament or in their schools.

Big Questions involves two opposing sides debating a topic concerning the intersection of science and philosophy. The 2016-2017 topic is, *Resolved: Science leaves no room for free will*. Rounds can be one-on-one, two-on-two, or pairs can compete against individuals. The Big Questions format is designed for novice debaters and teachers as an introduction into debate. Allowing students to choose whether they compete as an individual or with a partner lets them experience different characteristics of other debate formats to discover what they enjoy. Members from the community are invited to serve as judges.

The NSDA offers free resources for Big Questions! Resources online include three topic analyses, a judge training video, sample cases, and a demo round. More resources to come in the next month!

To be eligible to receive the grant award, a minimum of 15 students must compete in three rounds. Apply online at www.speechanddebate.org/big-questions. Read on to discover how you can hold Big Questions in your classroom, with your team, or at a tournament!



Classroom event

Any teacher is eligible to receive grant funding for their classroom. Big Questions rounds can be held during a block class period or over several days. Many teachers have used this event as an interdisciplinary learning opportunity for students by collaborating with IB programs, science clubs, and religion classes. Rounds are approximately 45 minutes long. Teachers can hold rounds after school, in a block period, or hold a round per day for three days to fulfill the grant requirements.

School scrimmage event

School scrimmage events can be held between junior varsity and varsity debate teams, speech and debate teams, or among team members. Big Questions can be used to prepare debaters for the upcoming season or attract non-members to interact with the debate team. Jeffrey Stoppenhagen held varsity and novice divisions of Big Questions at a Saturday scrimmage in Nampa, Idaho. “What intrigued me about Big Questions is that it is really a hybrid of several debate formats, which helped me introduce debate, in general, to our students. I am excited to offer this again to my students as a way to introduce debate, and debate theory, in my classroom.”

Stand-alone or Tournament event

Stand-alone events provide schools the opportunity to collaborate with other schools in their surrounding area as a way to support growing or new speech and debate programs. Stand-alone events are a great way to involve students that would like to try a new event without sacrificing their spots at a regular season tournament. Big Questions can also be added as a division at a debate or speech tournament.

Requirements

- Each event must have a minimum of 15 high school participants
- Middle schoolers can compete but will not count towards the total number of students
- Must hold a minimum of 3 rounds
- Must follow the event format outlined in the format manual

How to Apply

To receive funding to host Big Questions Debates, review the event details and fill out an application on the NSDA website. There is a limited amount of money to be awarded, so please apply early to increase the chances of being accepted regardless of the date of your event! After Big Questions Debates are held, there is a brief survey for judges and students to complete and a reporting form to be returned to the Association.

To learn more about Big Questions and to apply to host an event, please visit our website at www.speechanddebate.org/big-questions or contact Lauren Burdt, Manager of Big Questions Debates, at lauren.burdt@speechanddebate.org. To stay updated on Big Questions like us on [Facebook!](#)

BIG QUESTIONS DEBATE STRUCTURE

Affirmative Constructive	5 minutes
Negative Constructive	5 minutes
Question Segment	3 minutes
Affirmative Rebuttal	4 minutes
Negative Rebuttal	4 minutes
Question Segment	3 minutes
Affirmative Consolidation	3 minutes
Negative Consolidation	3 minutes
Affirmative Rationale	2 minutes
Negative Rationale	2 minutes

(Each debater gets 5 min of prep time to use at their discretion)