



Brisbane Girls Debating Association

BGDA Case Competition- Task Description

Competitors will prepare a written debating-style case in support of their chosen side of the stipulated preliminary round topic. It is anticipated that the process of researching, brainstorming, drafting, and finalising submissions will take approximately 5-10 hours. Submissions are encouraged to make use of a combination of headings, full sentences, and dot-points where appropriate in order to effectively convey meaning within a limited word range.

The competition will culminate in a Grand Final in which the winner of each category will be awarded an exciting prize.

Timeline

Monday 31st May 2021	Topic is announced Register of interest opens https://tinyurl.com/bgdacasecomp2021
Monday 28th June 2021 8:00pm	Submissions due Email attached submission to bgdacasecompetition@gmail.com
Monday 11 July 2021 8:00pm	Grand Finalists notified New topic released
Monday 2 August 2021	Grand Final

Rules

- Students may compete as pairs or as an individual
- With the exception of students collaborating within their pair, competitors must not discuss their entries with any other competitors or plagiarise in any way
- The maximum word count is absolute any words over the maximum word count will not be considered (e.g. there is no 10% over leeway)
- Entries must be emailed as a word document to bgdacasecompetition@gmail.com by 8:00pm Friday 28th June 2021
- Submission emails must include your and your partner's name, your grades, and school.
- In the preliminary round, each case will be assessed by three adjudicators who will each individually assign a score to the case, which will be averaged to determine the score of the case
- Following the preliminary round, the highest performing entries will be invited to progress to the Grand Final. In the event of a tie between entries, five judges will assess the relevant submissions and vote on which entries will progress to the Grand Final. The number of entries selected to progress to the Grand Final will be at the discretion of the BGDA Executive.

Categories

Category	Eligibility	Maximum word count
Junior	Students eligible for the BGDA Competition in grades 7-8	800 words
Intermediate	Students eligible for the BGDA Competition in grades 9-10	1000 words
Senior	Students eligible for the BGDA Competition in grades 11-12	1200 words

Topics

Junior: "That we should ban movies and TV shows from using child actors"

Intermediate: "That we should introduce harsher penalties for youth crime"

Senior: "We regret the rise of charities funded solely by billionaires (e.g. Bill & Melinda Gates foundation)"

Criteria

The competition will be judged by qualified BGDA adjudicators who will score the case out of 100, with reference to the following criteria:

- Matter: the substance of your ideas (maximum of 50 points)
- Manner: the clarity of your expression, choice of words to convey specific meaning, formatting of the document (maximum of 20 points)
- Method: structure of your argument, prioritisation of ideas (maximum of 30 points)

Unlike in debating, the full score range will be utilised so that entries can be effectively distinguished. Students may request feedback on their case following the completion of the preliminary round. Below is a description of the attributes a judge would expect a case within the following ranges to present:

Needs improvement: 0-40 points

- Limited understanding of the key terms within the topic
- Limited context provided
- No evidence of strategy or prioritisation of ideas
- Formatting is confusing and difficult to follow
- Limited use of structure
- Very limited use of stakeholders
- Very limited use of research
- Narrow range of arguments
- Rebuttal does not meaningfully advance assigned case

Good: 41-60 points

- Good understanding of key terms within the topic
- Good context provided
- Good understanding of the key issues within the debate
- Good range of arguments selected
- Clear point titles selected
- Good prioritisation of material
- Limited consideration of stakeholders
- Good use of internal structure
- Some evidence of a research
- Good identification and response to rebuttal issues

Very good: 61-79 points

- Very good understanding of key terms within the topic
- Very good context provided
- Very good understanding of the key issues within the debate
- Very good range of arguments selected
- Clear and appropriate point titles
- Very good prioritisation of material
- Some consideration of a variety of stakeholders
- Very good use of structure
- Some impacting and 'weighing-up' of arguments
- Clear evidence of research
- Very good identification and response to rebuttal issues

Excellent: 80-100 points

- Sophisticated understanding of key terms within the topic
- Highly strategic context provided
- Nuanced understanding of the key issues within the debate
- Highly effective range of arguments selected
- Clear and appropriate point titles
- Excellent prioritisation of material
- Strong consideration of a variety of stakeholders
- Discerning use of structure
- Excellent impacting and 'weighing-up' of arguments
- Sophisticated argumentation resulting from research
- Excellent use of pre-emptive and integrated rebuttal throughout case
- Concise and clear written expression

Task Format

Context

- Provide the factual context within which the debate takes place
- Frame this strategically to support your team's side of the debate
- Define key terms within their context in the debate

Set-up

- If necessary, provide a clear model/counter-model that outlines **clearly and succinctly** how the policy will be implemented (who, what, when, how); or
- Provide criteria to frame your stance on the topic (in the topic "that books are better than movies", you might have criteria for what "better than" means such as provides superior outcomes educationally, for enjoyment etc.)

Summary

- Briefly summarise what you believe your team would need to prove in order to win this debate
- **1-2 sentences maximum**

Substantive arguments

- Outline **four** substantive arguments (points)
- Follow a clear structure, providing a label for the point, explaining the reasoning behind the point, providing supporting evidence/examples (for some students, following the PEEL structure may be helpful)
- Avoid being assertive and ensure that the reasoning (why and how) underpinning your point is evident
- Provide a hyperlink to any electronic evidence you use
- Impact your arguments (explain why they are important)
- Order your points as you would in a debate, taking into consideration the impact of each point and its relative importance in the context of the whole "debate" (e.g. your 2.2 should be the least important/impactful point in your case)
- You may wish to acknowledge where your material would likely clash with the other team's case and how you would respond/engage in necessary trade-offs

Pre-empting rebuttal

- Brainstorm as if you were preparing the opposite side of this debate and briefly list 2-4 **strong** arguments that the opposition may make
- Provide a brief response to the main ideas underpinning these arguments

Concluding remarks

- Summarise the important material you have conveyed
- Any closing remarks

Task Sample

The following is an example of how you might use the above structure for the purpose of this competition.

Topic: *That children under 18 should be banned from having smartphones*

Side: Negative

Word count: 991 words (including headings)

Context

In today's digital world, we are using technology such as smartphones more and more as a mode of communication, education and socialisation. The Australian Government has increasingly used texts, WhatsApp messages and App notifications to communicate with citizens throughout the Coronavirus pandemic. Children under 18 have been raised using smartphones and are highly proficient with this technology.

Set-up

We propose that Australian children under the age of 18 should be free to use smartphones, with the agreement of their parents. Through the department of education, the federal government will:

- Run regular training sessions at schools to educate parents and children on responsible phone usage (how to monitor and prevent cyberbullying, sexting and addictions etc.)
- Equip parents to monitor their children's phone usage
- Encourage schools to implement strict phone policies for in classroom and playground

Substantive arguments

1.1 The responsibility and rights of parents to make choices for their children

- Parents are entrusted with the responsibility of making decisions for their children
 - For example we already trust parents to make decisions about a child's education, health and extra-curricular activities.
- We must respect this role of parents in society and trust them to put guidelines in place that best suit their children
- Parents are better equipped to know their own child and make decisions for them
- Children develop at different rates
 - Dr Jerry Bubrick, a clinical psychologist and anxiety expert at the Child Mind Institute, explains that "You could have an immature 15-year-old who's acting out on the phone, but you give it to him because he's 15, whereas a really socially mature 12-year-old could handle it better"
<https://childmind.org/article/when-should-you-get-your-kid-a-phone/>
- Parents know their child better and their situation than the government who would have to make a blanket decision. Government wouldn't know if you were a mature 12-year-old who had to catch the train to school each day, or an immature 15-year-old who can't be trusted to not post personal information on your Facebook.

1.2 Social benefits of having a smartphone

- One of the greatest benefits of having a smartphone is building connection to family on other side of world, friends that are a long way away.
 - “Communication is fundamental to children's development; children need to be able to understand and be understood. Communication is the foundation of relationships and is essential for learning, play and social interaction.” (https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/2147/all_together_now_-_section_2.pdf)
- While this is not the same as talking to people in person, this should be available for when we don't have that opportunity.
- It also allows children to organise social interactions outside school that they otherwise wouldn't have – can't have a 17-year-old's mum organising a playdate for them!

2.1 The additional safety provided by having a smartphone

- Phones allow parents to ensure they're safe while giving them increasing levels of independence
- Through childhood it is important to develop independence but also must do this while staying safe. Phones allow parents to ensure that you are safe when they can't be with you all the time (practically and for your development).
 - Parents can access location on apps like Life360 or Find My iPhone. Under our model we will educate parents on how to use these.
- Whilst society is generally pretty safe, the ability of apps like these to save one child who is in a situation like Daniel Morcombe's is invaluable.
- These features are not available from “dumb phones” because whilst you might be able to call or text, these apps still work in situations when you do not know your locations and cannot send a text or call.
- Smartphones also allow children to navigate independently with apps like Translink and Google Maps. This allows them to find their way and develop independence, while remaining safe as they will never end up somewhere where they don't know where they are.

2.2 Smart phones allow children to develop skills for adulthood

- Using smartphones now will allow children to develop skills for adulthood
- Smartphones have become an increasingly large part of our lives and this can only be expected to grow (<https://www.keyideasinfotech.com/blog/impact-of-smartphone-on-society/>)
- Today's children will be expected to use phones in the workforce and at tertiary education, to check emails, access business and education materials and communicate with society
- Young people also need to learn how to safely use social media. If never learn how to safely use, we will get a number of 18-year-olds who are unable to use it responsibly.

- The best time to learn these skills is when they have the guidance of their parents and teachers.

Pre-emptive rebuttal

- Smartphones provide a greater opportunity for cyber bullying and the production and transmission of other harmful media.
 - By providing education to parents and students on the dangers of material such as this and how to prevent it, we would be able to successfully reduce its transmission.
 - As long as students continue to use technology of any sort (e.g. computers and Xbox) there is the risk of this
- Students social skills are significantly decreased when they are on their mobile phones all the time
 - Parents and schools have a responsibility to ensure that children are interacting with each other in social settings.
 - To the contrary, social skills are enhanced by ability to talk to others at a long distance (set out in 2nd point)
- Sleep issues arising from blue light from screens
 - It is a parent's responsibility to monitor children's phone usage and sleep.
 - Can still be distracted by other things if don't have phone
- Addictions to mobile phones
 - This is the parent's responsibility as well.
 - Anyway, these are not the sort of kids that as soon as you take their phones away are going to run outside and exercise. They will become addicted to other things.

Concluding remarks

Smartphones are a vital tool for the socialisation, health and wellbeing of young people. If we want to encourage a healthy relationship with technology and prepare kids for the future, we must not ban smartphones.