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# Convenors' Foreward

The 'Schools' has had a prestigious and successful history and, this year we are delighted to once again continue that tradition with our new sponsors, Denny. In the past twenty two years, the Irish Schools' Debating Competition has enabled thousands of students and teachers to get involved in a unique and rewarding competition, the only one of its kind in Ireland. This information booklet is designed to aid those who have competed in previous years, and those who are entering for the first time. There are guidelines for both teachers and students on the practicalities of debating, and it includes detailed instructions on how to enter.

This year sees the Denny All-Ireland Schools' Debating Competition advancing in more ways than one. With the backing of our new sponsor, we are once again running the administration of the competition electronically, with competitors and teachers being notified of their rounds and motions via email and text alert. All details of rounds, results, timetables and further resources for competitors can be found at our website, [www.irishschoolsdebating.com](http://www.irishschoolsdebating.com). We hope this system will make it easier for those taking part to access information about the competition at their convenience.

We would encourage all competitors and teachers to read this booklet in its entirety and to pay our website a visit, where further help can be found. There is no secondary level competition of any kind that compares to the Denny All-Ireland Schools Debating Competition, and we hope that you find it both rewarding and enjoyable.

Go n-éirí libh,

**Irwin Gill**

Leinster Schools' Convenor  
Literary and Historical Society  
University College Dublin

**Bartley Rock**

Leinster Schools' Convenor  
College Historical Society  
Trinity College Dublin

**Siobhan Greaney**

Munster Schools' Convenor  
Cork Philosophical Society  
University College Cork

**Roisín McGrogan**

West of Ireland Schools' Convenor  
Literary and Debating Society  
NUI Galway

# Teachers' Section

## Competition Format

The Denny All-Ireland Schools' Debating competition is the largest debating competition, at any level, in Ireland. The competition offers students, through its three regional rounds, an excellent chance to develop their communication, analytical and interpersonal skills, while also having some fun along the way.

Normally two teams of two persons may be selected to represent each school, but numbers allowing a third team may be allowed to enter. There will be several knock-out rounds in each region culminating in regional finals. A team and an individual from each of these three finals, along with the best runners up will then qualify for the All-Ireland Final, also sponsored by Denny.

## Some Details to Note

1. This year, the administration for the competition will be run almost entirely electronically. Application forms are now available to download from <http://www.irishschoolsdebating.com>. Simply download the form, fill it out, and post it back to your regional convenor. All further correspondence will be via email with a concurrent text message being sent to the nominated number. It is crucial that the email address and mobile telephone number given on the application form are valid and in regular use. Details of rounds will also be posted on our website.
2. A strict deadline for the receipt of application forms will be enforced this year. Target schedules for the entire competition can be viewed on our website, [www.irishschoolsdebating.com](http://www.irishschoolsdebating.com). Those applications received after the deadline will only be accepted if due to exceptional circumstances.
3. Teachers are requested to inform the convenors **five working days** in advance if a team from their school is unable to attend a scheduled debate. Schools will receive order papers via email, five working days before a debate is due to take place.

## General Rules & Regulations

1. Teams of two persons may enter the competition but individuals will also progress to the later rounds.
2. There shall be a maximum of **three** entries per school.
3. Entrants must be 19 years of age or under on September 1st 2005
4. Substitutions may be made in teams subject to the condition that no competitor may represent two teams in the competition, and the discretion of the convenors.
5. The chair for all debates shall be appointed by the convenors.
6. Adjudication of each round shall be by a panel of the least three adjudicators to be appointed by the convenors.
7. Any team or individual not present when called to speak may be eliminated from the competition at the discretion of the convenors or a representative. Teams who cannot speak as scheduled are asked to inform the convenors at least five working days in advance of the debate.
8. In event of any dispute, the decision of the convenors or the convenors' representative shall be binding. The decision of the convenors in all matters and at all stages of the competition shall be final.

# Standing Orders

## Conduct of the Meeting

1. All speeches must be via the Chair.
2. The decision of the Chair will be final in all matters pertaining to the operation and the interpretation of these Standing Orders.
3. All members of the host society and of any school represented in the debate, or any guest and/or supporter thereof, shall be deemed to be a member of the house.
4.
  - i) Speeches shall be of five minutes duration in the first round and seven minutes duration in the subsequent rounds. Longer speeches will incur time penalties.
  - ii) The timekeeper shall give a time signal at the end of the first minute, at the end of the fourth minute (first round debates)/sixth minute (all other rounds) and every thirty seconds thereafter.
  - iii) The Chair may advise speakers to conclude if they speak for more than their allotted time.
5.
  - i) The Chair shall call on speakers first for and then against the motion in order that they appear on the order paper. Should there be an imbalance in the order paper, dummy speakers may be called upon to speak to ensure that the order is maintained.
  - ii) The Chair and the adjudicators may, in exceptional circumstances, dummy speak.
6. Under no circumstances may a debate open with an opposition speech.

## Points of Information

7.
  - i) Points of Information may be offered between the first and the second bells in each speech, i.e. after the first minute and before the last minute of each speech.
  - ii) Points of Information may only be offered to the speaker at the podium by a member of the opposite side.
  - iii) The Chair will declare out of order points not made in accordance with i) and ii) above
8.
  - i) A point of information shall consist of brief (15 seconds max), relevant information sought from or offered to the speaker of the floor by another speaker in the debate.
  - ii) A speaker when offering information will stand, raise one hand and clearly state "On a point of Information".
  - iii) The speaker at the podium shall politely either accept or refuse the Point of Information.

9. i) The chair may disallow any Point of Information if he/she considers it to be an abuse of privilege or if the speaker is not being given a chance to proceed with his/her speech.
- ii) Special arrangement for dummy speakers and points of information shall, if necessary, be made by the Chair and announced at the start of the debate.
10. i) A Point of Information may only be offered to the speaker on the floor. It may not be offered to the Chair or any other official.
- ii) A Point of Order relating to the debates proceedings may be offered by the Chair.

## End of Competitive Debate

11. When the competitive debate concludes there shall be a period of open debate. The Chair shall call upon the adjudicators to retire, declare the motion "Open to the House", and call for all speakers to propose and oppose the motion. All members of the house may participate in the debate by delivering speeches or offering Points of Information.
12. i) There shall be a three minute time limit on any speech during the period when the motion is open to the house.
- ii) Speakers may speak more than once during the open period subject to the regulation by the Chair in the interests of good order and debate.
- iii) Any person wishing to speak in the open period shall first raise his/her hand and await the Chair's signal to speak. He/She shall state whether he/she speaks for or against the motion.
13. On return of the adjudicators, the open period shall end and the Chair shall call upon the Chief Adjudicator to deliver the verdict. The Chair shall then call for a vote on the motion either by an acclamation or by a show of hands.
14. At the conclusion of the meeting the Chair shall formally close the meeting by announcing "the House now stands adjourned".
15. Any matter not expressly dealt with in these standing Orders shall be resolved by the decision of the Chair having due regard to the maintenance of proper order, good debate, and the purposes of the competition.

# Students' Section

## Message from the Convenors

Dear Student,

On behalf of all those involved we wish you a very warm welcome to this year's Denny All Ireland Schools' Debating Competition. As the biggest and best competition of its kind in Ireland (with over 700 students participating last year) we are sure that every one of its debates will be an enjoyable experience that will test and improve your debating skills.

Debating is not simply about natural ability; it is about experience, preparation and practice. We hope this competition will help you achieve all of these things. Remember, there are valuable lessons to be learned even in defeat, often from your competitors: after all, some of the best student speakers in Ireland participate in this competition. Never be too critical of yourself after a debate; and instead enjoy the experience and remember to stay involved by attending later rounds even if you are no longer in the competition.

As former participants in this competition we appreciate how difficult and demanding the competition is. You are developing your rhetoric skills and increasing your knowledge of a broad range of important issues at the same time. We hope that this Students' Section gives you valuable tips on how to construct a speech and helps develop your self-confidence in your debating ability.

We hope that over the next few months you gain more self-confidence, become more articulate and above all that you enjoy mixing with the students from other schools and of course the students from TCD, UCD, UCC and NUIG. The mark of university level debating is this combination of social and intellectual elements, entertainment and education.

For many of you this may be your first contact with the Hist (Trinity), the L&H (UCD), the Lit&Deb (NUIG) and the Philosph (UCC). These are the largest societies of their kind in Ireland. Our four societies which organise the competition, have long and impressive histories and have, in recent years, attracted between them F.W. de Clerk, An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, Mary Robinson and Jeremy Irons.

We wish all this year's entrants the best of luck.

**Enjoy!**

### **Irwin Gill**

Literary & Historical Society  
University College Dublin

### **Siobhan Greaney**

Munster Schools' Convenor  
Cork Philosophical Society  
University College Cork

### **Bartley Rock**

College Historical Society  
Trinity College Dublin

### **Roisin McGrogan**

West of Ireland Schools' Convenor  
Literary and Debating Society  
NUI Galway

# Guidelines for Debaters

## Content

This will be the backbone of your speech. Ask yourself what the real issue of the debate is and what the main arguments are. Remember, the adjudicators have to be supplied not only with the information about the topic, but with the arguments that support what you and your team-mate will say. The former will reflect what research you have carried out and the latter will indicate how you have fashioned the material so as to convince the adjudicators that your side is the correct one to support.

All speakers must analyse the motion clearly and define the issues, but this is particularly important if you find yourself speaking early on in the debate. If you are one of the first speakers make sure you let the audience and the adjudicators know exactly what is being discussed, and please heed this note of caution: If given a motion which is not clear, do not play on words or liberally interpret it to get a motion you would rather debate. If material is not relevant then it does not qualify as content.

If you find yourself proposing a motion you are adamantly opposed to, don't panic. Use it to your advantage by anticipating the oppositions' arguments. You do not need to believe in what you are saying, you need only convince the adjudicators that you do. In the words of Lord Macaulay; "The object of oratory alone is not truth, but persuasion".

Originality is, however, always welcomed. An extreme or unconventional argument, if relevant, can add greatly to the debate and the understanding of the issues, particularly when thought has gone into the argument presented. One further and crucial aspect looked for is a clear structure in your speech. Your speech should have a beginning, middle and end. At the beginning of your speech you should clearly let the audience and adjudicators know what you will be arguing in your speech. Then proceed to argue your points. This will be the bulk of your speech. Finally, recap what it is you have argued. In this way, when a speaker clearly signposts their arguments, their arguments tend to take on a logical sequence, leading the audience to the conclusion you want them to reach and to a conclusion which will be lasting and impressionable.

## Rebuttal

Rebuttal is what distinguishes debating from public speaking. This is where you and your team-mate's views will be challenged and tested, and where you will be given the opportunity to attack and overturn what a previous speaker has said. It goes far beyond asserting that the opposition is wrong- you must tell us why they are wrong.

Rebuttal which flows in and out of your speech is more effective than spending the first or last minute listing your grievances with the opposition's arguments. Ideally rebuttal should not only weaken an opposition point, but strengthen one of your own. This is a skill you will develop the more you debate, but to start you could try using one of the points in your speech as the basis of your rebuttal.

Rebuttal is also an area which can be cleverly prepared for. Avoid memorising perfect word answers and relies, but do spend some time thinking about the other side of the debate so that you might predict what is likely to be argued, and hence be prepared to reply.

*"That is the whole secret of successful fighting. Get your enemy at a disadvantage; and never on any account, fight him on equal terms".*

If you do get into the spirit of the contest as opposed to merely offering prepared speech, you will be rewarded. Taking on the opposition is an essential element in a debate and the marks allocated here reflect its importance.

## Delivery

All your work, effort and practice will come to fruition or decay in the delivery of your speech. It is here that you impart what you believe to the audience. The basic point to remember is that you are communicating. You must speak to the people present. The following are a few of the chief areas where delivery can succeed or fail.

- **Eye contact**

This is the basic point in any delivery. If your head is not up, if your eyes are not looking at the audience and meeting their eyes as they watch you then you are not communicating and your speech will be wasted.

- **Notes**

If you are using notes as a guide you should use them as unobtrusively as possible. Don't bounce your head up and down at ten second intervals. Refer to your notes only when you have to.

- **Enjoyment**

Above all else if you want to impress an audience then you should appear to be confident and enjoying yourself.

Remember that your delivery starts at the moment the Chair calls you. From then until you sit down the eyes of the audience are on you. At the end don't return to your seat shaking your head and muttering under your breath.

During your speech look confident, smile and enjoy yourself! It will rub off on the audience.

"Begin low, speak slowly; take fire, rise higher;  
when most impressed be self possessed;  
at the end wax warm, and sit down in a storm."

Anonymous

Go for it with confidence and style and you won't go far wrong.

## Participation

The debate involves more than the speech you deliver, you are also expected to contribute on an ongoing basis via points of information. This category is intended to reward those who have gone about their own preparation and are able to react quickly when they spot a fact or argument they believe to be suspect, or alternatively a speaker who accepts a point of information and manages to overturn it on the spot. As many people are unsure how to approach Points of Information, a later section will deal with this area in detail.

## Humour

Humour is always welcome in a speech and is particularly impressive if it is spontaneous and natural. Those who make an effort to entertain as well as educate their audience will be rewarded. Again a note of caution- telling "in jokes" should not qualify as humour nor should the telling of funny stories that have no connection whatever with the subject matter. Some attempt must be made to make material fit with the topic being debated. Humour is a valuable tool and used well can greatly enhance the impact of your arguments on the adjudicators.

**"Wit is a sword; it is meant to make people feel the point as well as see it"**

G.K. Chesterton

Do not labour over jokes and funny anecdotes, but do let your style and personality shine through.

## Teamwork

As this is a team competition both you and your team-mate have a duty to tell us what your 'team line' is. There are traditionally two ways of doing this. The first is for one person to deal with arguments 1 and 2, and the other to deal with arguments 3 and 4. The second method is where both of you address arguments 1-4 using a variety of material but coalescing into one 'theme' on the motion. Either method should be acceptable.

If you are the first speaker and you inform us that your team-mate will cover a given area then he/she had better do so. There must be evidence of a joint endeavour to merit a good team mark. You should be as au-fait with your partner's speech as you are with your own.

Co-ordination and joint treatment of the motion will be evident from a lack of any inconsistency, or contradictions in what both speakers say, and marks will be withheld where any such contradictions are present.

## Summary

| A good speech has:    | Good Content has:                  |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 Preparation         | 1 Relevance to motion              |
| 2 Good content        | 2 Clear structure and organisation |
| 3 Incisive Refutation | 3 Good analysis of the motion      |
| 4 Good delivery       | 4 Strong teamwork                  |
| 5 Natural Humour      | 5 Clearly proven arguments         |
|                       | 6 Originality where possible       |

So the three central qualities of any good speech are good content, incisive refutation and good delivery... and a little bit of personality thrown in for good measure.

## Refutation

### Points of Information

Simply put, a Point of Information consists of asking the speaker on the floor for some further relevant information, or in offering to the speaker information which concerns what he/she has said. However, there are certain basic points to keep in mind.

- i. Speakers must rise and announce that they wish to offer information.
- ii. The speaker on the floor may either accept or reject the offer.
- iii. If rejected, the speaker must immediately retake his/her seat.
- iv. If accepted, the information must be short.

Information can take different forms. Examples of the types of things which might be included follow.

- a. A fact or figure not mentioned by the speaker which weakens his/her argument can be pointed out.
- b. A contradictory conclusion which could follow from his/her arguments is pointed out.
- c. A humorous idea following from what he/she said is pointed out.
- d. An inconsistency between the speakers on a team is pointed out.
- e. The relevance of arguments can be questioned.

**Remember:** good overall refutation should attack the main arguments of the opposition, not just the peripheral ones.

There are two basic areas which must be dealt with in discussing Points of Information, offering them and receiving them.

## Offering Information:

The timing of Points of Information is essential. Practice will of course be the best indicator of when to give or take information but there are some general rules to follow.

- Never offer information just for the sake of it or to break into a speaker's train of thought.
- Never give a Point of Information immediately after one has been given by someone else or while the speaker is replying to the previous point.
- Neither should one be given just after the speaker has refused to take someone else's.
- The above 'barracking' of a speaker will make a very poor impression on adjudicators.
- Points of Information should not last more than fifteen seconds and should be clear and precise.
- Do not begin a conversation with the speaker under **any** circumstances even if they question you when you have finished giving your information.

The **best guideline** is to offer information just after the speaker has finished a particular point, assertion or argument.

Points of Information are a gamble. If you offer good information which undermines what a speaker is saying you will be marked well by the adjudicators. On the other hand a speaker who handles your information will make a very good impression. Be warned therefore to ensure your information is sound and well phrased.

Giving good information tells the audience and judges that a speaker has more to offer than the prepared text. The offering of points of information is not an optional extra for anyone serious about getting through to the next round. It is essential.

Finally, for the giver, a vital piece of advice. The speaker on the floor has the option to accept or refuse the information offered. If the speaker refuses there is **nothing** to be gained by muttering or waving your hands in the air trying to convince the whole world that you are being denied the chance of a lifetime - just sit down and focus on the debate!

## Receiving Information

Knowing how to handle good information when offered is as important as knowing how to give it. If a speaker has prepared well and has a good knowledge of the area under discussion he/she need have no real fear of points of information. Indeed, a speaker in such a situation should relish the prospect of information since in dealing with it well a very good impression is made.

### How many points should a speaker accept in a debate?

Once a speaker is seen to be willing to take information it is up to him/her. As a rule of thumb two in a five minute speech or three in a seven minute speech would be reasonable.

A speaker should choose when to take points. Remember when you are at the podium you are in control and therefore you are entitled to ensure that your train of thought is not broken. A tactic often employed is to say "Not yet" when offered information in the middle of a point, and then at the end of an argument return to the offered point.

There are times during a speech when a speaker is expected to accept information. When you have just finished a main argument, made a major claim or quoted a statistic. If you are offered information, then to refuse it can have only one interpretation; you are not quite as sure of your point as you would like people to think. If your point is strong and if you are sure of your arguments, then take the information, you should be able to handle it.

If you decide not to accept a point of information you should politely make this clear to the speaker saying "No thank you". Never leave a speaker standing, waiting for your reply.

## Conclusion

Points of information are therefore very valuable tools whether offered or accepted. Through them two speakers can really 'lock horns' and fight it out. If used properly they add greatly to a debate and heighten an audience's enjoyment of the contest.

**Give it everything!** After all your work and effort, there is no use holding back. Throw caution to the wind, go for glory and above all

ENJOY YOURSELF!

# Final tips for the debater

## When am I prepared to give my speech?

- My notes are clear and in order.
- I have the structure of my speech clear in my head
- I know exactly where quotes, statistics and rebuttals are to fit in.
- My timing is right.

## Check List

- I have my notes
- I have pen and paper
- I have a team-mate!
- I know the venue, date and time

## On arrival at the venue

- Arrive in plenty of time
- Take a good look around
- Go up and stand behind the podium and look down the hall
- Don't be put off by other speakers. No matter how confident and cool they look they have only two ears and one mouth and you are just as well equipped as they are

## Stay calm

- You are well prepared, therefore don't worry
- If you're getting nervous work quickly through your notes. It will show you just how much you know.

## Just before the speech

- Take a few deep breaths.
- Walk up with confidence.
- Arrange everything on the podium before you start.
- Take another deep breath and begin

## During the debate

- Listen to the other speakers and make sure you are au-fait with how the debate has progressed.
- Offer points of information.
- Follow the procedure for giving information.
- Project your views to a person at the back of the room.
- If possible address your competitors by name.

## Some don'ts of debate

- Don't be rude
- Don't use props
- Don't barrack
- Don't go over time

## Some useful sources of information

Below is a short list of internet sites, which in general, provide considerable information on a wide range of topics. Of course, there will be debates that will require information not available at any of the sites on the short list below. Nevertheless, we hope that you find them useful during the course of the competition.

*The Irish Times Website: <http://www.ireland.com>*

*The Irish Independent Website: <http://www.unison.ie>*

*The Guardian Website: <http://www.guardian.co.uk>*

*The Economist Website: <http://www.economist.com>*

*Times Magazine's Website: <http://cgi.pathfinder.com/time/>*

The Irish Times, The Indo and The Guardian all provide extremely extensive archive searches that can be used to uncover articles on specific topics. The Economist and Time are also on back-issues.

# Hosting a debate

We strongly encourage you to host a debate. It can be a great way of arousing interest in debating in your school and of getting a home crowd to cheer on your teams. We guarantee you, your participants, and any other students who may attend a most rewarding and enjoyable evening. All you have to do is complete the section on hosting a debate on the Application Form enclosed with this booklet, and we'll take care of dates, teams, order papers etc. Guidelines for host schools are included below for your information.

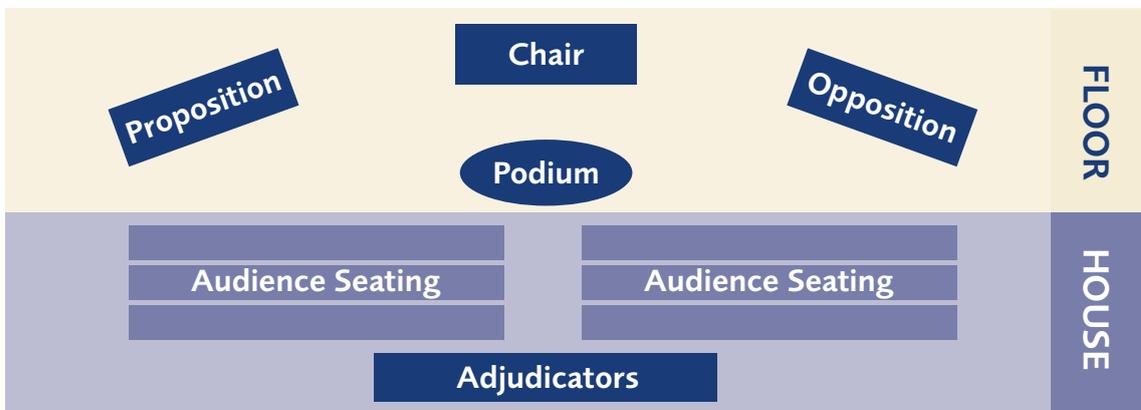
## Guidelines for Host Schools

### The Room

A room will be needed for the debate. A quick telephone call to visiting schools is advised to determine how many are likely to attend and the room can then be chosen accordingly. The room should be at a comfortable temperature so that speakers can perform to the best of their ability.

### The Podium

A podium should be placed in the centre of the floor at one end of the room, with seating for the Chair behind and to one side. The host school is expected to provide a bell and a watch (preferably digital) / clock for the timekeeper, who is usually seated beside the chair. Host schools usually provide a timekeeper, but if no one reliable can be found, there is no problem with the Chair doing this role also.



**The Speakers**

The speakers should be seated either side of the podium and Chair, with sufficient seating and table space. The proposing side should be seated to the chair's right, the opposition to the Chair's left; speakers should be seated in the order they will be called to speak. Water should be provided for the speakers.

**The Adjudicators**

The adjudicators should be seated at a table at the rear of the hall. They should of course be facing the podium and have an adequate view of all the speakers. The adjudicators' table should not be too close to the audience seating and it should also be ensured that people cannot stand behind the adjudicators. The adjudication panel will require a room such as a classroom separate from the main hall to retire in order to consider its adjudication.

**The Reception**

It is very important that students and their teachers have an opportunity to discuss the debate with the other competitors and the adjudicators after the conclusion of the debate. It is very important that the debate can be viewed by students as a social event as well as a competition. For these reasons, we would ask that host schools provide refreshments of some sort after the debate. These certainly need not be extravagant: a cup of tea and a biscuit would suffice.

## A Few Tips on Preparing Your Team

Every teacher goes about preparing their students for the competition in a different way and so what follows are merely a few ideas you may find useful.

- When you first get a motion have a brain-storming session with your team. It is important at this stage to remain open-minded in your approach to the topic and consider the motion from every angle. Of course you can then pick through these ideas for those most relevant to the side you are arguing.
- It can often help to divide the material to be covered in some logical way between the two speakers, e.g. micro & macro, social & political, national & international (to give some basic examples)
- It is imperative that students write their own speeches and adopt a style that comes naturally to them and that it is not put on for the debate.
- While letting students be themselves is vital, you should also advise your students to deliver a reasonably balanced speech. Teachers can attempt to provide students with a broader perspective and can quell individual desires to, for example, tell 'in jokes', or go on at length about an irrelevant 'pet' subject.
- Encourage your students to work together as a team and to come up with a common approach to the motion. The Denny All Ireland Debating Competition is a team competition and teamwork is always looked for and rewarded by adjudicators.
- Get your students to try out their speeches in front of each other and challenge both of them with points of information so they are thoroughly familiar with their argument.
- Remind your students that their speeches **must** be adaptable on the night so that they can address the arguments which the opposition have forwarded.
- As far as possible, try to give your students the confidence not to be over-reliant on notes. Speeches should be delivered to the audience not the podium.
- Make sure students have a look through this booklet, especially the Student's Section, which contains advice on writing and delivering a speech. If students feel well prepared for a debate, they will be more relaxed on the night, and this inevitably comes across in a positive light.

# A word from our sponsors

## Denny



This year Denny are delighted to be able to sponsor for the first time The Denny, All-Ireland Schools Debating Competition. Denny, has been part of Irish Family and community life since 1820 and believe it is only fitting that we sponsor this schools competition that has such strong community involvement and participation. We are also extremely happy to support a competition that helps foster confidence and interpersonal skills in young people throughout Ireland.

Despite the explosion of information technology in recent years, the spoken work is still and will remain the primary medium for the selling of ideas, communicating with families and friends and for making things happen in a knowledge based society. The competition successfully promotes the development of confidence, the learning of structure through processes and the overall enhancement of communication skills for all those who participate.

So all that remains to be said is go on give it try, no matter what you think your own abilities are who know you just might win!

Best of luck to all from Denny!

## The Literary & Historical Society, UCD



The Historical, Literary & Aesthetical Society was founded by the first Rector of the Catholic University of Ireland, Dr. John Henry Newman, in one of the basement rooms of the No. 86 St. Stephen's Green on March 9th 1855. In 1869, under William Dillon, the society became the "Literary and Historical". In its early days, the Society was the only platform for Catholics to air their frustrations in a country where they were a governed people with no influence. The Society was "always in opposition and never in power". As such, the L&H attracted much interest from mainland European Catholic empathisers, and consequently, the Society hosted numerous debates on an immensely varied range of topical and controversial issues – a tradition which lives on to the present day.

The Literary & Historical Society is no ordinary debating society. Its membership brings together people of diverse beliefs and principles; Thomas McDonagh, James Joyce, Vincent Browne, Antony Clare, Garret Fitzgerald and Pat Kenny. At one time or another, it has heard the voice of almost everybody who has been prominent in modern Irish Life; among them Pearse and Yeats, Connolly and Larkin, De Valera and Cosgrove.

The main function of the L&H is to provide a forum for the exchange and debate of ideas, views and options. In this regard, the Society prospered and thrived - the L&H is widely recognised as one of the nation's foremost undergraduate debating societies. It is also among the most successful; the Society is the only college society in Ireland to have produced both a World Debating Champion and World Public Speaking Champion. The membership of the Society may be heard competing at the highest standard throughout the world.

During term, L&H hosts at least one, and often two, successful debates each week. Its most important debates, however take place on Friday nights, when influential and prestigious guest speakers are invited to give their opinions on the motion for debate. In the past few years Lord Douglas Hurd, FW DeClerk, Richard E. Grant, Governor of Oklahoma Frank Keating, Murray Walker, Noam Chomsky and Rev. Jesse Jackson to name but a few, all addressed the society. This year, the 151st Session looks better again with another line-up of famous names and faces.

The Literary & Historical Society is once again delighted to convene the All-Ireland School's Debating Competition. The Leinster final will take place in UCD's largest auditorium and anyone present will have a first hand opportunity to savour the excitement and atmosphere which is traditionally part of the L&H debates. For those of you who succeed in getting to the final, you will have a chance to become part of a tradition that has seen the very best that debating has to offer. Either way, the committee of this years Session of the Society wishes you the best of luck in the competition this year.

## The College Historical Society, Trinity College



The College Historical Society traces its roots back to the Debating Club founded by Edmund Burke in 1747. It was then incorporated into Trinity College in 1770 and is therefore the oldest undergraduate debating society in the world. In 1785 Theobald Wolfe Tone was elected as Auditor and described the Hist as "a theatre of war and tumult". The Society later passed a resolution opposing the 1798 Rebellion whose leading spirit was Wolfe Tone. Despite this, College Authorities became increasingly irritated at the extent of radicalism in the Hist as Robert Emmet was also an active member at this time.

The Hist was expelled from college and after a brief reconciliation in the period 1810 - 1815 again tied to impose dictatorial restrictions on freedom of speech within the Society. This time the Hist withdrew from campus of its own volition. During this time Isaac Butt, Thomas Davis and John Blake Dillon were all elected Auditor, and it was during his Inaugural Address that Davis first publicly declared his nationalist credentials. Novelist Bram Stoker (author of Dracula) and Edward Carson were also elected as Auditor at the end of the 19th Century.

In 1904 the Hist moved to the Graduates' Memorial Building, purposely built for voluntary student societies to commemorate those members of the Society and alumni of the College who had died in battle. During the 20th Century the Hist began to come to grips with the first Catholics and women to be admitted to Trinity. Women were belatedly allowed membership of the Hist in 1969, the condition that "Men will walk on the moon before women will be admitted" having been satisfactorily fulfilled. Shortly thereafter, Mary Harney was elected as first female Auditor. Since then there have been two female Auditors.

The Society continued to grow in the 1990s. It is now the largest voluntary student society in Trinity with over 1,600 members. It organises weekly debates and social events as well as sending speakers to all the major debating competitions at home and abroad. The Hist has been addressed by every Uachtaran and Taoiseach of Ireland at some stage or another and is regarded as a highly attractive forum for politicians, academics and leading celebrities. Senator Edward Kennedy called The Hist "The greatest school of the orators". Among those to have addressed the Hist in recent years are An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, An t-Uachtaran Mary McAleese, Gareth Fitzgerald, Ken Maggins, Caoimhin O'Caolain, Senator David Norris, Valery Giscard d'Estaing, Oliver North, Bob Geldof, Dermot Morgan, Brendan O'Carroll, Tommy Tiernan, Germain Greer, Ben Kingsley, Joseph Heller and Jeremy Irons, to name but a few. The Hist is very proud to be part of the All-Ireland School's Debating Competition, and will continue to do so for years to come. We wish you the best of luck in this year's competition.

## The College Philosophical Society, University College Cork



The College Philosophical Society of University College Cork has recently completed its 155th Session and was founded by the Anglican Chaplain in early 1850. Presidents of the Philosoph have included Daniel Corkery, Garret Fitzgerald, Seamus Mallon, Peter Sutherland and Charles J. Haughey. In recent years, the Society has experienced tremendous success in competitive debating, with a clean sweep of the 1995 Irish Times Debating Competition and as an individual winner in 2002. The Philosoph is the only debating society in Ireland to have both won and hosted the World University Debating Championship.

## The Literary & Debating Society, NUI Galway



The Literary & Debating Society was founded in 1846 by the entrants to Queens College Galway. This makes the Lit 'n' Deb (as it is affectionately known) the oldest society in NUI Galway. As the student numbers grew from 800 in the 1960's to a present day total of 9,500 the society boasts the largest membership of any University based society in the British Isles or Ireland. In 1995 under the regal Auditorship of John Sweeney the Society set the World Record for the longest continuous debate. Members of the society spent the entire month of February debating on the motion "That This House has all the time in the world."

## Our thanks in advance to...

- Our sponsors, Denny, who have allowed this great competition to continue in the tradition that has made it so popular.
- The members of the four college societies - the Hist, the L&H, the Lit&Deb and the Philosph, who have pledged their time and energy to trek around the country in the coming months to chair and adjudicate the preliminary rounds of the competition.
- Last, but not least, we wish to thank all the students, teachers and parents, who participate and make this competition happen. Without their enthusiasm and dedication, the competition could simply not take place.