



The Rotary Club of Grays Thurrock

2026

Rotary **YOUTH**
SPEAKS **A Debate**
COMPETITION



INFORMATION PACK

Closing date for entries Monday 2nd November 2026

Contents

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| <u>Introduction</u> | <u>Page 2</u> |
| <u>Aims and Objectives</u> | <u>Page 2</u> |
| <u>Who Can Take Part</u> | <u>Page 2</u> |
| <u>The Three Stages of the Competition</u> | <u>Page 3</u> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Heats• District Competitions• Cluster Finals | |
| <u>Competition Guidelines</u> | <u>Page 3</u> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Format• Judges• Judging Criteria• Questioner• Prizes | |
| <u>How to Enter</u> | <u>Page 4</u> |
| <u>Competition Procedure</u> | <u>Page 4 - 5</u> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arrival• Arrangements• Chairperson• Proposer• Opposer• Chairperson• Proposer/Opposer• Chairperson• Results | |
| <u>Youth Competitions & Working with Children</u> | <u>Page 6</u> |
| <u>Privacy Notice</u> | <u>Page 7</u> |
| <u>Entry Form</u> | <u>Page 8</u> |
| <u>Judges' Score Sheet</u> | <u>Page 9</u> |

Information Pack for 2026 – 2027

Introduction

'Youth Speaks: A Debate' is organised and promoted by Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland (Rotary GB&I). It is a three-stage competition which is designed to support and encourage the development of effective communication skills.

Aims and objectives

The competition aims to offer young people:

- experience in speaking on a public platform as a member of a team
- an incentive to formulate ideas on topical subjects and to put these forward while being in opposition to another speaker
- discipline in dealing with a topic in a limited time
- the opportunity of learning and practising high standards of expression, presentation and appearance
- impartial feedback and assessment of performance by experienced adjudicators

It is a team competition with each team comprising three young people who take on the roles of the Chairperson, Proposer and Opposer presenting opposing viewpoints on a topic of their choice. They will then be asked a question(s) from a pre-selected member of the audience. The young people have 15 minutes to present their debate in front of an audience. Teams should note that Rotary International is a non-religious and non-party political organisation and this should be respected by competitors. Subjects chosen for debate should not set out deliberately to cause offence to others. Teams may choose to change the topic for debate at any subsequent level of the competition.

Who can take part?

The competition is open to all schools and college communities and those who are home educated along with any other young peoples' community organisations within the borough of Thurrock..

Each team will comprise of three students in full time education in one of two age groups:

| | |
|--------------|----------------|
| Intermediate | 11 to 13 years |
| Senior | 14 to 17 years |

With the age qualifying date of 31st August 2026, it should be noted that some intermediate entrants may be 14 and some senior entrants may be 18 at the time of some or all the stage competitions. (i.e. A competitor who may be 17 on 31st August but turns 18 on 1st September is allowed to enter.) **Competitors must include their age on the application form.**

Students should enter the competition organised by the local Rotary club through their respective group, as detailed above.

Competitors, school, colleges, and organisations may participate in a district that is outside of their geographical boundary but may compete in only one club or district competition.

The Three Stages of the Competition

Thurrock Local Heat

This local heat is organised by the Rotary Club of Grays Thurrock. It will be held on **Tuesday 17th November 2026** from 18:00 hrs. Joining instructions will be sent to all teams nearer the day (it will be in Thurrock).

District Competition

The 1240 District competition will take place at a venue and date to be advised

Cluster Final

The Cluster Finals are organised by several Rotary Districts together and are generally completed by end of March 2027.

Competition Guidelines

Format

Each team will consist of three members with each taking a specific role: a Chairperson, a Proposer (speaking for the motion) and an Opposer (speaking against the motion). The team should remain the same throughout each stage of the competition. In exceptional circumstances substitutions may be made, subject to the approval of the organiser.

The Team will be allocated a total of 15 minutes to present their debate. The timing of each part will not be monitored but it is recommended that both the Proposer and Opposer speak for 5 minutes with the Chairperson taking up the remaining 5 minutes for the introductions and summing up.

Judges

Judges with appropriate skills, appointed by Rotary, will apply the judging criteria and may provide feedback to all competitors. Teams may choose to change the topic for debate at any subsequent level of the competition.

Judging Criteria

The judging criteria and scoresheet can be found at the back of this Information Pack.

Judges will deduct one point for each complete 15 seconds over the allocated time of 15 minutes, and one point for each complete 30 seconds under the allocated time of 15 minutes.

The Judges' decision is final. Only in exceptional circumstances and at the sole discretion of the competition organiser will correspondence or discussion be entered into following the competition.

Questioner

The questioner, who shall not be one of the judges, will be appointed by the competition organiser. The Proposer or Opposer will be asked to respond to a question asked by the questioner.

Prizes

All competitors will receive a certificate of participation. Each member of the winning team of each age group will be presented with a £30 Amazon voucher and a trophy for their school/organisation.

After the judges have determined the result of the competition, comments and observations will be given by a judge before announcing the result.

How to enter

Please complete the entry form at the end of this information pack and submit it to the organiser, Mark Jones, at the Rotary Club of Grays Thurrock via email to youthdebate@rotaryclubofgraysthurrock.co.uk Entry forms should be received by **Monday 2nd November 2026** Please ensure you receive an email confirming entry from us.

Competition procedure

Arrival

Before each competition commences, the organiser will conduct a draw to determine the order in which each team will participate. This will be notified to teams on their arrival. Organisers have the right to adjust the order should teams arrive late.

Arrangements

A master of ceremonies will invite each team in the order of the draw to come to the front or to the stage to make their presentation.

The team should be led to their positions by the Chairperson who should sit with the Proposer on the right and the Opposer on the left. This is a team competition, and **each member must conduct themselves appropriately by being attentive to the others when they are speaking.**

A reminder that the team **MAY NOT** use any props, including power point. Nor enter a dramatic performance as this is a public speaking competition.

A system of coloured cards will be used to indicate times:

Green – start. Amber – one minute to go (14 minutes). Red – end of allocated time (15 minutes).

Notes may be used, however, their use should not be too obvious. If electronic media is used for this purpose it must be used only as a reminder of the content of the speech and not as a prop or as a live means of presenting or sourcing information.

A static microphone will be provided for team members to use. A sound test will be arranged prior to the competition. If any team member fails to use the static microphones and their words are inaudible, the judges will deduct marks.

The team members will perform their roles **in the following order:**

Chairperson

When the team is ready and has been given the signal, they are able to start, the Chairperson will stand. The Chairperson should control the debate. They should open the meeting and welcome the audience, introduce the speakers and their chosen topic. When the speakers have given their presentations, the chairperson should invite a question from the Questioner. After this has been replied to, the chairperson should close the debate with an appropriate summing up.

Proposer

The Proposer will put forward relevant arguments for the motion. The speech should be structured with an introduction, points for the motion and a conclusion.

Opposer

The Opposer should put forward relevant arguments against the motion. If possible, they should pick up on some of the points put forward by the proposer. The speech should be structured with an introduction, points against the motion and a conclusion.

Chairperson

Ask for a question from the questioner

Proposer or Opposer

Reply to the question

Chairperson

Closes the debate with appropriate summing up.

The Team will be allocated a total of **15 minutes** to present their debate. Timing of each part will not be monitored but it is recommended that both the Proposer and Opposer speak for 5 minutes with the Chairperson taking up the remaining 5 minutes for the introductions and summing up.

Answering questions from the questioner will not be included in the timing of 15 minutes but any answer should be limited to two minutes and this will be timed separately. A reply to the question which exceeds the stipulated time will be taken into consideration by the judges

A signal will be given to indicate that the Team can start the debate with a further signal being given at 14 minutes and a final one at 15 minutes.

The Team should not stop suddenly at the final signal but should be aware that time over the limit will be penalised by 1 point for each complete 15 seconds over the allocated time of 15 minutes, and 1 point for each complete 30 seconds under the allocated time of 15 minutes.

Results

After the judges have determined the result of the competition a judge will comment on their observations before announcing the result. These will be retained by the competition organiser for 3 months after the date of the competition after which time they must be destroyed to comply with GDPR and the competition Privacy Policy.

Youth competitions

The Rotary Youth Speaks: A Debate competition is one of several competitions organised by Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland for young people. Among the others are Young Artist, Young Chef, , Young Musician, Young Photographer, Young Writer, Primary Athletics, NVQ Leadership and Management course, and the Technology Tournament. To find out more about these competitions and other opportunities please contact your local Rotary club at www.graysthurrockrotary.org.uk

Working with children

Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland has adopted this statement of policy for working with children, the vulnerable and those with disability.

The needs and rights of the child, the elderly, the vulnerable and those with disability take priority. It is the duty of every Rotarian to safeguard to the best of their ability, the welfare of and prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect of all children, the elderly, persons with disability or otherwise vulnerable persons with whom they come into contact during their Rotarian duties'.

Privacy Notice – Youth Competitions

[For the purpose of this privacy notice, Rotary International in Great Britain & Ireland (RIBI) also includes Rotary clubs and districts and their members. The use of the term 'you', 'your' also means that of your child where the competition Entrant is a minor, i.e. under the age of 18 years].

Members of Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland (“we”) value the trust you put in us to process your personal information and will always be open and honest about the information we collect and how we will use it. We will never do anything with your personal information that you wouldn’t reasonably expect us to in relation to the Youth Competitions and we will always take every effort to protect your privacy.

The RIBI Privacy Notice is available on our website, www.rotarygbi.org, and explains how we collect, process and share personal information. This ‘Privacy Notice – Youth Competitions’ is supplementary to the general RIBI Privacy Notice and explains in more detail how you can expect your personal information to be specifically used in relation to the Youth Competition events.

How we use your personal information for Youth Competitions

1. We are collecting your personal information (and that of your child if a minor) for the organisation and administration of the youth competitions only, it will not be used for any other purpose.
2. Club, District or Rotary Public Relations Officers may use your personal information to make contact with you to discuss public relation opportunities and will gain your specific consent at that time for the use of your information, such as photographs/interviews for newspaper articles, club or district websites etc. Where the entrant is a minor only the parent/guardian will be contacted.

Providing your personal information to others for Youth Competitions

3. The personal information will only be shared with others that require it for their role/the services they provide for the organisation and administration of the youth competition events. Initially, this will be at club level competitions but should an entrant progress to district or national levels of the competition, the information will also be shared with those relevant organisers.
4. Depending on the Youth Competition, it may be necessary to share some of your information with third parties such as providers of venue hire and catering services. Under such circumstances only the minimum amount of information for the third-party service will be provided, i.e. for caterers, only the name and allergy/special dietary requirement will be disclosed, no other information.
5. Those individuals and organisations that have access to the personal information are also bound by the RIBI Privacy Notice.

Retaining and deleting your personal information

6. All reasonable steps will be taken by those concerned to ensure the personal information they have access to is kept securely and will not be shared with anyone who does not have a legitimate reason to have access to it in relation to the organisation and administration of the competitions.
7. For all youth competitions, personal information will be kept on file for 3 months after the date of the National Final for that specific competition. After this date, the information will be securely destroyed (either by shredding, incineration or deletion from electronic devices) at club, district and national level. This timeframe is necessary to allow for any disputes to be settled before the personal information is destroyed.

By signing the front of this form, you are acknowledging that you have read and agree to the Privacy Notices in respect of the use of personal information for yourself (and your child, where applicable).

ENTRY FORM - 2026

Please read the information pack before completing this form clearly. By signing this form, you confirm you have read, understood and agreed to the contents of the information pack. Please return this form to the competition organiser by **Monday 2nd November 2026** to youthdebate@rotaryclubofgraysthurrock.co.uk

| | | |
|---|---------------------|--|
| School/College/Organisation: | | |
| Contact person: | | Email: |
| | | Tel No: |
| Chairperson's Name: | Age on 31 Aug 2026: | Signature: |
| Speaker's Name: | Age on 31 Aug 2026: | Signature: |
| Vote of Thanks' Name: | Age on 31 Aug 2026: | Signature: |
| Please tick category being entered: | | |
| Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Senior <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Title of topic: | | |
| Sponsored by Rotary Club of: Grays Thurrock | | District Number: 1240 |
| Contact Rotarian Person: | | Email: |
| <i>Mark Jones</i> | | youthdebate@rotaryclubofgraysthurrock.co.uk |
| | | Tel No: 07967 516754 |

For any entrant under the age of 18 at the date of the competition, the parent, guardian or carer of the above entrant has given permission:

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| a. for the named person to take part and be identified in the competition. | Yes/ No |
| b. for photographic/video records to be taken and used for Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland (RIBI) publicity purposes in printed, electronic and online formats. | Yes/No |
| c. for RIBI, District and Club Public Relations Officers to make contact for public relations purposes. | Yes/No |

Not agreeing to b & c above does not preclude the individual from entering the competition.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-------|
| School/College/Organisation Contact | Signature: | Date: |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-------|



The Rotary Club of Grays Thurrock

JUDGES' SCORE SHEET

| Team: | | | Topic for debate: | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------|--|--------------------|-------|
| MEMBER | ASPECT | MARKS | POINTS TO BE CONSIDERED | COMMENTS | SCORE |
| CHAIRPERSON | Delivery | 5 | Effective use of voice, clear enunciation, confident and relaxed manner. Engage audience. | | |
| | Manner and control of debate | 5 | Polite but business-like handling of meeting, showing appropriate attention. | | |
| | Process | 5 | Welcome audience. Explain structure of meeting and introduce speakers and topic for debate. | | |
| | Summing up and close of proceedings | 5 | Invite a question from the questioner.. Close debate appropriately, including thanks to both speakers. | | |
| PROPOSER | Delivery | 10 | Effective use of voice, clear enunciation, confident and relaxed manner. Engage audience. | | |
| | Subject and Construction of topic | 25 | Content of the speech and logic. Develop the topic and demonstrate clear thinking. Show knowledge and understanding of topic. Conclude by summarising points and why you are proposing the topic. | | |
| OPPOSER | Delivery | 10 | Effective use of voice, clear enunciation, confident and relaxed manner. Engage audience. | | |
| | Subject and Construction | 25 | Develop relevant arguments to points raised by proposer, showing a knowledge and understanding of the topic. Conclude by summarising why you are opposing the subject. | | |
| TEAMW4-25ORK | General | 5 | Posture, stance, mannerisms, general appearance, observance of formalities. | | |
| | Question/Answer | 5 | Ability of Proposer/Opposer to answer question appropriately. | | |
| | Timing of presentation | | Marks be deducted in this section for mismanagement of time.(Maximum of 3 points) | | |
| Possible Score: 100 points | | | | TOTAL SCORE | |

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