



PHILOSOTHON



What is a Philosothon?

A Philosothon is concerned with big questions, questions at the edge of science and reason. Each school selects between 5-8 students to represent the school and together they explore philosophical and ethical issues orally. During the event they discuss four issues and the aim is to collectively come to a conclusion about the issue. The event differs from debating in that students are scored highly if they build on each others arguments. Students can also change their mind during the course of the discussion. University based lecturers in Philosophy award points on the basis of students critical thinking, collaboration and creativity. At the end of the evening medallions and trophies are awarded to individual students and schools.

A Brief History

In 2007 Hale School in Perth Western Australia embarked on a bold new project to promote higher order thinking among secondary school students. Since then each year the event has grown with many hundreds of schools around Australasia and the UK now involved. In 2011 the first Australasian Philosothon took place at Cranbrook school in Sydney New South Wales and was hosted by the Federation of Australasian Philosophy in Schools Associations (FAPSA). In 2012 the first Primary School Philosothon was held at the National Art Gallery in Victoria.

Why a Philosothon?

Philosothons promote critical thinking, creative thinking and collaboration skills. In a Philosothon students from different schools can agree or disagree with each other. The ultimate aim is for a group of 10-12 students to build a collective reasoned response to a complex ethical or philosophical issue or problem. There are often cross curricular links and students who might struggle with written expression find Philosothons a wonderful way to help them develop skills such as critical thinking, collaboration and creativity which are important life skills and an asset to any working environment.

Name _____

School _____

Email Address _____

Contact: Project co-ordinator Mr Matthew Wills (e) philosothon@yahoo.com | Ph: +61 (0)400 029 660 |

FAPSA Website: <http://fapsa.org.au/>

This project was made possible through the support of a grant from Templeton Religion Trust. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of Templeton Religion Trust.



The Federation of Australasian Philosophy in Schools Associations (FAPSA) is delighted to announce that it has been awarded a substantial grant from the Templeton Religion Trust to fund a philosophy in school's project from September 2017 to August 2020. The Project will further develop Philosothon in Australasia by growing existing Philosothon and supporting the establishment of new ones, particularly in remote schools and at schools catering for students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

The Philosothon Project was conceived by Mr Matthew Wills, the Head of Philosophy, Values and Religion at Hale School in Western Australia. A Philosothon is a competition that sees students engaging in a Community of Inquiry, seeking to investigate a complex ethical or philosophical problem in a collaborative manner. Philosothon promote critical and creative thinking and collaboration skills.

You will find links below to online application forms. Fill in the form and press submit. We ask for applications to be submitted by the end of November each year for the following year. Nevertheless we will accept and process applications at any time.

The following is a summary of the benefits from the Philosothon Project. Applications are now open on the Philosothon website www.philosothon.org

New Regional Philosothon: Subsidies are available for schools to help regional and remote schools cover the costs associated with starting up their own local Philosothon. This will involve other schools in their area.

New Philosothon: will be supported in cities that do not currently have one, including the ACT, New Zealand, the Northern Territory, Singapore, South Australia, and Tasmania.

Travel & Participation subsidies: Subsidies will be provided to assist students/staff who might not otherwise be able to participate in a Philosothon. This might be because they live in remote locations or because the school is dealing with students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Judges/facilitators subsidy- Money is available to schools to pay judges/facilitators an Honorarium to cover travel costs etc.

Teacher training subsidy- Money is available to schools to pay judges/facilitators an Honorarium to cover travel costs etc.

Training for Phd Students: Training and professional development will be organised to allow students to be trained in the Community of Inquiry pedagogy which, in turn, enables them to act as facilitators in Philothon.

Resource development: Teachers and academics will be recruited to consult on and develop age appropriate resources to be used as stimulus material for Philothon. A website will be developed to house these resources and enable access for all participants. Click here for an application form.

FAPSA is an umbrella organisation which seeks to enrich and expand philosophy education in primary and secondary schools in Australasia. It supports the interests of its nine affiliated Associations through professional development and advocacy initiatives, has an official open access journal, Journal of Philosophy in Schools, and holds a biennial conference.

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