



2017 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PHILOSOTHON

Prince Alfred College

ORGANISING TEACHERS

The following information is for organising teachers who have entered a team in the first South Australian Philothon. In conducting the Philothon we hope to raise the profile of Philosophy in secondary schools. We also want to provide young people with an opportunity to reflect deeply on philosophical and ethical issues fostering good critical thinking and communication skills. This is an important initiative and we thank you for agreeing to be part of it.

Schools are entering teams of 5 students, one student from each year level (8-11) and one reserve. 8-12 SA schools will participate this year.

The following information will help you in preparing your schools team.

- There are currently many hundreds of schools participating in Philothon events being held in each Australian state, NZ and the UK. The seventh Australasian Philothon will be held in Sydney this year at St Andrews Cathedral College. The winning schools from this year will be eligible to participate in next year's Australasian Philothon.
- The resource material has now been distributed to each school and has been placed on the Philothon website in the resources section.
www.philosohon.org

- Your students will need to familiarise themselves with the resource material before the Philosothon evening.
 - There is no expectation that students will have studied Philosophy and Ethics before or after participating in the Philosothon.
 - There is a small for participating this year of \$125 per school. This will cover the cost of food, water and other costs associated with the evening.
 - All students attending the Philosothon will need to be in their respective school uniform. (Also students from your school who are supporting their friends will need to be in school uniform.
 - All students, judges and facilitators will have a name tag provided for them.
 - The Philosothon uses a Community of Inquiry (C.O.I.) model of discussion. (See below for details)
 - Schools can use a reserve student on the evening. If the reserve student is required because another student is unwell and/or absent then the reserve student can only take the place of students in their own Year level or a year level higher than their own during the first two COIs. Reserves can replace any students in the final two C.O.I.'s on the evening. Also note that if the reserve student does participate in two of the four COI's their score will count towards the initial student's score. If the total score of the initial student and the reserve student totals a score ranked in the top three in their year level a medal will be presented to the initial winning student. The reserve will receive a medal if their school is placed among the top three schools on the evening.
 - Organising teachers will need to notify us of the names and student questions ASAP and at the latest by the end of Term 3 Friday the **29th September**. Any changes in team member names and questions can be made up until then. Please email these details to the contact address below.
 - Organising teachers will need to email their students questions on a template which will be provided mid-way through term three (each student will need to provide one question from each topic) These questions will form the starting point for the COI's.
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Event Details:

Prince Alfred College

The Piper Pavilion

Wednesday, 25th October 2017

5.00 pm – 9.15 pm

Light Dinner provided

FURTHER DETAILS ABOUT THE PHILOSOTHON

On the evening all participants, teachers and parents will gather in the The Piper Pavilion. Following snacks/finger-food there will be a short introduction and explanation of the format. Water will be provided for participants to carry into the COI's.

During the evening there will be four 30 minute "Community of Inquiries" for each student. There will be twelve groups of ten students meeting at any one time, all twelve groups will be dealing with the same topic and then moving on to the next topic after 30 minutes. **Group members will remain in Year level groups (8, 9, 10 and 11) for the first two Communities of Inquiry and then for the final two sessions the year levels will be mixed up.** Each Community of Inquiry will be assigned a facilitator to co-ordinate the discussion and a University Philosophy Lecturer will award marks using the attached criteria. Each participant in the COI will be marked separately, and these marks will contribute towards a final School score. These scores will also be tallied to decide Year level medals. Individual medals will also be awarded to the most promising philosophers. The attached marking regime will be used by the judging panel.

A magnificent trophy will be awarded to the winning school at the end of the evening and medals awarded to various categories. All students will receive a certificate to honour of their selection to represent their school.

Topics for the Communities of Inquiry:

2017 Philosothon Topics

Topic 1- Is it moral to create a donor baby?

Topic 2- Is the mind a physical thing?

Topic 3- Is privacy important?

Topic 4- Will machines ever become human?

The stimulus material for these Topics can be found in the resource section at www.philosothon.org

Students will need to go through this stimulus material and design an open-ended question which will need to be emailed to the organisers ASAP and at least a week before the event.

The judging panel will include professional Philosophers from each of the major universities;

Dr Paul Oppenheimer Adelaide Uni

Dr Jonathan Opie Adelaide Uni

Assoc Prof Jordi Fernandez Adelaide Uni

Prof Rachel Ankeny Adelaide Uni

Prof Gerard O'Brien Adelaide Uni

Prof Garrett Cullity Adelaide Uni

Martyn Mills-Bayne Adelaide Uni

PREPARATION

Here is a way of conducting meetings in the lead up to the event.

1. **Stimulus:** The group is exposed to a rich source of interest, intrigue or puzzlement or a new experience.
2. **Absorption:** Before anyone responds to the stimulus, everyone has an opportunity to think, absorb and reflect in silence.
4. **Conversation:** In pairs, the participants share their first thoughts and feelings about the stimulus.
5. **Formulation of Questions:** In pairs or in small groups, students compose philosophical questions which probe some aspect of the stimulus that they found interesting.
6. **Airing of Suggestions:** Once each pair has agreed on a philosophical question, the questions are shared with the rest of the group. Sometimes there might be an opportunity to explore the range of questions considering common themes, key differences, or presumptions.
7. **Selection / Voting:** The central inquiry question is voted for by the students. As the community develops they should explore and make explicit the criteria by which they are making their decision. E.g. A good inquiry question should be open; it should invite lots of different views; it should address an issue people think is very important; it should be a question that can't be decisively answered by asking an expert, doing an experiment or searching the internet.
8. **First Words:** The discussion begins with an opportunity for the person who composed the question to explain why it interested him or her.
9. **Building Through Dialogue:** Next participants are invited to build on what others have said by taking turns to comment on the question and the contributions of others. The person currently speaking (not the teacher!) chooses who speaks next.
10. **Final Words:** Finally everyone in the group is invited to reflect on the discussion and, if they like, to offer a final comment.

If you have any further questions:

Contact:

Matthew Wills, Head Philosophy Values and Religion

on matwill59@hotmail.com

0400028660

Basic Guidelines for Community of Inquiry

Be prepared for a discussion

One person speaks at a time

There is a need to ask questions

Deep listening is integral to the process

Give reasons for opinion

Check assumptions, reasoning, evidence – your own as well as others

Define and discuss points of difference as well as points of agreement

Ask others for reasons, definitions, evidences, examples, assumptions if necessary

Admit when you disagree with something that you may have thought earlier

Remember

Sense of community is essential

All opinions are respected

The discussion makes the pathway not a leader

Differences are a fundamental part of the process

Accept that others may disagree with you

Conflict and mistakes made in good faith are to be seen as opportunities for learning and growth.

This is a thinking process that can challenge assumptions and preconceived ideas

It may be that you need to change your mind

It is NOT about winning an argument.

It is about thinking more deeply about matters of importance to you as a member of the community.

ALL CHALLENGES ARE TO IDEAS EXPRESSED AND NOT TO THE PEOPLE EXPRESSING THE IDEAS.
