2027 Edition

Format Fremdsprachenwettbewerb BHS Englisch



Konzeption: FLORIAN WIESBAUER

florian.wiesbauer@hak-bregenz.at

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Introduction

This guideline is aimed at providing an overview of the dates, aims, and methods to be used in the 2027 Vorarlberg BHS English Language Competition.

Florian Wiesbauer

Date

March 2nd, 2027, 8.30 – 13.30

Place

WIFI Dornbirn
Bahnhofstraße 24
6850 Dornbirn
Room A 16 (Lefthand wing of the building)

Conditions of Participation

- **Teachers** must register contestants via the official application form by **January 26th, 2027**.
- Registrations are limited to **two (2) participants plus one (1) substitute per BHS**.
- **Students whose L1 (first language) is English cannot participate** in the competition.
- **New in 2027:** Students are **not** allowed to participate if at least one of the following conditions has been met:
    - Their **L1** (First language) or one/both of their **parents' L1** is **English**.
    - **English** is an **officially recognized state language in their country of origin**.
    - They have attended or are attending a **school** where **English is the primary language**.
    - They have attended or are attending **bilingual English school**.
    - They have spent an uninterrupted period of **four or more months** in a country where **English is an officially recognized state language**.
    - They have **won the Austrian English Language State Competition** in a previous year.



Requirements

To put their skills on display, participants will be given the opportunity to prove their English proficiency in a variety of contexts. As such, they must have sufficient command of the language to perform the following acts on-stage:

- **Introduce themselves** and **explain** their relationship with English in a brief self-presentation.
- Give authentic, spontaneous **reactions to visual stimuli**.
- **Participate in a group debate** about a given topic.
- Give a **prepared speech** about a given topic.

Topics

The topics chosen for this competition will be in line with the National Austrian BHS Curriculum 2014. As such, they may be selected from areas pertaining to **cultures, societies, politics, economy, ecology, technology, work and travel, the world of work, current societal issues**, and **personal experiences**. **Sample topics will be provided on pages 7-10.**

Procedure

- **Round 0: Introduction Round** (Self-Presentation)
    - **No preparation time** provided.
    - Participants will **all be on stage together**. The organizer brings a bowl on stage, from which the participants will **draft a starting number**. This number is used to **determine starting order** and topic choice for all subsequent following rounds.
    - Speakers will have 2-3 minutes to **present themselves and their relationship with the English language.**
    - **This round is not yet scored by the jury**; rather, it serves as a "calibration tool" for the jury to make themselves familiar with the overall language level of the competitors.
    - This sequence will last approximately **3 minutes per participant.**
    - After finishing their presentations, participants will be guided into the preparation area.



- **Round 1: Impromptu Round** (Reaction to Visual Stimuli)
    - Participants will be **guided back on stage** by the organizer one by one. **The order is determined by the starting number drawn in Round 0.**
    - Speakers will then be **confronted with an image**. They must produce **spontaneous language output** relating to this image and **engage in an impromptu roleplay** with the presenter. This sequence will last approximately **two (2) minutes**.

- **Jury Intermission 1**
    - Jury members will judge the participants based on the criteria outlined below. Depending on the total number of participants, the best **9 or 12 contributors will advance into Round 2.**
    - The jury decisions will be narrated by the presenter and visualized on-screen by the organizer.

- **Round 2: Debate Round** (Panel Discussions)
    - **Preparation time starts during jury intermission 1.** Participants are provided with the topics in a **staggered** manner to ensure equal amounts of time**.**
    - Participants must prepare in a separate back-stage room.
    - **Separated into three (3) groups** of equal size, speakers will **participate in panel discussions** moderated by the presenter.
    - Speakers must give an **opening statement** of around one minute that may not be interrupted by the other debaters and that outlines their stance on the given topic.
    - The topic will be introduced by the presenter. **Opening statement speaking order is decided by the starting number drawn in round 0.**
    - The presenter or organizer may intervene to ensure that proper debating etiquette is maintained.
    - The discussions last for **10 minutes each**. The presenter will ensure that all candidates are provided with ample opportunities for contribution.

- **Jury Intermission 2**
    - Jury members will judge the participants based on the criteria outlined below. Depending on the total number of participants, the best **5 or 6** contributors will advance into Round 3.
    - The jury decisions will be narrated by the presenter and visualized on-screen by the organizer.



- **Round 3: Oration** (Individual Speeches)
    - The speech topic will be given to each participant individually and in a staggered manner to ensure equal preparation time for all.
    - Speakers must **choose between two (2) topics** provided.
    - **15 minutes of preparation time** provided.
    - Participants must wait their turn and prepare for their speeches in a separate back-stage room.
    - The topic will be revealed to the audience by the presenter.
    - The speeches last for **4 minutes each**. Performance assessment will be based on the criteria outlined below.

- **Jury Intermission 3**
    - Jury members will judge the participants based on the criteria outlined below.
    - Subsequently, participants will be ranked from **last to first** based on their individual scores.
    - The jury decisions will be narrated by the presenter and visualized on-screen by the organizer.

Timeline

This timeline is tentative and may be subject to change based on unforeseeable events.

Time (Approx.)	Event Stage
8.30	Ceremony Opening Speech (Organizer) Introduction of the Jury
8.35	Introductory Speech (Presenter)
8.40	**Round 0**
9.00	**Round 1**
9.40	**Jury Intermission 1** (Break and audience activities)



9.50	**Round 2**
11.00	**Jury Intermission 2** (Break and audience activities)
11.15	**Break** (Preparation time for candidate #1 starts here)
11.35	**Round 3**
12.15	**Jury Intermission 3** (Break and audience activities)
12.30	**Announcement of Rankings and Winners**
12.50	**Closing statements** (Winner, presenter, organizer)

Assessment Criteria

- **Fluency and Interaction:**
  - Interaction with other members, adherence to debate rules, spontaneity, taking initiative, identification with a given role.

- **Language Competency:**
  - Range, register, situationally adequate language use.

- **Accuracy:**
  - Vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, intonation

- **Contents:**
  - Persuasiveness of arguments, coherence, cohesiveness of speech, coverage of bullet points, relevance, subject knowledge, variety of ideas and arguments, creativity.

- **Presentation Skills:**
  - Situational awareness, body language, recovery from mistakes.

The criteria mentioned above are based on the B2 Foreign Language Assessment Scale according to the CEFR.



Team

- Organizer: Florian WIESBAUER, HAK Bregenz
- Moderator: Bronwyn KONRAD, WIFI Dornbirn
- Assistant: Talula SEALE (USA)
- Jury Members: Amanda HEHLE KOEB (UK)
  Joshua VALONE (USA)
  Susanne DALPRA (Austria)

For further inquiry: florian.wiesbauer@hak-bregenz.at



- **Impromptu Round:**

Behold my latest invention! It is a cactus with an integrated spy camera and WIFI. How could we use it?

Candidate #1



- **Debate Round:**

Censoring Classic Literature in Classrooms

Throughout the existence of the medium, certain works of literature have been challenged by the authorities for containing supposedly harmful language. When Johann Wolfgang von Goethe published his novel *The sorrows of Young Werther*, the book was banned in multiple provinces due to its tragic ending. Today, it is rare for modern societies to outright ban books; however, there is a trend among Western education systems – especially in the English-speaking countries - to allow only "sanitized" versions of classic literature in classrooms. One recent example is Mark Twain's novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which contains characters using the n-word. Although Twain's message was one of inclusiveness and diversity (especially for its time), many US states have decided to only allow for censored versions of the book in their curricula so that students do not come across hurtful language. This begs the question: Is it good to censor literature according to modern standards, or does this approach damage the impact and message of those works?

(For reference: https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/jan/05/huckleberry-finn-edition-censors-n-word)

Discuss the following points:

- **Should states and countries censor classic literature that contains problematic themes, depictions of violence, or offensive language?**
- **Is it good to protect young readers from potentially offensive language, or should they be exposed to such themes with proper explanations?**
- **Who gets to decide what is and is not acceptable in literature?**



- **Oration Round:**

Option #1:
The Deepfake President

Thanks to technology, you have finally made your master plan come true: You have created a deepfake video of you winning the 2028 Austrian presidential elections. The video was so convincing that you are now being inaugurated as president, and somehow, no one is questioning any of this. To your own surprise, you are now sitting in the room where Alexander Van der Bellen held his inauguration speech in 2023, and you have 15 minutes to prepare a speech of your own. It must contain the following bullet points:

- **Address** all Austrians and **explain** how you see your role as president of the nation.
- **Describe** your plans for your upcoming six-year term.
- **Elaborate** on how you will be representing Austria internationally.

