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**B R E W E R**  
**FOUNDATION**  
AND **NEW YORK**  
**UNIVERSITY**

# WEBINAR: BUILDING YOUR CASE

How to make your  
essay stand out.

Sept. 10, 2025

# Goal of this Webinar

- Hear from past champions as they share their journey to submitting a standout Qualifying Round essay.
- Equip teams with the clarity and confidence needed to complete their Qualifying round essay.
- Provide practical tips and tricks to improve the quality of each team's writing and maximize their chances of breaking into the Round of 64.
- Address pressing questions and challenges encountered by teams thus far.





# On the Agenda

- I. The Qualifying Round
- II. Teamwork from the Start
- III. Resources & Essay Basics
- IV. Writing A Strong Essay
- V. Content that Shines
- VI. One-Voicing Your Essay
- VII. The Editing Process
- VIII. Final Review & Submission



CELEBRATING  
**25**  
YEARS  
OF POWERFUL  
DISCOURSE

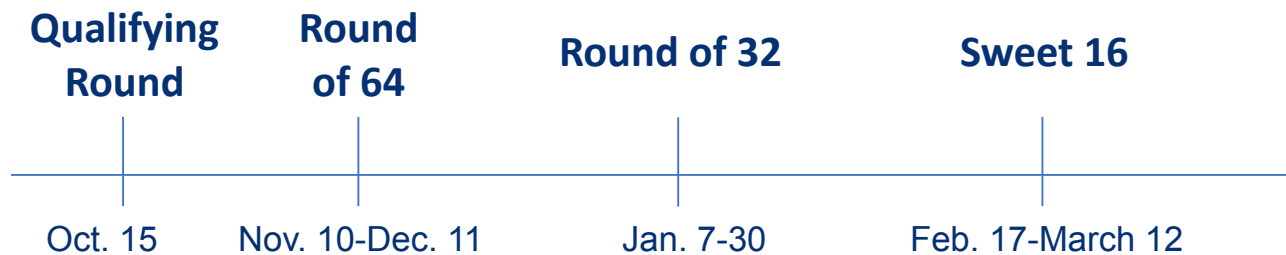


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# The IPPF

- Founded in 2001 by the Brewer Foundation and now jointly administered by New York University.
- The only competition that gives students around the globe the opportunity to engage in written and oral debates on public policy issues.
- Teams compete to be among the Elite Eight invited on an all-expenses-paid trip to New York City to compete in the IPPF Finals. There, the IPPF World Champion receives a \$10,000 grand prize and the “Brewer Cup.”



**Elite 8, Semi, Finals**  
**NYC Finals Weekend**  
Apr 17 - 19

Written Rounds

Oral Rounds



# The Qualifying Round

- Qualifying round essays due at noon CST on October 15.
- Teams must consist of at least three students.
- Essays should be no more than 3,000 words (excluding the cover page and Works Cited pages).
- You choose your side – affirmative or negative.

## THE 2025-26 IPPF Topic

Resolved: The Group of 20 Nations should levy a global education tax equal to 1% of each member country's gross domestic product to establish a dedicated international organization that supports the provision of universal, free, quality primary and secondary education.



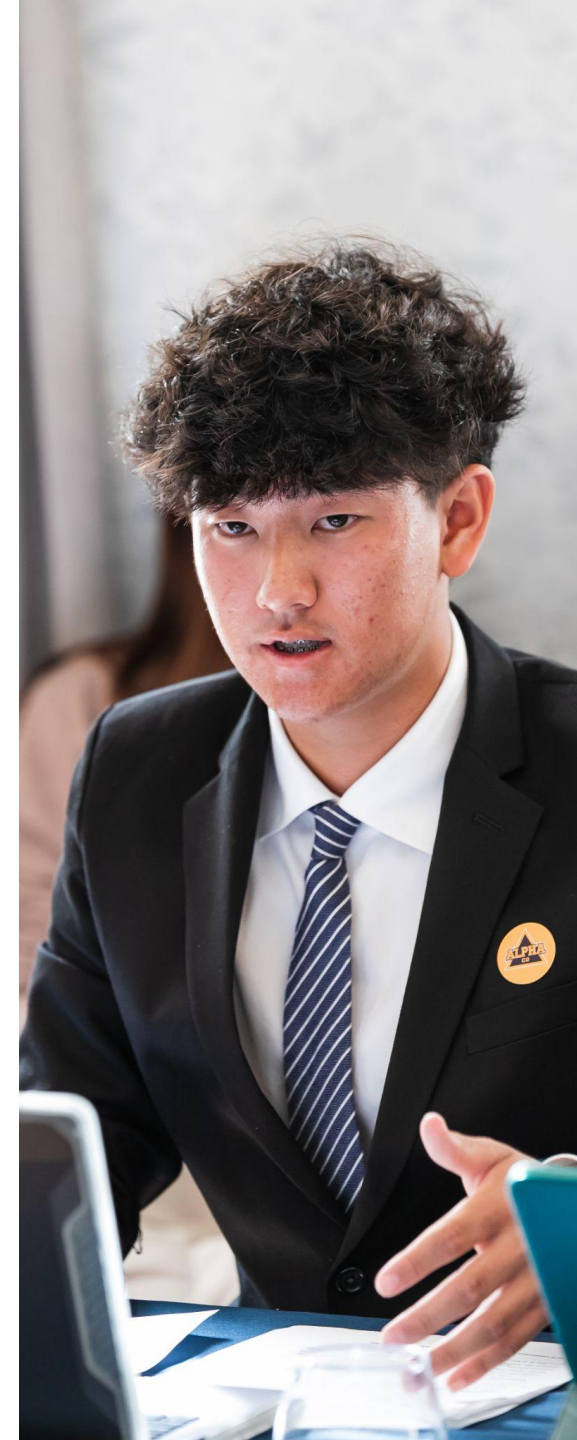


# Teamwork from the Start

- Identify a team captain.
- To stay on track leading up to the Qualifying Round submission deadline, build a calendar outlining each key phase of work. Set specific dates for when you will review, collaborate, and complete milestones.

## Sample Phases of Work:

1. Initial research
    - a. Reading the Primer, example essays, and conducting independent research
    - b. Selecting your position (aff or neg) and key arguments
  2. Writing
  3. One-voicing
  4. Reviewing
  5. October 15: Submit Your Paper via [ippfdebate.com](http://ippfdebate.com)
- System & Tools: Use Google Docs for live track changes.



# Resources: Primer

- Before selecting a side, read the **IPPF Topic Primer**, which:
  - Identifies key terms, and
  - Identifies areas of clash.
- Use the Primer for inspiration, but also conduct your own research.
- Consider setting a Google News Alert for Education/SDG 4.

## Aff – Growth & Development

A core argument in favor of a global education tax is the claim that education acts as an economic multiplier, generating long-term prosperity for both individuals and nations. Investing in education generates some of the highest returns in human capital. According to the World Bank, each additional year of schooling increases individual earnings by an average of 9% (Patrinos). In addition, the social returns to education, which reflect the economic value to society broadly, are high and exceed 10% at the secondary level (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos).

### Sources:

“250 million children out-of-school: What you need to know about UNESCO’s latest education data.” *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, 21 September 2023, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/250-million-children-out-school-what-you-need-know-about-unescos-latest-education-data>. Accessed 3 August 2025.

Table of Contents .....	2
Introduction.....	3
Understanding the Resolution.....	5
Areas of Clash.....	11
Aff – Growth & Development.....	12
Aff – Moral Imperative & Human Rights.....	15
Aff – Feasibility & Scale.....	17
Neg – Sovereignty & National Autonomy .....	19
Neg – Implementation Challenges .....	21
Neg – Political & Economic Constraints .....	23
Conclusion.....	25
Additional References .....	26

2025-26 IPPF Topic Primer

# THE IPPF TOPIC PRIMER



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2025-26  
IPPF Topic Primer

Group of 20 Nations should levy a global education tax equal to 1% per country's gross domestic product to establish a dedicated organization that supports the provision of universal, free, quality secondary education.

Dr. Matthew Munday  
Director of Debate at The Westminster Schools

Dr. Florencia Lopez Boo  
Director of Global TIES for Children at NYU

Carolina Rivas Herrera  
Senior Research Associate with Global TIES for Children at NYU



# Resources: Sample Essay

- Review the sample Qualifying Round Essay (written on a prior topic).
- Note:
  - Cover Page
  - Bold Face Sections
    - Introduction
    - Defining Terms / Framework
    - 2-4 Main Arguments / Contentions
    - Conclusion
  - MLA-Format
    - Double-spaced, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins
    - In-line citations
    - Works Cited Pages (in alpha order)

## Introduction

The migration crisis has exploded into one of the cardinal problems of the 21st century. Today, more than 258 million displaced migrants are in need of a new home (United Nations). Numerous countries have signed non-binding treaties, such as the *New York Declaration*, which promise to protect migrants. However, a small number of countries cannot honor these commitments as they lack the resources. As a result, many migrants “languish in overcrowded detention centers” and suffer numerous human rights violations (Sakuma). In these cases alone, we advocate for a nation’s self-interest to outweigh its commitment to migrants due to resource

impact current residents and migrants alike.

on properly, the affirmative will define a few key terms.

the Rights of Migrants, the term “migrant” refers to a taken freely by the individual concerned, for reasons of order this definition, “migrant” does *not* include refugees or therefore, the resolution is concerned *only* with people who r than of necessity.

of who are defined as “migrants” and “refugees,” the UN rks for each (Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Regular Migration). As per the *New York Declaration*, he safety, dignity and human rights and fundamental

## International Public Policy Forum Qualifying Round Essay

[School Name]  
[Street Address]  
[City, State, Zip, Country]  
[Phone]

On the topic:

*“Resolved: When in conflict, a nation’s self-interest should outweigh its international commitments to migrants.”*

Composed by:

[Student Name]  
[Student Name]  
[Student Name]

On our honor, we pledge that we have received no unauthorized assistance on this work.

Coached and Submitted by:

[Coach’s Name]  
[Team Contact Phone Number]  
[Team Contact Email Address]

Fukuyama, Francis. “An Antidote to Empire.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 25

July 2004, <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/07/25/books/an-antidote-to-empire.html>.

Gumiensky, Joe. *Self-Interest, National Interest and the Political Leader’s Responsibility*. 1 Jan.

1995, <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1531&context=rtds>.

Hall, Richard, and Bel Trew. “Thousands of Detained Refugees at ‘Serious Risk’ as Fighting

Engulfed Libyan Capital.” *The Independent*, Independent Digital News and Media, 12 Apr.

2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/libya-migrant-crisis-refugees-eu-a8865481.html>.



# What to Notice in the Sample Essay

## (And later in your essay)

### 1. Position Clarity

- How quickly do you know if the team is affirming or negating?
- Do they state it plainly up front and is it consistent throughout?

### 2. Definitions and Terms

- Are important terms defined clearly and early?
- Do those definitions shape how the arguments unfold?

### 3. Use of Evidence

- How well are graphs, statistics, or examples integrated?
- Do the transitions make the evidence feel part of one story rather than isolated points?

#### Introduction

The migration crisis has exploded into one of the cardinal problems of the 21st century. Today, more than 258 million displaced migrants are in need of a new home (United Nations). Numerous countries have signed non-binding treaties, such as the *New York Declaration*, which promise to protect migrants. However, a small number of countries cannot honor these commitments as they lack the resources. As a result, many migrants “languish in overcrowded detention centers” and suffer numerous human rights violations (Sakuma). In these cases alone, we advocate for a nation’s self-interest to outweigh its commitment to migrants due to resource burdens and economic challenges that impact current residents and migrants alike.

#### Defining Terms and Burdens

In order to discuss the resolution properly, the affirmative will define a few key terms. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of Migrants, the term “migrant” refers to a person whose “decision to migrate is taken freely by the individual concerned, for reasons of personal convenience” (UNESCO). Under this definition, “migrant” does *not* include refugees or any other forcibly displaced people. Therefore, the resolution is concerned *only* with people who migrate out of their own free will rather than of necessity.

Due to the different parameters of who are defined as “migrants” and “refugees,” the UN has also created distinct legal frameworks for each (Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration). As per the *New York Declaration*, nations have the burden to “[protect] the safety, dignity and human rights and fundamental

# What to Notice in the Sample Essay

## (And later in your essay)

### 4. Structure and Flow

- Is there a logical progression between sections?
- Does each argument build toward the conclusion?

### 5. Conclusion Power

- Do the authors restate their position effectively?
- Do the authors explain *why* their arguments matter beyond just winning the round?

### 6. Technical Details

- Note the format of the Works Cited page: alpha order, hanging indent.
- Are acronyms defined and handled consistently?

8

that birth rates and amounts of economic opportunities are the reasons for these disparities. Latin American countries have much higher birth rates and much smaller availabilities for employment than do developed countries such as the United States (Harms). Consequently, this makes it very difficult for their economies and employment rates to sustain massive inflows of immigrants.

**The Need for Borders and Nation-States**

When weighing whether a country's self-interest is more important than obligations to migrants, it is also essential to look at the alternatives and address negative concerns. Negative proposals necessarily embrace unlimited free movement for those choosing to migrate. This is infeasible — the idealistic view of a world in which billions of people participate in a single democracy and have an equal say is quixotic (Fukuyama). Geography and trade are also heavily adapted towards borders and the idea of nation-states (Rodrik).

**Conclusion**

While nearly all countries have an obligation to welcome migrants, the assumption that every country must do so despite the domestic issues they face is ill-advised. As shown in Libya, accepting migrants notwithstanding contradictory national interest exacerbates the harms migrants and citizens face. Pressuring countries in a state of chaos to accept migrants is irresponsible as only human rights abuses, dangerous conditions, and drained resources will follow. Moreover, an endlessly increasing intake of migrants ignites ethnic conflict, endangers migrants, and destabilizes the recipient state. Finally, many countries' economies suffer under the strain of economic migrants, as seen in Colombia. Migrants traveling to a nation whose national

# Write FIRST, Edit LATER

## Committing Your Thoughts to Paper

- Once you've started your research, focus on **getting your arguments on paper**. Don't worry about perfection or word count yet.
- For maximum clarity, your thesis should be a single sentence.
- Use the **P.E.E.L. method** when constructing individual paragraphs:
  - **Point:** State your argument clearly.
  - **Evidence:** Support it with facts, data, or examples.
  - **Explanation:** Show why it matters.
  - **Link:** Tie it back to your overall position.

## Cite as You Go

- Always cite sources as you write so you don't lose track of sources.
- [Easybib.com](https://www.easybib.com) / Zotero





# Content that Shines

- **Case Studies & Historical Examples:** Ground arguments in real-world events that feel concrete and memorable.
- **Current Events:** Show awareness of recent developments that make the issue feel urgent and relevant.
- **Comparisons & Analogies:** Use relatable comparisons to simplify complex issues.
- **Expert Voices:** Cite scholars, policymakers, or organizations to add authority. Ensure consistency of your sources.



# Content that Shines

## Persuasive Technique

- **Clear Line of Reasoning:** Each point logically builds toward your position.
- **Balance of Logos, Ethos, Pathos:** Blend facts (logos), credibility (ethos), and emotional resonance (pathos).
- **Storytelling:** Humanize the issue with a narrative, case, or vivid example.





# Content that Shines

## Technical Polish

- **Strong Open & Close:** Start with a hook; end with a powerful restatement of why it matters.
- **Smooth Transitions:** Carry the reader seamlessly from point to point.
- **Clean Citations:** Flawless Works Cited sections shows care and credibility.
- **Concise Style:** No wasted words; every sentence drives the argument.

**Bottom line:** A standout essay isn't just accurate — it's memorable, persuasive, and polished.





# One-Voicing Your Essay

- A strong essay should sound like it was written by *one author*, not a patchwork of voices.
- Judges notice when style, tone, or formatting shifts — and it distracts from your arguments.

## How to Achieve It:

- **Agree on Tone Early:** An IPPF essay is typically written in a formal manner.
- **Unify Language:** Use consistent terms, acronyms, and phrasing across sections.
- **Designate an Editor:** One person polishes the draft for flow and voice (who is your best writer?).
- **Read Aloud as a Team:** Listening to your words as a group makes inconsistencies easier to catch.

**Goal:** Seamless writing that presents your case with *one clear, confident voice*.

# The Editing Process

- Now that you have your thoughts and ideas on paper, it's time to refine your essay.
- If needed, edit your essay to get down to 3,000 words (the maximum number allowed). Keep in mind, your word count includes in-text citations.
- Polish the flow and strengthen transitions.
- Be on the lookout for spelling or grammar issues.
- Review the IPPF Evaluation Grid early and often. It will be used by judges to evaluate your work.

	Masterful (25-21 points)	Skilled (20-16 points)	Able (15-10 points)	Developing (9-5 points)	Novice (1-4 points)	Inadequate (0 points)
<b>Introduction/Conclusion</b> <i>Does the introduction include a focused thesis and identify main points that will be developed in the essay? Does the essay include a conclusion that brings the parts of the essay together and provides closure?</i>	Engaging and full development of a clear thesis; clearly lays out main points that are developed in essay. Conclusion logically links the themes of the essay.	Competent and well-developed thesis that represents sound and adequate understanding of topic; addresses main points. Conclusion demonstrates links in a logical chain.	Mostly intelligible ideas; thesis too broad and does not point clearly to the body of the essay. The conclusion repeats the major points of the essay but may not tie them to a coherent theme.	Simplistic and unfocused ideas; little or no sense of purpose or control of thesis. The introduction makes claims that are not addressed in the essay; the conclusion repeats those unproven claims.	Ideas are extremely simplistic, showing signs of confusion, misunderstanding of the topic; thesis is missing or not discernable. The conclusion is short and disconnected from the essay.	Shows confusion about the topic; lack of focus. Does not address main points that will be addressed in essay. No conclusion at all or simply an end statement.
<b>Ideas and Advocacy</b> <i>Does the author use analytical and writing tools to persuade the reader? Do the authors present original ideas rather than merely presenting long block quotations from source material? Consider the cumulative force and effect of the narrative.</i>	The essay advances the topic to a new level of analysis. The paper is a work of scholarship rather than a report. The logical flow of the narrative is persuasive and unique.	The essay presents a defensible and logical position — the source material effectively supports the conclusions.	Solid advocacy in most areas of the paper. The authors lean a bit too much on source material to support their conclusions.	Dependence on source material is excessive. The paper reads more like a report than a work of scholarship. Elements of good analysis are present if perhaps under-developed.	Reads like a report on the topic without any attempt to draw original conclusions. The essay may be on the right track, but the work lacks analytical independence.	Original prose is little more than connecting statements between quotations. Little if any original thinking.
<b>Research and Evidence</b> <i>Do the authors use credible, reliable statistics, data and/or expert testimony to support arguments? Do the authors include a variety of sources, rather than a limited review of the topic area? Do the authors appropriately give other writers credit for their work using MLA citation format?</i>	The authors deeply engage the topic and adeptly use a variety of expert evidence to reach unique conclusions. All sources are correctly cited using MLA format.	Ideas supported sufficiently; support is sound, valid, and logical. MLA format is followed accurately.	Main points and ideas are only indirectly supported; support isn't sufficient or specific. MLA citations are attempted, but some are missing or inaccurately formatted.	Insufficient, nonspecific, and/or irrelevant support. Many citations are missing or incorrectly formatted.	Lack of support for main points, frequent and illogical generalizations without support. Citations are almost wholly missing or there is no attempt to use MLA format.	Clear absence of support for main points. No works cited page.
<b>Writing and Organization</b> <i>Consider writing style, organization, and sentence construction. Does the writing flow logically with effective transitions? Does the writer use an effective voice that engages the reader?</i>	Organization is sequential; paragraphs are well-developed and appropriately divided; ideas are linked with smooth and effective transitions. Voice is masterful.	Writing is competent and organized. Voice is generally quite engaging.	Writing is good and the organization makes sense. While the form of the essay is predictable, it is also competently written. Essay may lack some connectivity to themes and transitions.	Acceptable writing style. The essay reflects effort but may also reflect limited experience. Paragraphs are nearly independent and the essay lacks consistent narrative theme.	Noticeable errors in basic writing skills in style and sentence construction. Significant lack of organization or appropriate transition between concepts.	Unacceptable errors in all areas. The essay reflects a less than serious effort. Entire parts of the essay may be missing.
<b>Vocabulary and Writing Conventions</b> <i>Consider vocabulary and writing conventions: grammar, usage, and punctuation. Does the author use carefully considered vocabulary? Proper capitalization, spelling and use of punctuation?</i>	Exceptional vocabulary range, accuracy, and correct and effective word usage. No significant errors in writing conventions.	Good vocabulary range and accuracy of usage. Few errors in writing conventions.	Ordinary vocabulary range, mostly accurate. Some errors in writing conventions.	Errors of diction, usage, and writing conventions are somewhat frequent, but do not substantially interfere with readability.	Contains many errors of word use, punctuation, spelling, and/or capitalization; errors interfere with meaning.	Frequent errors in word use, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors severely interfere with meaning.

# Final Review & Submission

## 1. Fresh Eyes Matter

- Ask a non-subject matter expert (a classmate, teacher, or parent) to read your paper.
- Have them highlight parts that are confusing, unclear, or too “debate-y.”
- Give them a copy of the evaluation grid and ask them to “score” your essay.
- Remember: Not all of your judges are, or were, debaters — clarity is key.

## 2. Play Devil’s Advocate

- Assign a teammate (or outside reader) to act as a sparring partner.
- Have them argue the *opposite* of your position, and use their challenges to sharpen weak spots.





# Final Review & Submission

## 3. Team Read-Through

- Again, read the essay aloud together.
- Listen for tone shifts, clunky transitions, or repetitive phrasing.
- Ask: Does our paper sound like it was written by one polished, confident voice?

## 4. Submit Your Paper

- Essays are due by noon CST on Wednesday, **October 15**.
- You can submit your essay through the IPPF website. Issues? Contact [ippf@brewerfoundation.com](mailto:ippf@brewerfoundation.com).



# What's Next

- Once submitted, your paper will be reviewed by a judging panel. Judges will provide a number score and substantive written feedback, which will be shared with your team.
- On October 31, 2025, the Top 64 teams will be announced and move into a single-elimination written debate tournament!







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