



LETTER CIRCULAR

Date: 17th October 2023

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To: Permanent Secretary, Directors General, Directors, CIO, Heads of College Network, Education Officers, Heads of Middle Schools (State and Non-State), Heads of Entities

From: Mr. Mario Muscat, Mr. Noel Harmsworth – Education Officers, Integrated Science

Subject: Thematic STEM Debate – (Year 8 students)

Heads of School are kindly informed that the Science Centre, within the Directorate for STEM and VET Programmes is organising the third edition of Thematic STEM Debate for Year 8 students. The aim of this activity is to engage students to become active critical thinkers and skilled debaters. Through effective participation in the debate, students will:

- examine ideas, reports, audio-visual material and policy documents;
- verify the value of evidence for concepts;
- recognize strengths and weaknesses of arguments;
- engage with opposing views and discuss opinions strategically.

This year's Thematic STEM Debate for Middle Schools will focus on '**Electric Vehicles: a must or a choice?**'. In preparation for the debate, student participants together with their mentors can refer to the document '*Electric Vehicles - Suggested Readings and Videos*', attached with this circular. Throughout the debate, participants can use Maltese and/or English to present their arguments.

The following criteria will be used by a team of professionals to adjudicate the debate:

- organization and clarity – main arguments and responses presented in a clear/orderly way;
- use of argument – response given to support the arguments;
- use of cross-examination and rebuttal – identification of weaknesses in other's arguments and ability to defend own arguments.
- presentation style – tone of voice, clarity of expression, precision of arguments.

The Thematic STEM Debate for Year 8 students will be held on **Wednesday 29th November 2023, between 9.30am and 12pm, at the Institute for Education, Pembroke** (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/1ermF9dMCExXqjuR7>). The event programme is attached to this circular. Each school can nominate **one** Year 8 student by accessing this link <https://forms.office.com/e/vwQfZwq8un>, by **Wednesday 8th November 2023**. The number of participants is limited, and registrations are on a first come first served basis. Kindly note that transport to and from the venue, should be coordinated by the participating school. Up to two accompanying adults per participating student are invited to follow the debate.

At the end of the debate, three participants will be presented with the *Top Debater Award*, each receiving a smartwatch provided by HSBC Malta Foundation. Certificates of participation will be given to all debaters.

Any queries can be put forward to Mr Mario Muscat (mario.muscat.2@ilearn.edu.mt) or Mr Noel Harmsworth (noel.harmsworth@ilearn.edu.mt).

Thank you for your cooperation.

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Director,
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