



Big Questions Debate 2025-2026 Potential Topic Overviews

There are two topic options for Big Questions for the 2025-2026 season. Member students and one chapter advisor per active school may vote for each topic one week prior to the topic release date. Topic voting opens July 25, and the topic is announced August 1.

Option 1 - Resolved: Religious belief deserves more protection from government interference than other forms of belief.

This topic strikes at the heart of ongoing debates: from legal controversies over religious exemptions in healthcare or education to disagreements about religious symbols in public spaces, the question of how much the government can restrict actions motivated by religious belief continues to spark controversy.

On the affirmative side, debaters might argue that the government ought to grant religion extra protection because it plays a unique role in people's lives, often tied to belief in a higher power, and offers a framework for understanding existence and morality. They may also cite international human rights frameworks that afford religion heightened protection. Alternatively, the negative side might argue that the government giving religion special treatment opens the door to inequality and potential abuse, especially if it lets people sidestep laws meant to protect others. They may argue that all belief systems, whether religious, ethical, or philosophical, should be treated equally under the law.

Option 2 - Resolved: Religious belief is a prerequisite for morality.

This resolution dives into the question of where morality comes from. Is belief in a higher power necessary to live a moral life, or can ethical behavior exist without religion?

Affirmative debaters might argue that religion gives people a clear sense of right and wrong, backed by a higher authority that encourages moral behavior through accountability. They could point to moments in history when religious leaders helped drive powerful moral movements, like the fight for civil rights. On the other side, negative debaters might argue that people can and do act morally without religion, using logic, empathy, or a sense of shared humanity instead. They might also point out that religious beliefs have sometimes been used to justify immoral actions, which complicates the idea that religion is necessary for ethics.