



**Taipei
American
School**



Taiwan Speech and Debate Invitational Toolkit

TOURNAMENT DATES: OCTOBER 9-12, 2025





A tournament unlike any other.

I acknowledge that when you have the first conversation with your administration about traveling 8,000 for a speech and debate tournament, you may not get the most favorable response. Planning international trips can be daunting - and there are many unknowns that can make some administrators uncomfortable. However, the value of attending this tournament and giving your students an opportunity to experience a new culture, learn about the unique position that Taiwan holds in our increasingly globalized world, and build international connections is too great to not make this experience available to as many students and schools as possible. As we reflect on our inaugural tournament and look forward to the 2025 Taiwan Speech and Debate Invitational, we hope that the information in this toolkit will help you earn approval from your administrators and plan a successful and enriching trip to Taiwan. We are here to help - if there is anything you need as you plan your trip, please don't hesitate to reach out!



Getting to Taiwan



FLIGHT OPTIONS ARE PLENTIFUL - AND THE PRICES MIGHT SURPRISE YOU!

With daily flights between the United States and Taiwan provided by Delta, United, Starlux, China Airlines, and EVA Airlines, there are a number of options available to you. And with advance planning, the cost is more affordable than you might think. Average round-trip ticket prices for east coast cities hover around \$1,200, while west coast flights can be as low as \$800.

Helpful information

- U.S. citizens do not require a visa to enter Taiwan if their stay is less than 90 days.
- If you have a student with a PRC passport, or a passport with visa requirements, TAS can work with local authorities to obtain approval (three months advance notice required).
- Flight options to and from Taiwan include both morning and evening arrival and departure times, which grants you flexibility in when you will arrive/how much school will be missed by your students.
- Our school travel agent can help you explore options - or Chase loves looking at various flight paths and is always happy to help!
- Our 2025 dates coincide with a U.S. holiday (Columbus Day/Indigenous People's Day) which will minimize school days missed in many districts/schools.



Hotel Accommodations



WE CAN BOOK YOU THROUGH OUR LOCAL HOTEL PARTNERS - NO MANDARIN NECESSARY!

TAS works with a number of hotels near the school to create room blocks throughout the year - including for this tournament! No need to navigate Taiwan websites or try to communicate via email at odd hours of the day/night - our phenomenal staff will help you establish your room block!

Helpful information

- Hotels in Taiwan primarily have two twin beds or a single double/queen bed. Sometimes, larger rooms can be obtained from a hotel, but these are generally limited.
- Nightly rates for hotels within walking distance of the school usually hover around \$90USD/night and wi-fi and breakfast.
- After our staff secures your room block, they will send you a credit card authorization form - so you can pay in advance and have peace of mind when you arrive!
- The neighborhood around the school and our partner hotels is extremely walkable and gives you and your students a great chance to explore!



Getting Around Taiwan



**TRAVELING TO A NEW COUNTRY CAN BE INTIMIDATING -
DON'T WORRY - WE ARE HERE TO HELP.**

From the moment you arrive in Taiwan, our team members, coaches, parents, and volunteers are here to make sure you have a great experience! And as you will find...Taiwan is a lot easier to navigate than you might originally expect!

Other helpful information

- TAS will organize airport shuttles for our overseas guests. As soon as you have passed through customs and grabbed your luggage, our welcome team of students will greet you at the airport and get you to your bus!
- The TAS finance office can help with currency exchange! We allow schools to wire USD to our bank account ahead of the tournament, and when you arrive at the airport, Chase will have an envelope of NTD\$ waiting for you! The approx. conversion rate is \$1USD to \$32NTD.
- While cash is prominent in night markets, convenience stores, etc. many businesses/venues will accept U.S. credit cards.
- TAS provides transportation for all of our cultural outings, including the full tour day and each evening outing.
- If you and your team want to explore Taipei independently, it's easy! Taipei has a robust public transit system including busses and an MRT. Uber and Taxis are also easily accessible.
- Taipei is incredibly English-friendly. Most signs in the city have English translations and most businesses and restaurants have an English menu or will speak with you in English. Plus, Google Translate can fill in any gaps!



Exploring Taipei



THIS TOURNAMENT EXPERIENCE IS SPECIAL - BECAUSE IT IS ABOUT SO MUCH MORE THAN ROUNDS AND BALLOTS.

We have intentionally built a schedule for our tournament that allows visiting teams to explore the bustling city of Taipei and experience the true beauty of Taiwan. And the best part is - our students and coaches will be your tour guides during each outing!

Other helpful information

- All overseas guests are invited to join us for a full tour day prior to the tournament. This exploration of Taipei includes the National Palace Museum, Taipei 101, and Chiang Kai-shek memorial hall. For 2025, we are exploring some alternative locations for returning schools.
- Each evening during the tournament, we end early enough to ensure that all schools at the tournament have the opportunity to explore some Taipei sights. In 2024, this included the Shilin Night Market, the Xinyi shopping district and dinner at Din Tai Fung, and the Ximending district. These outings may rotate from year to year to allow attendees to explore different parts of Taipei.
- Some schools in 2024 planned additional excursions including trips to Jiufen, Dihua Old Street, and the Longshan Temple. TAS students and coaches are always willing to be a resource while you are planning your Taipei outings!
- Taiwan is very affordable - giving your students the opportunity to explore a new culture and all that it has to offer without blowing the budget. For example, dinner at the night market can cost as little as \$5-10USD and include multiple items!



Quality Tournament Experience



A REALISTIC SCHEDULE WITH QUALITY FOOD, VIBRANT FACILITIES, AND TOP-TIER TOURNAMENT STAFF

Yes, our tournament offers amazing opportunities to students to explore Taipei - but we also are proud of the high-quality tournament experience that we offer to all of our attendees. It's possible to explore the world and get TOC bids!

Other helpful information

- We believe in maximizing rounds for all events, so we strive to run six preliminary rounds in debate when possible based on entries.
- Speech and debate is still growing in Taiwan and across Asia, so we adapt when needed. This year, that included moving World Schools to a round-robin format and hosting a speech showcase across events. Both changes provided students with more opportunities to perform and receive high-quality feedback.
- We work hard to recruit and hire as many high-quality judges as possible.
- Our tournament is tabulated by Mr. Chris Palmer, founder of Tabroom.com and our rules and equity process is led by Angelique Ronald, CHSSA State Tournament Director.
- In 2025, we expect to maintain our TOC bid levels in Public Forum (Finals), Policy (Finals), and Congress (Top-6). We also plan to apply to be an NIETOC bid tournament.



Convincing Your Administration



DESPITE WHAT THE MEDIA SOMETIMES SAYS...TAIWAN IS ONE OF THE SAFEST PLACES IN THE WORLD.

There's no doubt that there are headlines about Taiwan that can scare parents, administrators, etc. The truth is - Taiwan is very safe. Ask any local resident and they'll tell you that the headlines are just hyperbole. And the Taiwanese people? They are incredibly welcoming and will love meeting you and your students!

Arguments to convince your administrators

- The cultural experience that your students will have and the connections they will make with speech and debate students from around the world is a once in a lifetime experience. There's nothing else like it in our activity.
- Taiwan is vibrant democracy - the strongest in Asia - and provides a model for what discourse and discussion can and should be. This tournament is a fantastic opportunity to expose students to a different way of life - on the other side of the world.
- While there may be an initial concern about cost, when you actually break down the per-student cost, you would be surprised how affordable it actually is. There are teams that attended in 2024 that paid just marginally more than they did to attend larger U.S. invitationals like Bronx or the TOC.
- Attending this tournament is a fantastic fundraising opportunity! Reach out to parents, local law offices, etc. to see if they are interested in supporting this amazing experience. TAS is also working on some leads for the possibility of a grant program for the 2025 tournament.
- Missed school can be minimized - and the marketing value for your program and school/district is unmatched.



Advocacy Resources



WE RECOGNIZE THAT GETTING APPROVAL FOR A TRIP OF THIS MAGNITUDE CAN BE DAUNTING...LET US HELP!

The benefits of providing students with a unique opportunity like this are significant - but how can you convince parents, donors, and school leadership to support the trip? Check out some of the resources that we have compiled below!

Helpful resources to gain financial support and trip approval

- Administrator Sample Letter: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/13M9cGjt0-tG5yOluUqogN3R3TzUMWhFjX0C1U8aAnE4/edit?usp=sharing>
- Fundraising Sample Letter: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hrnMvZzZIFarL3UxEFXI90XAR9NiGhtvRDLM8Z1buZA/edit?usp=sharing>
- Parent Sample Letter: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M4LI2OVvcxpZeuKkOocdCdJwcy9GSoJCymp3_QUDa_s/edit?usp=sharing
- New York Times story about 36 hours in Taipei: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/16/travel/things-to-do-taipei.html>
- U.S. State Department's Travel page for Taiwan: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/taiwan-travel-advisory.html>



Testimonials



HEAR WHAT OUR 2024 ATTENDEES HAD TO SAY ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE!

"Roosevelt High School had a wonderful time at the inaugural Taiwan Speech & Debate Invitational. In addition to being a highly competitive academic event, we were impressed by the excursions (Ximending and the National Palace Museum were our favorites). Having never been to Asia, I was a little intimidated about the flight, navigation, and payments, but TAS couldn't have made it easier for us. We hope the tournament continues to grow!" - Parker Klyn, Roosevelt HS (IA)

"The inaugural Taiwan Speech and Debate Invitational set the bar high for debate tournament experiences in Asia. The competition was robust and our debaters learned, were challenged and rewarded for their hard work and preparation. We learned from the expertise at TAS, enjoyed the international competition and felt like we were a part of an important moment in debate history, especially for international schools. The experience was also balanced with excellent tours of Taipei. It was an action-packed trip and 5 days of learning and fun. Thank you for a great experience!" - Diana Sorobey, Saigon South International School

CHS Principal Ian Lyle is proud of the students for showcasing the school's excellence to a global audience. "The opportunity to travel to Taiwan and compete at such a high level helped these students grow personally and develop valuable skills," said Lyle. "We are thankful they were able to have this opportunity, and that they demonstrated the gold standard of excellence throughout the trip." - Carrollton HS (GA)

"As a principal I'm always exploring how to provide our students unique experiences that are educationally meaningful. When presented with the idea of traveling to the Taiwan debate tournament it sparked interest. After learning more about what was planned, I quickly went from being interested to being determined to have students attend. My students got competitive debate, but so much more. The cultural experiences embedded into this tournament set it apart from a traditional debate tournament, which made it uniquely educational. The experience exceeded expectations of my students and coach. Furthermore, the work of Chase Williams and his team made the logistics of traveling less intimidating to navigate. Everything was seamless. My only regret is we didn't send more students!" - Steve Schappaugh, Roosevelt HS (IA)

It was a career highlight for me and a life-changing opportunity for my team. When we travel, we rarely get to do anything other than compete at the tournament, so making time for authentic learning experiences was refreshing. If it wasn't for this tournament I'm not sure I would've ever visited Taiwan and I consider myself blessed. TAS were amazing hosts! Everyone was so supportive and generous and I'm still blown away at how many activities and events were able to fit into each day. The school facilities were fantastic, the tabroom staff was elite, the food was incredible, and the sight-seeing and tourism attractions were all the more enjoyable because we experienced it with other colleagues and debate community members. - Mike Shackelford, Rowland Hall



Building a Global Community

It is difficult to pick up a U.S. newspaper or magazine - or even walk into a public forum or policy debate round - without seeing or hearing a mention of Taiwan. Our small island holds immense importance in our expanding world and with that importance comes an excitement for democracy and vibrant discourse that is contagious.

That excitement is showcased in the diversity of people, cultures, and experiences that are present at our tournament. We know that there are big things happening in this world that may be beyond our control but through the powerful activity that is speech and debate, we find more that unites us than divides us. The power of our unique tournament is the opportunity to model for the world what productive discourse can look like - on an island whose democracy is still in its infancy. The free exchange of ideas and opinions that will occur at our 2025 tournament between people from all walks of life around our world is a testament to the resilience of Taiwan - and also to the students and coaches who participate as we bridge gaps between our cultures in such a magnificent way.

We can't wait to welcome you to our campus in October 2025 as we work to build a robust global community that is united by our passion for speech and debate and share the beauty of the magnificent island of Taiwan that we are proud to call home.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chase Williams".

Chase Williams
Director of Speech and Debate

