

Audience selection

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1. The objective is to select an audience which is broadly a demographic cross section of the country.
2. the audience to be made up of roughly 200 people, subject to venue capacity.
3. ICM has been appointed as an external recruitment agency and the methods of recruitment are based on their expert advice. In broad terms, we will aim to:
4. recruit within a 30 mile radius of the host city, mindful of administrative borders on either side of that radius based on the revised ICM list of constituencies.
5. recruit according to gender, age, ethnicity and social class to best reflect the broader voting-age population. The recruitment procedure will be transparent, and its methodology will be available to the parties for comment.
6. ensure around 80% of the audience is made up of voters who express a voting intention at the time of recruitment.
7. These will be subdivided into ratios which reflect a ratio of 7 Labour, 7 Conservative, 5 LibDem .The political ratios will take precedence over the demographic in the final selection of the audience by ICM.
8. within the 80% (see point 6) the broadcasters retain the right to recruit some audience members who express an intention to vote for smaller parties.
9. ensure that around 20% of the audience will be undecided but will be politically engaged. ICM's definition of undecided voters to be the basis of this selection.
10. reserve a small number of seats for participants from outside the ICM selected audience, whose questions have been pre-submitted and selected by the broadcaster's editorial panel. The broadcasters may use a variety of methods to encourage the submission of such questions from across the UK in the build up to the debates.
11. the number of questions from outside the ICM selected audience will be a maximum of four per debate.
12. over-recruit by a small margin to accommodate "drop outs" or "no shows"
13. issue audience members with a protocol of rules, including security procedures for entry and conduct during the debates. The protocol will be agreed by the parties.

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Audience role

14. The objective is to ensure maximum debate between the party leaders - the distinctive characteristic of these programmes - whilst allowing the audience's voices to be heard directly posing questions.
15. Each broadcaster will nominate a panel to choose the questions for its debate. The panel's membership will be public, but they will meet in private.
16. Each selection panel will include a member to oversee compliance. List of names of panel members attached
17. The objective of each panel shall be to ensure fair question selection in order to frame a balanced debate within the rules of our agreements.
18. The panel will meet confidentially in the weeks running up to their debate.
19. All questions submitted by the ICM selected audience will be seen by a member of the panel. Email questions will be sifted and a selection given to the panel.
20. Initially, each panel will sift through a selection of questions drawn from those submitted by members of the public.
21. They will narrow down their selections in a series of meetings up to and including the day of the debate.

22. Each panel will have five to seven members, including a designated chair who would have a casting vote if necessary.
23. The panel cannot be quorate with fewer than three of its members present.
24. In selecting its questions, the panel will take full account of the following:
25. each question will be relevant to all three party leaders.
26. no question shall focus on one party or one leader.
27. all questions will be based on election issues
28. audience members will be made aware of these rules before submitting their final questions.
29. half the programme will be based on the agreed theme. Within that portion of the programme, a maximum of three questions will be selected on a single sub-theme (as listed in point 65 of this document).
30. half the programme will be unthemed. In this portion of the programme, a maximum of two questions will be selected on a single subject.
31. the range of questions chosen will reflect the broadcasters' legal and compliance responsibilities for due impartiality and fairness.
32. the panel will use its editorial judgement to select questions and will take into account factors such as the prominence of certain issues in the campaign, the distinctiveness of the different parties' policies on election issues, voters' interest and issues relevant to the role of the Prime Minister.
33. Within these rules, the editorial independence of the panel shall be paramount, because each broadcaster is answerable to its regulator for its programme content.
34. Questions may be selected by the editorial selection panel up to the start of the debate.
35. The selected questions will not be shown to anyone outside the editorial team in advance of the programmes.
36. Members of the audience will ask their questions. The moderator will ask the leaders to respond. The moderator may read email questions.
37. All questions will be addressed to and answered by all three leaders.
38. The audience members will be restricted to asking the selected questions.
39. There will be an option of viewer involvement via emails read by the moderator.
40. In order to maximise the time available for viewers to hear the leaders discussing election issues with each other, the studio audience will be asked not to applaud during the debate. There will be opportunities to do so both at the beginning and at the end of each programme.

Structure of programme

41. the programme will start with all three leaders on set and standing at their podiums.
42. The moderator will have a podium/desk and will move within a small area to allow eyeline with the audience and the leaders.
43. The moderator will introduce the leaders,
44. The first half of the programme will be on the agreed theme but with the agreement of all the parties, in case of a major national or international event not included in the theme of the debate, the moderator will ask the leaders for their reaction to the development at the start of the programme before moving on to the theme.
45. The time taken for the reaction to such an event will be added to the time available for the themed part of the debate, unless the event is clearly part of the theme of the debate, in which case the reaction will be counted as part of the time allotted to the theme.
46. Each leader will make an opening statement on the theme of the debate lasting for 1 minute. After the three opening statements the moderator will take the first question on the agreed theme. There will be closing statements of 1 minute 30 seconds from all three leaders at the end of the 90 minutes.
47. Each leader will have 1 minute to answer the question.
48. Each leader will then have 1 minute to respond to the answers.

49. The moderator may then open the discussion to free debate between the leaders for up to 4 minutes on merit.
50. The length of the debate on each question will be decided by the programme editor.
51. The programme editor will use their best endeavours to keep to the 4 minute time allowance but it may need to be extended in the interest of equality of treatment.
52. Questions will be taken on the theme until around half way through the programme, depending on timing and ensuring fair treatment of all three leaders.
53. At the end of the themed period, the moderator will open the debate to general questions selected by the broadcaster's panel from the audience or via email.
54. The same timing format will apply to the general questions i.e. each leader will have 1 minute to answer the question. Each leader will then have 1 minute to respond. The moderator will then open the discussion to free debate between the leaders for up to 4 minutes on merit
55. There will be a clock indicating the time remaining for statements, answers to questions and responses. This will be visible to the candidates and moderator but not to the audience in the debate or on screen.
56. The order of speakers, based on an agreed grid, has been determined by the parties drawing lots.
57. At the end of the programme the three leaders will shake hands.

Role of the moderator

58. To moderate the programme
59. To keep the leaders to the agreed time limits
60. To ensure free-flowing debate being fair to all candidates over the course of the programme.
61. To ensure fairness on the direction of the programme editor
62. To seek factual clarification where necessary
63. It is not the moderator's role to criticise or comment on the leaders' answers.
64. The candidates accept the authority of the moderator to referee the rules on stage and ensure a free flowing, fair debate conducted within the agreed rules

Themes

65. Order of themed debates. The order of the themes for the first half of each programme was determined by the broadcasters drawing lots. The order is as follows:
 1. Domestic affairs including but not exclusively: NHS; Education; Immigration; Law and Order; Family; Constitution; Trust in politics; Political reform;
 2. International affairs including but not exclusively; International relations; Afghanistan; Iraq; Iran; Middle East; UK defence; International terrorism; Europe; Climate change; China; International Development
 3. Economic affairs including but not exclusively: financing of public services; Taxation; Debt; Deficit; Public finances; Recession; Recovery; Banking and finance; Business; Pensions; Jobs;

Set

66. The leaders will stand at podiums throughout the debate. The positions of the three leaders during the debates are to be determined by agreement with all parties.
67. The moderator will have a podium/desk and will move within a small area to allow eyeline with the audience and the leaders.
68. Each broadcaster responsible for their own titles, music, branding etc.

Audience cutaways

69. The purpose of the programmes are for the viewers to see and hear the party leaders engaging in debate with each other and answering questions from the audience. The audience is a key element of the programmes and has to be seen by the viewers but there will not be undue concentration of the reactions of individual audience members.
70. There will be a close up of the questioner while he/she is asking a question.
71. There will be no close-up cutaways of a single individual audience member while the leaders are speaking.
72. However if one of the leaders directly addresses an individual audience member, a close-up shot of that individual can be shown e.g. if a leader answers a question by directly addressing the questioner.
73. There may be group shots and wide shots of the audience during the programme.
74. The programme will be confined to events inside the debate studio.
75. Breaking News straps will not be put over live coverage of the debate. On news channels (Sky News, BBC News channel), the scrolling news tickers will offer other news but will not cover breaking news lines from the debates while the debates are taking place.
76. Each party will have the right to recall the negotiating panel made up of representatives from the broadcasters and the parties, during the campaign to discuss issues arising from the debates.

Details of selection panels

ITV Selection panel:

Michael Jermey, Director of News, Current Affairs and Sport (Chair)

Sameena Ali-Khan, ITV Central regional news presenter
Alexander Gardiner, Debate Programme Editor
Lucy Meacock, ITV Granada regional news presenter
Jonathan Munro, Deputy Editor, ITV News
Alastair Stewart, Debate Moderator
Chris Wissun, Director of Programme Compliance

Sky Selection panel

Chris Birkett, Executive Editor, Sky News (chair)
Adam Boulton, Political Editor and Debate Moderator
Jonathan Levy, Executive Producer, Politics
John McAndrew, Executive Producer, Debate Programme
Penny Chrimes, Executive Producer, The Boulton Factor
Hannah Thomas-Peter, Politics Producer & RTS Young Journalist of the Year 2009
Daniel Austin, BSkyB Legal Department

BBC Selection panel

Sue English Head of Political Programmes BBC News (chair)
Ric Bailey Chief Adviser, Politics, Editorial Policy
David Dimbleby, Moderator
Daniel Pearl, Programme Editor
Jeremy Hillman, Editor Business and Economics