



regulations

INTRODUCTION

Hippo is organising 13th Hippo English Without Borders – the Contest (hereinafter the Contest). The Contest is open to students 6 – 19 years old from the whole world. Students wishing to participate take tests in one of the Hippo approved venues (state schools and schools that are part of the formal education system, as well as private schools, and venues set up by country coordinators) or online exams with automated proctoring (where available).

HIPPO AND ITS AIMS

Hippo English Without Borders – the Contest is an international event which promotes English language, challenges students around the globe to compete in English language knowledge and motivates the teachers to cooperate. The Contest encourages the development of a shared sense of identity and integration, serves as a role model for young people living together as one community. The main goal is to create and nourish friendly relations, international understanding and a spirit of healthy competition between young people interested in English language from all around the world.

Apart from that, by participating in such a challenge, students get a chance to measure their level of English against international standards and get used to the concept of examination. Schools will more easily understand the level of English of their pupils and challenge them to learn more.

THE CONTEST REGULATIONS

1. ROUNDS, DATES & VENUES

The Contest is run in four stages: Preliminary Round, National Finals, Qualifiers (Regional Qualifiers see 3. *Regional Qualifiers*) and World Finals. Candidates who do not qualify for the World Finals will be given a chance to participate in Regional Qualifiers and Play-Off Qualifiers (See 3. *Regional Qualifiers* & 4. *Play-Off Qualifiers*).

The first two rounds will be held on different dates in different countries. Each country coordinator needs to choose the most suitable dates for their country, taking into account the school calendar and national holidays and communicate the dates to the interested participants. The three possible sets of dates are as follows.

Option 1 PRELIMINARY ROUND 14–15 February 2025, NATIONAL FINALS 14–15 March 2025

Option 2 PRELIMINARY ROUND 7–8 March 2025, NATIONAL FINALS 11–12 April 2025

Option 3* PRELIMINARY ROUND 4–5 April 2025, NATIONAL FINALS 2–3 May 2025

*Not available for Europe, North Africa, Central Asia, Azerbaijan and Mongolia

Students and schools need to contact their country coordinator for the dates in their country.

Every school, independent of the type and country, can participate in the Contest. Schools that wish to enrol a group of candidates are required to host the preliminary round of the Contest, even in the countries that accept individual enrolments.

Schools that wish to participate in the Contest need to apply through the country coordinator. If there is no country coordinator in the country, the school needs contact Hippo directly (venue@hippo-thecontest.org) for venue approval.

The National Final round will be held on one of the aforementioned dates. The network of national finals venues will be based on the location of the qualified students.

The World Finals will be held in Italy, in October 2025. The venue and the date will be announced shortly. 180 finalists (plus wildcards, for details please see *10. Marking and Ranking*) as well as a school representative (chosen by the school), e.g., the student's teacher, will be invited to the final round of the Contest.

Hippo reserves the right to increase the number of finalists if the number of applicants exceeds 88,215, in accordance with the Contest regulations.

2. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION AND FEES

Each participating school needs to appoint one of their staff as the Contest school coordinator and contact person (the details need to be provided in the Venue Approval Form). This person will be in charge of student enrolments and will need to ensure that all the Contest examination regulations are followed.

Hippo 2025 Online Enrolments. Upon venue approval, each school will receive login details for the Hippo Online Platform (www.soa-htc.org) where they need to register the candidates by entering the required details. The registration deadline varies from one country to another – candidates and/or participating schools are kindly asked to contact the country coordinator for more detail. After the enrolment deadline, no further amendments can be made. The system will automatically assign candidate numbers to applicants. The lists of candidates will remain available for printing the Preliminary Round attendance lists.

School coordinators are required to print the attendance registers for the preliminary round of the Contest. They are also kindly requested to double check the accuracy of candidate details. Candidate entries can only be made in Latin letters (A – Z, no language specific letters).

No candidate can be registered without the DOB and grade. School coordinators need to have the data ready before they start registering the candidates.

Some of the participating countries accept individual candidates. To find out whether your country accepts individual candidates, please contact the country coordinator. In the countries where individual candidates are accepted, they will be assigned to the nearest approved venue.

No venue approval forms or enrolments will be accepted after the deadline. For detailed information about deadlines and fees, schools need to contact the country coordinator. Participation fee is payable only once per student and covers the student's participation in all the Contest rounds except for the Qualifiers. The list of participating countries and coordinators, as well as some country specific details, are available on the Registrations page of the Contest website.

N.B. Children, family or relatives of organisers, coordinators or anyone involved in the Contest organisation cannot compete in the Contest.

3. REGIONAL QUALIFIERS

The Contest participants will be divided into the Contest regions (hereinafter regions) for the purpose of organising regional qualifiers. Based on the number and location of the participants in previous Hippo years, the pre-set regions have been established.

Pre-set regions are as follows:

1. Mediterranean Europe
2. Other countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea

3. Continental Europe
4. Middle East
5. Central Asia
6. Indian Subcontinent
7. Maritime Southeast Asia
8. Far East
9. Africa
10. Central & South America

The 2025 Qualifiers will be held in:

1. Venice, Italy for Mediterranean countries and Continental Europe
2. Samarkand, Uzbekistan for Central Asia
3. Doha, Qatar for Middle East, Indian Subcontinent and Sub-Saharan Africa
4. Da Nang, Vietnam, for Southeast Asia and Far East countries
5. Central & South America location to be announced

Where the number of enrolments in a specific region reaches 1,000 students in the 2025 edition, with a minimum of 100 candidates per Hippo Category, Qualifiers will be organised.

Students with the best ranking among those not qualified for the World Finals will be admitted to the Qualifiers. The number of students admitted to the Qualifiers per category and country will be proportional to the number of preliminary round participants in each category per country.

Regional Qualifiers will be held in person. Online examinations will not be available, and no exceptions will be made. Initially, the top 10% of the students who do not qualify for the World Finals will be invited to participate in the Qualifiers and their names will be highlighted in yellow in the ranking list. If a student does not confirm their participation, the next student in the ranking list from the same country will be invited. The minimum percentage of achievement for a student to be invited to the qualifiers will be 70% of the first ranked student points. These candidates will be highlighted in orange in the ranking list.

Students invited to the Regional Qualifiers will be requested to pay a participation fee ranging from €100 to €180, depending on the location. The participation fee will cover the costs of insurance, merchandising (given to the participants upon arrival), participation in the organised activities and examination materials. Where applicable, a package including accommodation and participation fee will be proposed to the participants through an exclusive service provider. Participants who book accommodation through the service provider will not need to pay the participation fee. Students and accompanying teachers or parents will need to cover the costs of travel and accommodation. Travel arrangements will need to be made by the participants themselves, while Hippo will propose accommodation options. Consequently, participants will be able to choose between the two options.

Students and one accompanying teacher or parent are expected to arrive at the venue one day before the examination date. The examinations will take place on the morning after while the proclamation of winners will take place in the evening.

First place winners of each Hippo category and for any of the Regions will proceed to the World Finals.

4. PLAY-OFF QUALIFIERS

Hippo will organise Play-Off Qualifiers in order to give additional participants the opportunity to reach Hippo 2025 World Finals by offering an intensive five-day Hippo English Language preparation course followed by a Hippo Test to be taken on day 6.

Play-Off Qualifiers are open to Hippo 2, Hippo 3, Hippo 4 and Hippo 5 students of both regular and special categories.

Play-Off Qualifiers will be held in Bucksmore Education's Oxford International College Brighton, UK, from 5th to 12th August 2025.

Students with the best ranking among those not qualified for the World Finals or for the Regional Qualifiers will be admitted to Play-Off Qualifiers. Students who qualify for the Qualifiers but do not participate or do not qualify for the World Finals are also eligible for the Play-Off Qualifiers.

The minimum percentage of achievement for a student to be able to participate in the Play-off qualifiers is 70% of the first ranked student points. The number of Play-Off Qualifiers slots are limited and will be available on a first-come first-served basis.

Students will need to make their own travel arrangements and cover the costs themselves. The package covers the costs of teaching, learning materials, accommodation, all meals, transfers arrival/departure, all activities and 1 excursion. Costs and other details are available on the dedicated pages of the Hippo website.

No accompanying teachers or parents are accepted. Students will be accommodated in a college open to students only, supervised by guardians 24/7.

The courses will be taught by Bucksmore Education teachers, for a minimum of 15 and maximum of 20 hours in classes 20 students. Students will be allocated to their class based on the category in which they participate and the entry test results. Lessons will be tailor-made and will include Hippo mock examinations. Play-Off Qualifiers examinations will take place on the morning of the 6th day of their stay.

5. THE CONTEST MATERIALS

In the preliminary round, schools can choose between online and paper-based examinations. In a number of countries, individual Candidates will have access to online exams with automated proctoring.

ONLINE EXAMS WITH AUTOMATED PROCTORING

These are only available in the Preliminary Round. Students who choose this option will be provided with the necessary guidance and login details.

ONLINE EXAMINATIONS

In the Preliminary Round, schools will be provided with login details. Students will need to take the test in their approved Hippo Venue or be invigilated remotely. Different regulations apply.

PAPER-BASED EXAMINATIONS

Tests for the preliminary round of the Contest will need to be delivered to the approved venue 2 days before the Contest date and need to stay closed until the preliminary round start time. They need to be sent back on the first working day after the preliminary round date and must be delivered within 5 working days, unless the Country Coordinator has provided another deadline. The return address will be provided with the materials. Where the return address is not provided

with the materials, schools need to contact either the Country Coordinator for instructions. The materials delivered after this date will not be marked.

The National Finals examinations will need to be taken either paper-based or online in an approved Hippo Venue. National final round examinations CANNOT be invigilated remotely.

6. SCHEDULES & INSPECTIONS

Each approved venue decides on the start time of the test depending on the number of participants per category. All approved venues must send their schedules to the Country Coordinator three working days before the Contest date for possible inspections. The Contest Examination Regulations¹ will apply throughout the Contest. Hippo reserves the right to randomly inspect examination venues.

Where it has been decided to deliver National Finals Examinations online in an approved venue, the venue will need to facilitate remote observation if requested. Remote observations will be carried out by one of Hippo staff members.

7. THE CONTEST – REGULAR & SPECIAL CATEGORIES

The participants will compete in 12 categories (7 regular and 5 special) based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and will take Gatehouse Awards examinations as well as Hippo Tests.

The students in grades lower than the ones in the table can also compete if they feel prepared for the level. The age limit for the Contest is 19 or as long as the students are in high school.

Bilingual students can only compete in one of the special categories. Students that are considered bilingual are the ones who were born or have lived and attended school for at least 3 years in an English-speaking country in the past 5 years as well as those who live in a non-English speaking country but attend an English/American International or a specialised school. Should a student, who is considered bilingual according to the above, apply for a regular category through another school, and should one of the abovementioned schools apply as a regular school, Hippo reserves the right to disqualify them from the Contest.

Special categories are aimed at students who are considered bilingual according to the Hippo Contest regulations (see above) as well as for the international schools and the schools where 50% or more of the subjects are taught in English (except for the countries where English is the only official language, e.g., UK). The percentage of curriculum delivered in English can be revised in agreement with the country coordinators. These students can compete in one of the five special categories.

Baby Hippo and Little Hippo students, even if they are considered bilingual according to the above, will still compete in the regular categories.

N.B. Hippo reserves the right to check the school's curriculum, the language of instruction and number of hours of English taught. Students who enroll in one of the regular categories but are supposed to compete in the special categories according to the regulations will be disqualified.

¹ The Contest Examination Regulations for PB, Remotely Observed Online, and On Premises Online Examinations are detailed in Annex 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

| CATEGORY | CEFR LEVEL PRELIMINARY | CEFR LEVEL NF & FINAL | CATEGORY | CEFR LEVEL PRELIMINARY | CEFR LEVEL NF & FINAL |
|--------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| BABY HIPPO* | CEFR Pre A1 YL | CEFR A1 YL | | | |
| LITTLE HIPPO | CEFR Pre A1 YL | CEFR A1 YL | | | |
| HIPPO 1 | CEFR A1 YL | CEFR A2 YL | HIPPO S1 | CEFR A1 | CEFR A2 |
| HIPPO 2 | CEFR A1 | CEFR A2 | HIPPO S2 | CEFR A2 | CEFR B1 |
| HIPPO 3 | CEFR A2 | CEFR B1 | HIPPO S3 | CEFR B1 | CEFR B2 |
| HIPPO 4 | CEFR B1 | CEFR B2 | HIPPO S4 | CEFR B2 | CEFR C1 |
| HIPPO 5 | CEFR B2 | CEFR C1 | HIPPO S5 | CEFR C1 | CEFR C2 |

*Baby Hippo examinations will be of the same level of difficulty as the ones for Little Hippo in all rounds of the Contest. The two categories will, however, have two separate ranking lists.

In accordance with the national education systems, potential Hippo candidates have been divided into two groups: those where children start school at the age of 6, and those where children start school at the age of 7. Grade 1 is the first grade of primary education, while each next grade number is next grade of the country's education system.

6 as school starting age. The table below applies to the candidates from the following countries: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brazil, Cambodia, China, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Egypt, Ghana, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Kosovo, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

REGULAR CATEGORIES

| Grade | Hippo Category |
|---------|----------------|
| 1 - 2 | BABY HIPPO |
| 3 - 4 | LITTLE HIPPO |
| 5 - 6 | HIPPO 1 |
| 7 | HIPPO 2 |
| 8 - 9 | HIPPO 3 |
| 10 - 11 | HIPPO 4 |
| 12 - 13 | HIPPO 5 |

SPECIAL CATEGORIES

| Grade | Hippo Category |
|---------|----------------|
| 1 - 2 | BABY HIPPO |
| 3 - 4 | LITTLE HIPPO |
| 5 - 6 | HIPPO S1 |
| 7 | HIPPO S2 |
| 8 - 9 | HIPPO S3 |
| 10 - 11 | HIPPO S4 |
| 12 - 13 | HIPPO S5 |

7 as school starting age. The table below applies to the candidates from the following countries: Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Poland, Serbia, South Africa, Taiwan, Tajikistan and Tanzania.

REGULAR CATEGORIES

| Grade | Hippo Category |
|---------|----------------|
| 1 | BABY HIPPO |
| 2 - 3 | LITTLE HIPPO |
| 4 - 5 | HIPPO 1 |
| 6 | HIPPO 2 |
| 7 - 8 | HIPPO 3 |
| 9 - 10 | HIPPO 4 |
| 11 - 13 | HIPPO 5 |

SPECIAL CATEGORIES

| Grade | Hippo Category |
|---------|----------------|
| 1 | BABY HIPPO |
| 2 - 3 | LITTLE HIPPO |
| 4 - 5 | HIPPO S1 |
| 6 | HIPPO S2 |
| 7 - 8 | HIPPO S3 |
| 9 - 10 | HIPPO S4 |
| 11 - 13 | HIPPO S5 |

When registering candidates, both the DOB and grade are mandatory. .soa only allows candidate registration in accordance with the above tables and will only allow candidates to register for their or higher categories.

In the countries where candidate registration deadline is in one school year and round examinations in another, candidates need to be registered according to the grade at the time of registration.

N.B. Students who reached Hippo 2024 final round, cannot compete in the same category in Hippo 2025.

8. THE CONTEST – PRELIMINARY ROUND

The tests for the preliminary round of the Contest will consist of two parts: a test of reading comprehension (multiple choice questions) by Gatehouse Awards, and a Hippo Use of English MC Test. The maximum allowed time per part is shown in the tables below. It is strictly forbidden to open the Contest materials before the exam date. The school coordinator can open the parcel to check that all the materials have been received. The transparent envelopes with the tests however need to stay sealed and be opened in front of the students, right before the start of the preliminary round tests.

The test samples are available on the Contest website. There is only one correct answer to every question. There are no negative marks. Ranking is based on the average number of marks achieved on the two tests.

| | BABY HIPPO | LITTLE HIPPO | HIPPO 1 | HIPPO 2 | HIPPO 3 | HIPPO 4 | HIPPO 5 |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| READING | 30 questions (1 point each) | 30 questions (1 point each) | 30 questions (1 point each) | 34 questions (1 point each) | 34 questions (1 point each) | 34 questions (1 point each) | 40 questions (1 point each) |
| USE OF ENGLISH MC | 20 questions (1.5 point each) | 20 questions (1.5 point each) | 20 questions (1.5 point each) | 20 questions (1.5 point each) | 20 questions (1.5 point each) | 20 questions (1.5 point each) | 20 questions (1.5 point each) |

| | HIPPO S1 | HIPPO S2 | HIPPO S3 | HIPPO S4 | HIPPO S5 |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| READING | 34 questions (1 point each) | 34 questions (1 point each) | 34 questions (1 point each) | 40 questions (1 point each) | 40 questions (1 point each) |
| USE OF ENGLISH MC | 20 questions (1.5 point each) | 20 questions (1.5 point each) | 20 questions (1.5 point each) | 20 questions (1.5 point each) | 20 questions (1.5 point each) |

Both reading test and Use of English answers are given on an answer sheet (OMR).

Maximum allowed times per category and part for regular categories:

| | BABY HIPPO | LITTLE HIPPO | HIPPO 1 | HIPPO 2 | HIPPO 3 | HIPPO 4 | HIPPO 5 |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| READING | 20 minute s | 20 minute s | 30 minutes | 30 minutes | 30 minutes | 40 minutes | 45 minutes |
| USE OF ENGLISH MC | 20 minute s | 20 minute s | 20 minutes | 20 minutes | 20 minutes | 30 minutes | 30 minutes |

Maximum allowed times per category and part for special categories:

| | HIPPO S1 | HIPPO S2 | HIPPO S3 | HIPPO S4 | HIPPO S5 |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| READING | 30 minutes | 30 minutes | 40 minutes | 45 minutes | 45 minutes |
| USE OF ENGLISH MC | 20 minutes | 20 minutes | 30 minutes | 30 minutes | 30 minutes |

9. THE CONTEST – NATIONAL FINAL ROUND

After the preliminary round tests have been marked, the top 10% of participating students from each participating country will be invited to the National Finals. The list of qualified students will be expanded to include all those whose number of points is the same as the number of points of the last students in the first 10%. Country coordinators can decide to divide the country into macro-areas. In such cases, the 10% of preliminary round candidates who qualify for the national finals will be per macro-area, not per country. The list of qualified students will be published on the Contest website within three weeks of the preliminary round date. The network of national finals venues will be based on the location of the qualified students.

Wildcards are available for the countries where no student qualifies for the finals and will be granted to the best candidate in each category from the country.

The exam level for the national finals will be one CEFR level higher than the one in the preliminary round. The tests for the national finals of the Contest will consist of a reading test, a writing test (30 questions) and an essay (except for Baby Hippo and Little Hippo).

There is only one correct answer to every question. In open-ended questions, where there can be more than one correct answer, all correct answers will be accepted. There are no negative marks. Ranking is based on the average number of marks achieved on both the reading and the writing test.

Reading test answers are given on an answer sheet (OMR) while the Writing test answers are given in the test booklet.

The writing test will consist of a free-writing task (100 – 200 words depending on the category) and 30 questions. The level of difficulty of all the questions will be one level higher than the one in the preliminary round. The essay will be assessed only in case two or more candidates have the scores on both the reading and the writing test.

| | BABY HIPPO | LITTLE HIPPO | HIPPO 1 | HIPPO 2 | HIPPO 3 | HIPPO 4 | HIPPO 5 |
|---------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| READING | 30 questions (1 point each) | 30 questions (1 point each) | 40 questions (1 point each) | 34 questions (1 point each) | 34 questions (1 point each) | 40 questions (1 point each) | 40 questions (1 point each) |
| WRITING | 30 questions (1.5 points each) | 30 questions (1.5 points each) | free-writing task (essay) + 30 questions (1.5 points each) | free-writing task (essay) + 30 questions (1.5 points each) | free-writing task (essay) + 30 questions (1.5 points each) | free-writing task (essay) + 30 questions (1.5 points each) | free-writing task (essay) + 30 questions (1.5 points each) |

| | HIPPO S1 | HIPPO S2 | HIPPO S3 | HIPPO S4 | HIPPO S5 |
|---------|--|--|--|--|--|
| READING | 34 questions (1 point each) | 34 questions (1 point each) | 40 questions (1 point each) | 40 questions (1 point each) | 40 questions (1 point each) |
| WRITING | free-writing task (essay) + 30 questions (1.5 points each) | free-writing task (essay) + 30 questions (1.5 points each) | free-writing task (essay) + 30 questions (1.5 points each) | free-writing task (essay) + 30 questions (1.5 points each) | free-writing task (essay) + 30 questions (1.5 points each) |

Maximum allowed times per category and part for regular categories:

| | BABY HIPPO | LITTLE HIPPO | HIPPO 1 | HIPPO 2 | HIPPO 3 | HIPPO 4 | HIPPO 5 |
|---------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| READING | 30 minutes | 30 minutes | 30 minutes | 30 minutes | 40 minutes | 45 minutes | 45 minutes |
| WRITING | 45 minutes | 45 minutes | 45 minutes | 45 minutes | 45 minutes | 45 minutes | 45 minutes |

Maximum allowed times per category and part for special categories:

| | HIPPO S1 | HIPPO S2 | HIPPO S3 | HIPPO S4 | HIPPO S5 |
|---------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| READING | 30 minutes | 40 minutes | 45 minutes | 45 minutes | 50 minutes |
| WRITING | 45 minutes | 45 minutes | 45 minutes | 45 minutes | 45 minutes |

10. REGIONAL QUALIFIERS EXAMINATIONS

In the Qualifiers Round, the candidates will take a Hippo Test of English consisting of 30 Use of English open-ended questions and a crossword. Hippo Test of English Samples are available on the official website.

11. PLAY OFF QUALIFIERS EXAMINATIONS

At the end of the course, the participants will take a Hippo Test of English consisting of 30 Use of English open-ended questions and a crossword. Hippo Test of English Samples are available on the official website.

12. FINAL ROUND EXAMINATIONS

In the final round of the Contest, the candidates take a Gatehouse Awards exam, all 4 skills included. GA Writing test will only be marked for the purpose of certification, not for the purpose of the final round ranking list.

In addition to the four-skill GA examinations, candidates take a Use of English test consisting of 30 questions. The results of this test will be used for final round ranking purposes and will not affect the GA examination qualification score.

The test samples / past papers are available on www.hippo-thecontest.org. The exam level for the final round will be one CEFR level higher than the one in the preliminary round that is the same as the national finals test.

12. MARKING & RANKING

The reading test answers are marked by an OMR device and for that reason need to be properly filled in. Candidates are required to use a pen while completing the OMR form. An OMR sample form will be available on the website two weeks before the preliminary round of the Contest at the latest.

In case an OMR form is not properly filled in (e.g., incorrect or missing candidate number) or scanned and the OMR device cannot read it, Hippo reserves the right to disqualify the candidate if the identity of the candidate cannot be established.

In the national finals, the essay will be marked only if two or more candidates have the same number of points on both the reading and the writing test or in case of suspected cheating or malpractice.

For online examinations, in case of suspected malpractice, Hippo reserves the right to re-test the candidates using a parallel test and under the invigilation of the Hippo staff.

The ranking list for all categories as well as the names of the candidates who qualified for the national finals will be available on www.hippo-thecontest.org within three weeks of the preliminary round date.

The ranking list for all categories as well as the names of the candidates who qualified for the national finals and eventually regional qualifiers will be available on www.hippo-thecontest.org within three weeks of the national finals date.

The final round places will be assigned in the following way:

Top 140 finalists will be admitted directly from the national finals ranking list. The number of finalists per category and country will be proportional to the number of preliminary round participants in each category per country. In order to promote a multicultural environment, wildcards will be granted to the best participant from each of the countries that does not have a finalist. In addition to the above, winners of regional qualifiers will be admitted to Finals.

Hippo reserves the right to increase the number of finalists if the number of applicants exceeds 88,215, all in accordance with the Contest regulations.

The exact date of the final round as well as the participation confirmation deadline will be announced in due time.

13. FINAL ROUND

The World Finals will be held in Italy, in October 2025. The venue and the date will be announced shortly. All candidates can be accompanied by their English language teacher, or an English-speaking teacher from their school.

Parents who wish to accompany their children need to make their own travel and accommodation arrangements as the hotels where the students are accommodated are booked exclusively for the Contest participants.

Three-day half-board accommodation will be provided for all the candidates and their teachers free of charge, while the costs of travel will be borne by the participants.

Finalists are expected to arrive the day before the examinations start; examinations will be held over two days while the proclamation of winners and awarding ceremony will be held on the evening of the second day of examinations.

The programme of the final round will be sent directly to the finalists who confirmed their participation one week before the event.

Finalists will be contacted and helped with making their travel arrangements.

14. PRIZES

QUALIFIERS. Winners of each qualifier round will proceed to the World Finals.

FINAL ROUND. All Preliminary and National Final round candidates will receive a certificate of participation.

All candidates who pass the final round tests (score 55% minimum) will be awarded a Gatehouse Awards internationally recognised certificate in English.

Other World Final prizes will be announced closer to the World Finals date.

15. PROCESSING AND PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA

As we organize HIPPO the Contest and events, we determine which data, including personal data, is processed, the purposes of the processing, and the means of processing within the context of HIPPO the Contest and associated events. Therefore, we are considered the data controller within the meaning of the General Data Protection Regulation of the European Union. More about the concept of the data controller, the data we process, and other relevant information concerning

our practices related to data processing and data protection are available in our [Privacy Policy](#) available [here](#).

For the organization and implementation of the Contest and for the purpose of realizing associated events, we engage other organizations and individuals to help us. These include the engagement of country coordinators and school coordinators. The country coordinators are organizations/institutions that support us in the organization and implementation of HIPPO the Contest and associated events in their countries with the necessary logistical measures. The schools with their appointed staff (school coordinators) also help with the implementation of the Contest at their locations as soon as they are approved. Both the country coordinators and the school coordinators process personal data for the purpose necessary for the organization of Hippo the Contest and associated events. In doing so, they should strictly follow our instructions due to the reason that they process personal data on our behalf. Therefore, the respective country coordinators and school coordinators are treated as data processors within the meaning of the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (entities processing personal data on behalf of the data controller).

In view of the fact that the country coordinators and school coordinators have the status of data processors, we have taken appropriate safeguards to comply with the relevant legal requirements, in particular with regard to the transfer of personal data and making data available. These requirements emphasize *inter alia* that whenever our data processors plan to engage third parties that will process personal data while assisting them in Hippo-related activities, they should seek our permission to do so. The same rules for data protection and data processing must apply to these third parties (as the case is with country coordinators and school coordinators). These rules are set out in the [Data Processing Agreement](#) available [here](#). Thus, this Data Processing Agreement forms a mandatory and integral part of each contract concluded between:

- us on one side and the appointed country coordinator and/or school coordinator on another;
- appointed country coordinator on one side and school coordinator on another;
- country coordinator and/or school coordinator on one side and any third party on another.

When collecting and processing data, including personal data, the country coordinators and school coordinators must duly observe national/local data protection regulations. If they identify a legal requirement from the domain of national/local data protection regulations that deviate from the European Union General Data Protection Regulation or any other legal requirement that could affect the lawfulness of the data processing, the processing must be stopped and addressed to the Hippo organization without undue delay.

15. CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

By applying for the Contest, the participants accept the rules and regulations of the Contest as detailed in this document.

