

DNO Regionals Bonn 2024 - Tanya Chandra and Manya Chandra (Q1)

On 9th of March 2024, we attended the neuroscience olympiad called DNO (deutscheneurowissenschaftolympiade) at Max Planck Institute for Neurobiology of Behaviour, Bonn. It is an annual competition, in which students from all over Germany participate to enhance their knowledge on neuroscience. They initially learn from a handout consisting of approximately 300 pages. The competition includes a written test, patient diagnosis, neuroanatomy and a podium round if the students perform exceptionally in the first 3 tests. At the start, the students take part in the regionals (Bonn, Berlin, Heidelberg) and the top 15 from each region participate in the national competition, which is held in Max Planck Institute for Neurobiology of Behaviour, Frankfurt. The winner of the national competition represents Germany at the International Brain Bee competition 2024.

Our experience at the Bonn regionals was very fun! We first took a written test, followed by a neuroanatomy test. In these tests, we visited different stations, looked at brain structures and identified them. In our break, we were able to engage with the organising team of neuroscientists and learn about how the brain works. We gained more insights into their PHD research projects as well as interacted with many participating students, sharing the same interests as us. Afterwards, students watched videos of patients and diagnosed their neurological disorders as part of the third test. It was really exciting to see parents also taking part in the patient diagnosis, despite having little knowledge on it. Both of us were selected in TOP 15 students and were allowed to take part in the final podium round. The podium rounds were facilitated by 3 well-known neuroscientists. Each student had to answer questions from the judges and slowly moved forward if their answers were correct. Through this process, three winners were announced, with Manya securing 3rd place in the Bonn regionals and receiving a prize from the judges.

The whole day was extremely informative and interesting. It was particularly fun to interact with other students, and get to know them better. Although learning for this competition was challenging amidst exams and projects, it was very interesting! We are looking forward to the nationals.