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GUIDEBOOK TO SUCCESSFUL DEBATE JUDGING



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FACTS Debate Forums EVIDENCE

A GREAT WAY TO SUPPORT EDUCATION!



Judges should remember that they are not aiming to evaluate who was cleverest, neatest or funniest, but who best used their cleverness, neatness and funniness to persuade us that the policy was a good or a bad idea.



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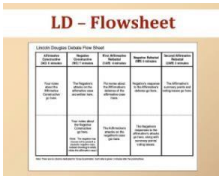
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Finding, Recruiting & Being A Great Volunteer Judge

What Prospective Debate Judges Need To Know

A successful debate program depends on many factors, but having the right people serving as judges makes every debate really exciting and rewarding. Not only are good judges important for managing the flow of the debate but they also provide much of the educational value for the event through their decision-making and feedback.

Participants use all their skills and passion in pursuit of their goal of winning the debate and then the judge's task is to figure out how to make both winning and losing a positive experience for everyone. That's sometimes not easy, but it's almost impossible unless judges receive good training and also spend some serious time informing themselves on their various roles and functions and on the style(s) of debate they'll be judging.

When a debate program is looking for volunteers to become judges they need to stress how much support the judges will be given by students, teachers and parents and that everyone involved understands that their role is to give high quality positive feedback.

Online Resources For Judges

There are a lot of great resources online for people to learn how to judge every kind of debate, from a grade school classroom debate where the teacher is the judge in a debate on kittens vs. puppies to a college tournament with serious prestige at stake where the judges are likely to be paid professionals.



Our purpose in writing this guide isn't to reinvent the wheel – we'll link you to some of what we think are the best resources in each area.

"Disagreeing with a student's argument or performance choices is valid as long as you are proceeding with an open mind. If the speaker is arguing we should ban dissecting frogs in basic biology classes and you think that was the best experience you ever had or dissecting a frog led your son/daughter to become a doctor, you might disagree.

But if the student goes on to show you the economic impacts, physical dangers and educational disadvantages of frog dissection, the student has done a good job of presenting a solid argument.

If the arguments have not convinced you, it should only because they have failed to meet their burden of proof, not because you disagree with them in the first place. You might make comments like "You haven't convinced me that this is a problem" or "I don't see significant improvement to the education of students if we switch to your solutions."

Concerns People Have About Being A Judge

Why me? I'm not qualified to be a debate judge!

That's a perfectly normal concern because the word 'judge' has a lot of baggage, but what a debate judge really does is bring their own experience in communicating with other people to the job of helping young people who are working hard to improve their own communications skills. In fact, judges and debaters from high school or college debate venues can help younger primary school debaters enormously by visiting primary school classrooms during debate programs and sharing their stories and experiences to help motivate the younger debaters.

Sure there are some rules that debaters have to follow and judges have to enforce but not as many as most people think. Debating is a largely self-regulating activity where all the participants understand the rules and respect the need to follow them – that's part of what kids learn in debate better than almost anywhere else in their education.

So – do you know well-organized, well-presented information and opinion when you see it, and do you feel able to stack several performances up against each other and say which was best and why? Can you follow a simple set of guidelines that will help you rank factors in each debater's performance in order to quantify your observations? Then you can be a judge and play a key role in helping young people achieve their highest potential just by spending a few hours a week or a month with some of the brightest, most motivated kids you'll ever meet.

Will I have To Pick Winners & Losers?

Picking winners sounds like fun but nobody thinks picking losers is fun even when it's necessary – which it isn't in debate! Luckily in debate there are no losers. We believe that there are only winners and learners! Here's how the "picking winners" process works.

"Judges listen and evaluate, insofar as possible, from the perspective of ordinary intelligent person. Their assessments should strive to be holistic and comparative, considering all the contributions each participant or team made to the debate in aggregate and comparing these to other participants or teams. "

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The winner is the person or team who did the best job. Their performance was given top ranking by the judge or judges. Then there is everyone else. Only one of them was the best but they each did their best and – most importantly - through your efforts as a judge in listening, considering and ranking each aspect of their performance, they will each have learned how they can do better next time. That makes everyone a winner, because judges know that self-improvement is the ultimate objective of all serious debaters and winning is literally just a way to measure steps in personal progress along that path.

Concerns People Have About Being A Judge

Will I have to judge students I know?

That depends entirely on the level of debate you're being asked to judge. In less formal, fun debates the role of the judge is to help maintain the intended structure and the flow of events, and the 'stakes' are low enough that nobody is going to worry about who knows who.

"Judges should remember that they are not aiming to evaluate who was cleverest, neatest or funniest, but who best used their cleverness, neatness and funniness to persuade us that the policy was a good or a bad idea. The best way to do that is for judges to simply address themselves towards debates as if there are real policies or controversies at stake and then see who best persuades them that the motion should or shouldn't be supported."

In more formal debates and in events like tournaments there is a lot of effort to ensure that judges are unrelated to anyone in the debate they are judging, but that only happens in an advanced judging situation so it shouldn't be a concern when you're recruiting for help to get a school program up and running, or even for help expanding the judges pool for an existing program. There's always room for people who want to be judges just like there's always room for kids who want to be debaters.

I don't want to make a mistake and hurt someone's chances!

That's a very positive reaction, but understand that the role of a debate judge isn't to assign fault, blame, guilt or to make any other negative kind of 'judgment'. It's important not to get hung up on the image most of us have of a judge, and of being judged. A debate judge evaluates and recognizes top performances and helps everyone who performs by offering clear evaluations of the strengths and weaknesses of each performance. "Judges assess which teams were most persuasive with respect to the burdens



their side of the debate is attempting to prove. Judges should determine which team did the best to persuade them, by reasoned argument, that the motion ought to be adopted or rejected."

How can I judge a bad performance without hurting feelings?

It's very likely that any experienced debater understands that there's 'nothing personal' in how the judge scores their performance. They also understand that, while judging some kinds of debate may involve quantifying and ranking performances, even numbers always involve subjective judgment. Debaters have to be good with that.

"The outcome of the debate should obviously depend on what the debaters do and do not say and demonstrate. Judges must not insert themselves into the debate."

What debaters expect is simply a judge's best effort to make an unbiased evaluation of every performance. Whether that involves a ranking or scoring system or just a judge's notes for each round, the debaters learn from the feedback that being welljudged provides. If their presentation wasn't perfect, they want to know why so that they can work on that issue for their next challenge.

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Concerns People Have About Being A Judge

How should I interact with the debaters?

Judges are typically introduced at the beginning of the event and may even be part of the hosting of the event. However, once the debate has begun the judge and the timekeeper (if there is one) limit their interactions to procedural communications. Debaters appreciate judges who make eye contact but also understand that making notes is a key part of the judge's role. Judges should not offer any kind of encouraging or supportive gestures or expressions or show any other signs of possible approval or disapproval – strict neutrality doesn't mean keeping a stone face, but it doesn't mean giving a thumbs-up to a debater who has just scored a point either.



What kind of feedback will I be asked to give?

A big part of judging is that you will be asked by many students to rank them and rate the quality of their work on a personal and informal level. In working with younger students, and even in less formal High School debates, there may be opportunities and even expectations that the judge(s) will share their helpful comments and reasons for decisions with the debaters. These are major learning opportunities and one of the great rewards of being a debate judge. Although at first it's a bit challenging to offer meaningful criticism instead of platitudes, debate judges quickly learn what most of the children already know – that the intended purpose of specific criticism of their performance is to help them improve and that if it is offered in a "we're all grown-ups here" but still caring way then that's how it will be received.

Most judges try to provide a balance of positive feedback and constructive observations. Students prefer constructive comments that help justify the ranking they have received. Saying "Great job" doesn't help the student understand how they could have done a 'great job' and still received a low ranking.

Concerns People Have About Being A Judge

How much time will I have to commit?

In high school and college debating judges are needed for everything from practice sessions to road trips, so it's important that prospective judges be given a clear understanding of how much preparation will be needed and how much time will be involved. If your debate program is still young then you'll want to recruit people who will be active supporters over time and will dedicate themselves to providing the program with the judging and feedback that the kids will need as everyone feels their way forward. Be sure to emphasize how much fun debating and judging is and how important their role will be.

There are a lot of great videos on debate judging that will give anyone considering the role plenty of information on what they will be called on to do. We've provided links to some of the ones we think are the best in the resource section at the back f the book. A lot of debate programs use these videos when they meet with prospective judges, watching the videos together as a way of getting the discussions started.

Judging a debate has been compared to judging a boxing match in concept. Each round in boxing is composed of swings and misses, hits and defenses, displays of various skills and other intangible factors like displays of courage, and at the end of each round the judges assign a systematic (but still impressionistic) "weight" to every factor for each boxer. At the end of a "decision" match – no knockout to end the fight early - the judges' scores are added up and the winner is declared. In concept the job of a debate judge is almost the same – you keep track of a set of factors in each round and assign a weight for each individual debater or team after each round, and then at the end you add the scores up and have a winner.

"Judges can and must assess how wellsubstantiated arguments are. This will inevitably involve some assessment of the quality of the supporting reasons offered for arguments; and seriously implausible claims may constitute weak support for an argument in the eyes of the judges. But judges must exercise the minimum of personal evaluation in making such claims, and even seriously implausible arguments cannot be disregarded by the judge if they haven't been rebutted – though they may have little persuasive value. "

Sometimes you may actually witness a knockout during a debate but in debate the event doesn't stop like it does when a fighter "goes down for the count", but just like at a boxing match everybody at a debate



knows a knockout when they see one and know when the debate is already over.

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Concerns People Have About Being A Judge

What kind of background makes a good debate judge?

Being a debate judge is actually a natural and fun process in which you use your own experience with people and with yourself to help younger people learn to gain key skills that solid research shows beyond doubt will make a huge positive difference in their lives. It doesn't take an expensive stadium or large budget – a debate team takes a few dedicated adult and a group of kids who instinctively understand that being better debaters will open doors for them in life that otherwise will be forever closed.

A professional debate judge writes

"Anyone watching a performance can appreciate what the speaker has done, but in the same way a trained critic is better able to identify the components of a piece of art and provide constructive feedback on the components and process, a trained judge can help to advance leaning for the participants and audience by identifying the components of individual and team performances which made them better or worse than other performances.

Ultimately, at the end of the day, what usually happens is the student who best connected with you, who made you understand or believe something (even if in an unexplainable way) is the one the judge will rank higher."

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Are there certain key duties during the debate?

Perhaps more important than many other important tasks a judge has is keeping track of time. You should always time the speeches carefully and write each time acurately and legibly on the ballot. This isn't a trivial matter in a debate. Coaches and competitors can get a good deal of information from how long the student's speech was in your round. If you indicate the student is rushing but the students time is consistent with their other rounds or their practice sessions, they know that their practiced rate is too fast. But if their time in your round is a full minute shorter than practice, they know they did something anomalous in your round. Providing the time helps provide a context for the other comments."

> ***"When I am getting ready to reason with a man, I spend one-third of my time thinking about myself and what I am going to say; and two-thirds of my time thinking about him and what he is going to say."***
> ***Abraham Lincoln***

Judges' Observations On Judging

Here's a collection of observations by judges illustrating how the style of a debater's presentation is as important as its content.

It's Fine To Disagree

"Disagreeing with a student's argument or performance choices is valid as long as you do so in a natural conversational style," "I don't see how any of this information will ever impact me, but go ahead and show the audience how we will be impacted by it."

Why Should We Care?

"One of the key elements to debate is giving the judges and an audience a reason to care. Debaters can demonstrate the significance of their argument in a variety of ways. Sometimes they use numbers to show the extent of a problem or the number of people who could be helped by a new invention. Sometimes they talk about a specific case study or situation.

But they should find a way to link an issue to their audience. When you are feeling apathetic in your role as a judge, the debaters have probably failed to give you a reason to care about either the pro or con side of the debate. Some comments may make to challenge this apathy include "What is the importance of this topic that should make us feel a need to focus on the issue right now?" or "I don't see how the topic relates to most people in this room – can you make that connection for us" or even "The significance of your topic was not shown to be as great as others in the round – have you anything to add that will change that deficit?"

Giving Feedback Is An Art

Part of a good public presentation is presenting a nonverbal component that enhances the vocal presentation. So if a student is using the same gesture over and over, she/he will indeed look awkward and it will be a kindness to find a way to point this out.

In order to let the student know that they are over using a gesture, you might describe the gesture and note that varying gestures will make their presentation more dynamic. Meaningless gestures and awkward gestures can distract from the performance. If the student is wearing something you find distracting you should note what was distracting to you, treading carefully on matters of individual dress and style.

Obviously comments about body shape, physical differences, sex, or gender are inappropriate because they are beyond the student's ability to control. A comment about purple hair might not be appropriate, whereas a comment about unkempt and dirty purple hair might be OK. A comment from a judge about one debater wearing a T-Shirt while the others wear coats and ties

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would be appropriate, whereas a comment on an appropriately-dressed student's tattoos would probably not be.

The Six Principle Qualities of Affirmative Arguments

There are six principle qualities of affirmative arguments which you may encounter while judging a debate round. In making your final judgment, you should take notes during each round noting the arguments made and their effectiveness, and after the round you'll want to use these notes to determine, based on what the debaters presented, which side had the most effective arguments and therefore carried the day. Be sure to make note of both effective and ineffective use of arguments so that you can give useful feedback if asked. Here's what judges look for:

Topicality: Does the affirmative team offer a plan within the current resolution?

Inherency: Has the affirmative case shown that the status quo is unable or unwilling to redress the harm creating an inherent need?

Impactfulness: If the plan is not passed, what potential harmful situation will occur? What advantage is there to the plan? How big are the impacts? Are they all equally likely and did the affirmative differentiate?

Relevance: Has the affirmative case shown that the plan will solve all or a significant portion of the stated impacts?

Disadvantages: The negative team may offer disadvantages explaining how the affirmative case causes its own harmful impacts. Is this impact likely? Does it outweigh the affirmative cases' impacts?

Counterplan: The negative may propose a specific counter-plan as an alternative to the affirmative plan. Does the counter-plan solve for the impacts of the disadvantages or others?

How To Apply Your Judgment

Depending upon your judging philosophy, you might follow this sequence of reasoning:

1. Is the affirmative plan topical? Unless the negative disproves this, assume itis. Don't use your own bias. If the negative has shown that the plan is not topical, then most judges will vote negative disregarding items 2 and 3 below).
2. Inherency/Relevance Balancing: If the negative has made arguments aboutinherency or relevance, ask how much would be gained by adopting

the affirmative plan after considering these arguments. If some advantage remains, then move to item c below.

3. Disadvantages Balancing: Balance the gains expected by adopting theaffirmative plan with any disadvantages the negative has proven would occur by adopting the plan. Determine if the impacts from the disadvantages are worse than the impacts from the affirmative case.
4. Plan/Counterplan Balancing: If the negative has offered a counterplan, thequestion is whether the counterplan offers a good reason to reject the affirmative plan or whose plan solves for more significant impacts.

What Was The Speaker's Overall Speaking Ability?

Some examples:

Did the speaker show appropriate use of English? Were they able to pronounce correctly and speak clearly and use grammatically correct sentences? Did they connect their major points with factual evidence and reasoning? Were their arguments solid and supported by references to authorities?

Did they organize their thoughts effectively to address the major issues? Did they offer any special insights into the subject or topic? If appropriate or called for by the topic or material, did the speaker display humor, high energy, criticism or other forms of expression?

How well-prepared was the speaker?

Some examples:

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Was there clear and reasoned organization? Was delivery confident, reflecting a well-

formed idea of the form of the argument being presented. Were all claims supported either by facts and evidence or examples and stories? Was the answer satisfactory, given the demand of the question, topic or point being debated? For example, in extemporaneous speaking, this might mean evaluating how well the speaker provided a nicely-reasoned answer, while in impromptu speaking this could mean evaluating how well they presented a reasonable interpretation of the quotation they had been given.

Certain things do not matter (in themselves) in evaluating how good a speaker's analysis was:

• The number of arguments the speaker makes,
• How clever/innovative the argument was, •
How interesting the argument was.

What matters, once an argument is made, is how important its conclusion seems to be in the debate with respect to the burdens that each side is trying to prove, and the extent to which it seems to be analyzed and responded to (and how well it withstood or was defended against such responses).

Judges do not consider how important they thought a particular argument was, in the abstract, but rather how central it was to the overall contribution of any team or teams in this particular debate, and how strong the reasons speakers offered to support the claim that it was important/unimportant were

How Good Was The Delivery?

We expect debaters and speakers to have enough of an understanding of their subject matter to deliver their arguments and make their statements with a good delivery technique. Hesitations, pronunciation issues, memory glitches and other issues with student delivery happen all the time but these deficiencies must be judged by whether they reduced the effectiveness of the presentation much more than by any external standards. For example, a debater might not use perfectly accented English but if that's also the situation with most of the school audience then a judge who does speak perfect English shouldn't apply their personal standards to judging student delivery.

A respected debate handbook notes:

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“Some debaters have developed an excessively rapid style of delivery that interferes with the element of communication that is basic to debate. The ballot provides an avenue for indicating to the debater that speed of delivery interfered with communications.”

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"The real question is – everything considered, did they communicate effectively? A judge might legitimately note how a student could be even more effective in a certain way if they were able to work on an aspect of their accent (such as slowing down and speaking more distinctly), but should be clear that they did not suffer in their performance ranking because of accent issues."



"Above all else, a "strong accent" is not bad style. Everyone in the world has their own particular accent, and

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they all have their own accent strongly! When people talk about mild or strong accents, they mean how strong or mild the accent is compared to the accents with which they are familiar. This sort of subjective measuring is not a valid basis for judging certain styles as superior."

"There is only one legitimate way "accent" can be a problem for a speaker, and that is if judges genuinely cannot understand what the speaker is saying despite their very best efforts to do so. This is a problem in the same way that speaking too fast to be understood is a problem – judges have to understand the words a speaker says in order to evaluate them. This is a problem that could afflict any accent in principle – it is not just a problem for an "ESL" or "EFL" accent."

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Important Qualities In Judging Arguments

Did they keep within established time limits?

Especially with younger students, the fewer the rules the more active and energetic the participation in debate. That's why we reserve forms like 'Parliamentary Debate' for older students – not that there aren't plenty of budding political orators in grade schools! However, the one thing that every debate must have is a set of time limits and a means of enforcing them. Time limits are essential in creating the structured and inspired thinking that characterizes debate much the same way that time limits force chess novices and masters alike to think through their next moves and adjust their game to their opponent's moves quicker and more effectively than their opponent.

In keeping with the critical importance of time limits is the idea that all student debaters must learn quickly - that you can't exceed your allotted time regardless of how much you feel a need to keep talking. This means that you need to plan out what you're going to say so that you know before you begin speaking that you can get every important point in under your time limit – a valuable skill in a world where the most anyone has to catch another person's attention is generally measured in milliseconds.

The Importance Of Individual Evaluations

Whether you intend to do it formally on a scoring sheet or as informal comments, it is important to provide students individualized feedback after a debate.

If you are not grading students strictly on a debate, this feedback may come in the form of some notes written on a grading sheet explaining a few things the student did well and a few things that he or she should work on for next time.

If you plan to grade students on their performance, or simply want to use a more detailed scoring system, here's an example of a commonly-used grading format for in-class debate. In formal debating events judges will normally be given a grading system to use although many judges wind up using the one they prefer. In--class debating with the teacher or another student in the role of judge is less likely to need a formal scoring system although there are plenty of occasions where having one might be helpful. Please feel free to create your own version that reflects your teaching goals for your class.

Do not make comments that indicate how you feel the debate is going during the debate. Your role as a judge is largely nonverbal until the debate is over.

Do not arbitrarily manufacture rules or ignore the rules of the debate to suit your own preferences. You are free to make up whatever rules you want before the debate, but do not change the rules once the debate has begun. Watch your body language carefully.

You’re responsible for time management. You must signal the beginning and end of protected times and the debaters will rely on you for these time signals.

Learn to use a flowsheet. Flowsheets make it easier to track arguments made by students throughout the debate, making it easier to judge when its over.

Leave your opinions out of it. The only facts known in the debate are what the teams bring forward. Do not bring your life-long held opinions into your judgment.

“Often as a judge, it can be tempting to complete arguments for teams that are interesting but pre-argumentative. Don't.”

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Don’t fill in for speakers. Do not “fill in” what you believe a speaker meant to say, was

going to say, or should have said. Only base your judgment on what was actually said.

Reveal your decision and the reasoning for it. Judges are required to reveal their decisions, their reasoning, and to give constructive feedback to the students when the debate is over.

Your feedback should not stress winners and losers but should focus on the positive accomplishments of each participant. The feedback you provide is critical for students to be able to evaluate their performance, build on their strengths and address their shortcomings.

“It is not he who gains the exact point in dispute who scores most in controversy, but he who has shown the better temper.” Samuel Butler

Although all judges follow the rules and conscientiously try to be be fair, there are as many ways of judging as there are ways of debating.

That said, there are two basic decisions all judges need to make: (1) deciding on a winner and (2) assigning individual points (or evaluations).

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“Debaters should not win or lose for isolated things they did or did not do, like setting up the debate well or contradicting another team member on their side. Crucially, there are no such things as an automatically winning or losing move. This is a matter of logical necessity: however good or bad something a team does is, another team could always do exactly the same good or bad thing and do something else that made them even better or even worse.

Note that speakers don't have to use the word “rebuttal” to respond to an argument. It may be tidier if they do, but judges should not ignore material that adequately deals with an argument just because the speaker doesn’t point out that it does. Equally, this doesn’t mean speakers should be “punished” for not refuting everything: some claims do not do any harm at all to the opposite side.

For example, in a debate about the legalization of drugs, if the affirmative side says “pink elephants are cute because they have those nice ears and are a pleasant color”, this flawed argument can be safely left unrebutted by the opposition as it isn’t a reason to legalize drugs. There is, therefore, no need to point out that blue elephants are obviously more tasteful. So too, if they said “some drugs are less harmful than others”, this could also be ignored. While it is clearly more related to the debate than the cute pink elephants argument, it is pre-argumentative – that is, it has not yet been given sufficient surrounding words to actually provide a reason to do or not do the policy. The other side can quite happily say “yes, some drugs are more harmful than others” and move on, or just ignore this argumentative non sequitur."



https://debate.uvm.edu/dcpdf/WUDC20Malaysia_2014_Debating_and_Judging_Manual.pdf

Here's an interesting article showing the wide variation in comments by lay judges under all kinds of debating conditions and formats.

https://pf.debateus.org/ blog/2017/10/28/what-to-layjudges-vote-onarguments/

Debates are about widely different issues and each form of debate is conducted somewhat differently, so there is no universal rule for deciding who wins or exactly how to arrive at that decision. Ideally, you will decide the debate based on obvious differences in the performances of the debaters over the course of the debate. The process gets tricky when there are clearly two (or more) individuals or teams that are superior to the others, rather than there being just one who stands out at obviously superior.

"Don't invent arguments for the debaters, don't complete their arguments for them and don't rebut their arguments. Judges often speak about a debater "getting at a good point" even if "they didn't quite get there". This is just an excuse for a judge to invent an argument they'd like to hear. Don't do it. As we don't do teams' rebuttal for them, we don't consider claims invalid just because we disagree, or because we can see holes in their arguments, nor do we ignore arguments that were made just because they were ignored by other teams in the debate. "

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During the debate, the teams or individuals will present different kinds of

arguments. The proposition will make a case for the motion being debated and the opposition team will make arguments for why the proposition's case is misguided, dangerous, or inadequate. You will have to make a judgment based on the merits to decide whether oppositions arguments or the proposition's rejoinders were more convincing.

"In an ideal world, teams will engage in extensive responses to each other's welldetailed points. In most of the debates that occur in the actual world, teams will often talk past each other and leave each other's points unchallenged. Under those circumstances, the judge will have to assess not only which arguments are most important, but equally which are most clearly proven."

During the debate, debaters may set out criteria for your decision. Encourage your student to offer these criteria. They are even permitted to address you directly, saying that you should or should not base your decision on a particular argument or kind of argument.

Although you are basing your decision on which team or individual was most effective at arguing a position, do not decide the debate based on the number of arguments won by each side. Instead evaluate the qualitative significance of each argument on the overall outcome of the debate.

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For example, probability and risk calculation can play a role in the significance of an

argument. However, it is not your job to interject your own risk calculations or value judgments into the debate. The debaters have weighed the options for you – it is their job to address why their arguments outweigh or are more important than or more instrumental to the decision than those of the other team.

“Unrebutted points that require the judge to make some logical leaps are often more persuasive than thoroughly-rebutted points and are always more persuasive than no points at all but are not preferable to a well-reasoned argument which rests on fewer unsubstantiated assumptions. What is and is not rebutted is therefore of vital importance to judging debates."

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Scoring & Ranking Debates

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Please feel free to create your own version that reflects your teaching goals for your clas

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Score

91-100

e Debate Scoring Format – Rank Presenters Within Each Range

Argumentation	Refutation	Structure	Presentation
Sophisticated understanding or issues and strategies. Presents powerful arguments with substantial evidence to support sound reasoning. Able to think on their feet.	Understands how their arguments interrelate. Recognized and investigated inconsistencies in the opponent's claims.	Showed strong narrative structure. Persuasive introduction and conclusion. Speech was sophisticated and easy to follow. Seamlessly integrated arguments.	Effectively used rhetorical devices (humor, inflection, pausing) to add depth to the argument. Thoroughly engaged and highly effective. Strong eye contact.
Able to establish clear positions that demand a sophisticated reply. Adheres to ARE	Maintains his own/ team's positions, supplementing them with thoughtful analysis	Simple, effective narrative structure for own arguments; some difficulty integrating multiple counter-positions.	Speaks in a clear and engaging manner. Only occasional use of entertaining or persuasive style.

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	format and effectively presents evidence to support issues. Is well prepared to discuss issues.	and examples. Effectively refuted major arguments made by opposing team.	Uses speaking time effectively. Sufficiently organized so that listeners not taking notes could follow.	Confident and credible. Occasional verbal pauses (um, uh). Strong eye contact.
71-80	Speaker clearly understands argumentation but only occasionally uses ARE format. Speaker confuses reasoning and evidence, often offering only one or the other. Struggled to identify debate's major issues.	Speaker discusses own arguments without answering opposing arguments, though there was some refutation addressing a combination of both general and specific issues.	Speaker has a basic structure (intro, body, conclusion) but strays from it. Speaker can organize own points but loses structure when addressing opponent's points. Could allocate time more effectively.	Speaks clearly but is not overly engaging or persuasive. Some distracting verbal interruptions (ums, pauses). Good but not outstanding nonverbal communication.
60-70	Did not follow the ARE format, with some exceptions. Used little evidence to support arguments. Has inconsistencies, logic gaps, or fallacies in major arguments. Little integration of issues from teammates.	Does not respond or reply to major arguments from the opposing side. Repeats previously stated ideas/positions rather than develop, analyze, or compare them. Speaker does not use welldeveloped refutation techniques.	Full speech is not well organized. Lacks an attention-getting introduction and a powerful conclusion. Difficult to follow for a significant period. Unclear when moving from one point to the next. Ineffective allocation of time.	Loses clarity for sustained periods. Poor eye contact and infrequent use of gestures. Speaker does not sound confident or convincing and is not engaging. Does not present effectively with teammates.
Below 60	Scores below 60 are reserved for students who are unsuccessful as debaters as well as otherwise uncooperative, mean-spirited, or disruptive during the debate.			

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A Detailed Approach To Evaluation

Here's another scale with more of a narrative format that is used in international debate tournaments is more detailed than the previous one – the complexity of the judging task is directly related to the type of debate. It may be useful to note that in high-powered debate tournament performances that are basically very good still rank in the mid-range for scoring at the most intense levels of competition.

Obviously these standards must be relaxed a bit for less rigorous competitions but really, this way of “laddering” criteria applies even when you’re judging a primary school debate around the merits of mandatory school uniforms.

The categories are rough and general descriptions; speeches needn’t have every feature described to fit in a particular category. Many speakers will range across multiple categories depending on the feature assessed – for example, their style might appear of the 75-79 range, while their engagement might be closer to the 65-69 bracket, and their argumentation closest to the 70-74 range.

Judges should not treat any individual feature as decisive in and of itself, but should rather aim to balance all features of the speech to come to the speaker score that seems most appropriate. Throughout this scale, ‘arguments’ refers both to constructive material and responses.

95- 100: Plausibly one of the very best debating speeches ever given, flawless and astonishingly compelling in every regard. It is incredibly difficult to think up satisfactory responses to any of the arguments made.

90- 94: Brilliant arguments are extremely well-explained and analyzed in great depth, always central to the case being advocated, and demand highly sophisticated responses. The speech is very clear and incredibly compelling in its delivery. Role fulfilment is executed flawlessly and includes excellent engagement with other teams in the debate.

85- 89: Very good arguments are highly compelling and analyzed deeply; responses of real sophistication would be required to refute them. Delivery is clear and highly persuasive. Role fulfilment is close to flawless, and the speech engages directly and effectively with other teams in the debate.

80- 84: Consistently relevant arguments set-up or address key issues in the round with a good degree of explanation and analysis. The speech is clear throughout, and persuasively delivered. Role is well-fulfilled and engagement with other teams, whilst possibly lax on some points, is generally effective and convincing.

75- 79: Arguments are almost exclusively relevant, and frequently persuasive. Occasionally, but not often, the speaker may slip into: i) deficits in explanation; ii) simplistic argumentation vulnerable to competent responses; or iii) peripheral or

irrelevant arguments. The speaker holds one's attention, provides clear structure, and successfully fulfils their basic role on the table. A genuine effort to engage effectively with other teams in the debate is made, though some important contributions may be missed or poorly unaddressed.

A Detailed Approach To Evaluation

70- 74: Arguments are generally relevant, and some explanation of them given, but on multiple occasions there may be: i) obvious gaps in logic; ii) simplistic argumentation; or iii) peripheral or irrelevant material. The speaker mostly holds the audience's attention and is usually clear, but is not always compelling, and may sometimes be difficult to follow. There are decent attempts to fulfil one's role on the table and engage with other teams, but these may be undermined by problematic omissions.

65- 69: Relevant arguments are often made, but with limited explanation. The speaker is clear enough to be understood the vast majority of the time, but this may be difficult and/or unrewarding. Poor attempt to fulfil role, and whilst some engagement with other teams in the debate is made, it misses important contributions, and is often ineffective in refuting the arguments it does target.

60- 64: The speaker is often relevant, but rarely makes sustained arguments. Frequently but not always confusing, with the appeal of arguments weakly conveyed; minimal awareness of role, little if any engagement with other teams.

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55- 59: The speech rarely makes relevant claims, which are only occasionally formulated as arguments. Confusing throughout, and perhaps somewhat limited in the basic quantity of what is said. No evident awareness of role, no meaningful engagement with other teams.

'

50- 54: Content is almost never relevant, is both confusing and confused, and is highly limited in quantity. No fulfilment of role is provided, nor any engagement with other teams.

It is important for judges, just like debate participants and their coaches, to keep track of the arguments made during a debate. Keeping track of the unfolding elements of a debate through systematic note taking is known as “Flowing”.

Here is an excellent 7-minute introduction to the basic principles of Flowing.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YY-JxA0MvOU

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It is easy for an audience and even a judge to make the mistake of deciding the debate largely based on the final rebuttal speech. That's one reason for keeping a detailed flow sheet – it allows everyone to keep track of events using the same format even though individual interpretations and focal points will vary. "Flowing a debate means taking notes as the speakers present their arguments.

Flowing can occur in any number of manners and some basic structure is outlined here. One method of flowing a debate is taking detailed notes on a single sheet of paper top to bottom, similar to just attempting to remember the key points raised during the entire debate.

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Flowing is a fairly simple method for new judges to use to remember the main arguments presented in a debate, but can get very messy and convoluted. A common method for flowing a debate involves separating a sheet of paper lengthwise into six columns.

Flowing in this manner affords judges specific columns to write both the arguments a team provides as well as the responses given as refutation to the opponent's arguments.

While flowing the debate on a separate sheet of paper, judges should also write down any comments and critique that arise during the round on the official judging ballot. Writing comments down during the round will help speed filing out the ballot after the conclusion of the round." (adapted from: "Judge Training: Cornerstone")

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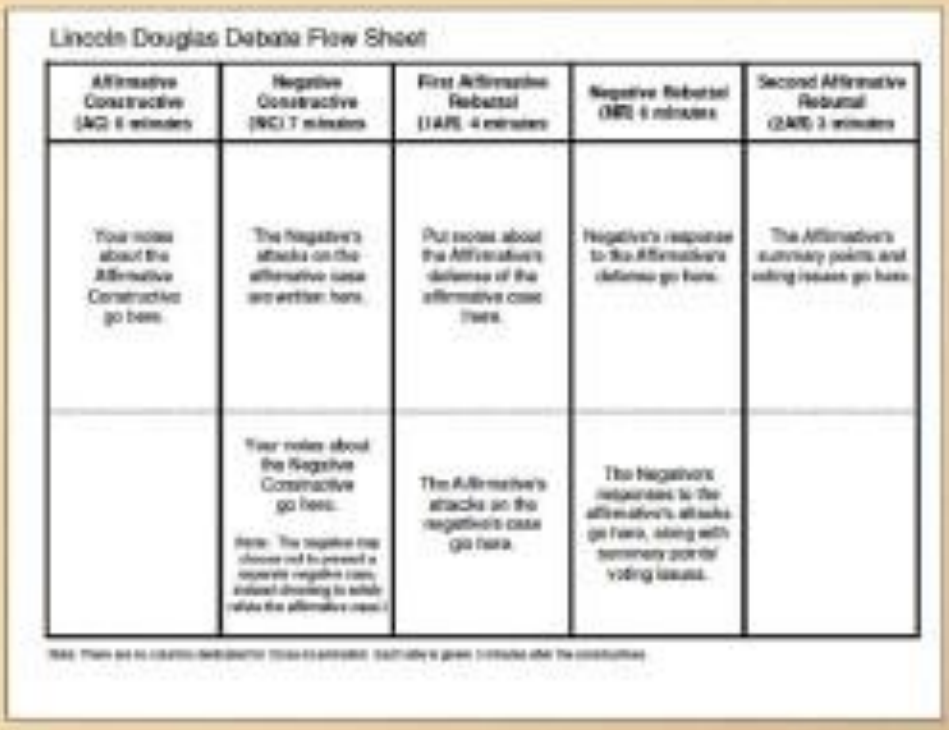
A Lincoln-Douglas Flow Sheet

In a formal debate, the proposition rebuttal speech needs to be both a response to the opposition's arguments and a summation of the proposition's final position.

When deciding the debate, a judge will need to evaluate whether the proposition failed to address and respond to any of the oppositions arguments and then decide how to weigh those 'conceded-by-default' arguments. Participants may also change or drop arguments over the course of the debate.

A good flow sheet helps everybody involved in the debate from any perspective – judge, participant, or coach- to track the arguments as they progress. This is a sample flow sheet from a "Lincoln-Douglas" debate format. As you can see it's quite formal but still logical and easy to follow. It reflects exactly how the give-and-take of the debate flows between participants.

LD – Flowsheet


Lincoln Douglas Debate Flow Sheet

Affirmative Constructive (AC) 6 minutes	Negative Constructive (NC) 7 minutes	First Affirmative Rebuttal (1AR) 4 minutes	Negative Rebuttal (NR) 6 minutes	Second Affirmative Rebuttal (2AR) 3 minutes
Your notes about the Affirmative Constructive go here.	The Negative's attacks on the affirmative case are written here.	Put notes about the Affirmative's defense of the affirmative case here.	Negative's response to the Affirmative's defense go here.	The Affirmative's summary points and voting issues go here.
	Your notes about the Negative Constructive go here. Note: The negative may choose not to present a separate negative case, instead choosing to refute the affirmative case.	The Affirmative's attacks on the negative's case go here.	The Negative's responses to the affirmative's attacks go here, along with summary points/ voting issues.	

Note: There are no cross-examination periods and each side is given 3 minutes after the constructives.

Here's a more generic flow sheet showing the order in which a judge (or anyone who is following the debate) can keep track of the arguments and counter-arguments.

Affirmative Constructive	Negative Constructive	1st Affirmative Rebuttal	Negative Rebuttal	2nd Affirmative Rebuttal
Your notes about the Affirmative Constructive go here.	The negative's attacks on the affirmative case are written here.	Jot down notes about the affirmative's rebuttal to the negative's attacks here.	Negative's response to the affirmative's rebuttal goes here.	Since the Affirmative only has three minutes for this speech what usually happens is that instead of covering every argument on the flow the affirmative simply selects a number of points to re-iterate. Jot them down here.
You can use this space to record possible questions to ask during the cross-examination.	This space contains notes about the negative case.	The affirmative's attacks on the negative's case go here.	The negative's responses to the affirmative's attacks go here. Also, any final points of summary can be recorded here as well.	

In judging the quality of the speaking in a debate the emphasis is on performance criteria rather than on quality of argumentation. Both are important and both earn the debaters points. Here's an example of a scoring system and good concise description of the process.

"In addition to deciding the winners of the debate, judges have to fill out their ballot and assign points to individual debaters. Speaker points are a measure of performance by individual debaters. Most tournaments give speaker awards, which are trophies given to individuals based on their aggregate point accumulation during the course of a tournament. Usually, you will be asked to rank the debaters on a 30point scale, although there are other kinds of scales."

"You may choose to assign a low-point win. A low-point win is a circumstance where the team that won did not get the highest points. This circumstance arises occasionally, when judges feel that one team did the better job of speaking but did not win based on the arguments. The total number of points does not decide who won the debate. We suggest the following guidelines for assigning points on a 30-point scale:

30: Almost no one should get a 30. (A perfect score should happen very infrequently and only with a beyond-brilliant speaking.)

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28-29: Simply Brilliant.

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26-27: Strong, well above average.

25: Above average

23-24: Modestly successful

"Points below 23 should be reserved for people who are both unsuccessful as debaters and are lso obnoxious and mean-spirited. Points should never drop below a 20, even if a debater was particularly bad. Lower points frequently exclude a debate team from elimination rounds, so if you give points below 20, you are saying that a debater has no chance of rehabilitation in any other debates. You may assign half-points (27.5, 25.5, etc.) After assigning points and ranking the debaters, you should write your ballot. "

“We recommend that you use the space provided on the ballot to explain the reasons for your decision. Why did you vote the way you voted? What arguments were most persuasive to you? Why? Give advice and constructive criticism to the debaters you watched. What did they do well? How could they improve their performance or their arguments?”

“Try to use as much of the ballot space as you can. Debaters and their coaches save ballots, and often refer back to them as references and resources. Do not use writing the ballot as an excuse 15 not to deliver an oral critique, however brief, to the teams that you judge. Whatever interaction you have with the debaters after the debate will always be more valuable than the comments you write on the ballot." (from: Kate Schuster: MiddleSchool Debate Judging Guide

One of the great things about being a debate judge is that you are able to counsel young people with active, bright minds on the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments based simly on your own life experience. After living a certain number= of years, most of us develop a pretty good feeling for whether an argument makes sense or not. In debate judging that intuitive sense gets organized and systematized and then used by judges to spot the elusive big game of the Debate jungle - the Logical Fallicy!

To be successfully fair debate and speaking judges need to be able to distinguish the differences between good argumentation and bad argumentation. Sometimes the reasoning behind a persuasive debater’s arguments can seem fine when you hear the arguments presented, but will prove to be flawed if you look more closely.

The dreaded Logical Fallacy is the most common type of flawed reasoning in debating, probably because logical fallacies seem so natural when incorporated into a persuasive argument. That’s part of the fun of judging for many judges at all levels – keeping a sharp eye and ear out for hidden logical fallacies and the incorrect conclusions arising from such flawed reasoning.

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The Good Old Appeal to Tradition

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An argument that we should do something a certain way because it has always been

done that way is not good reasoning. Although there are good reasons for preserving tradition in some circumstances, the simple fact that something has been done for a long time is not a strong argument.

The Appeal to Authority

Debaters should refer to reputable sources and authorities to support their arguments. If a student was arguing, for example, that the drinking age should not be lowered, he or she might reference a study conducted by the Center for Disease Control. However, saying that teenagers will always abuse alcohol because some article on Facebook said so is not a strong argument against lowering the drinking age. Statements are not true or credible evidence simply because someone made a statement or assertion in print, online or in a public forum.

The Straw Man Setup

The opposing team introduces an argument without serious intent, just to set up to rebut it. They may use an extreme example of your proposal or make a false projection of outcomes based on your argument – in any case you should “call out” this tactic at the first opportunity.

The Morally Flawed Argument

Arguments can be morally flawed, for example, "Convicted violent criminals should automatically be given the death penalty because taxpayers should not have to support them in prison." What has been argued may be accurate or true but it's obviously morally flawed.

The Fallacy of False Cause

This logical fallacy occurs when a speaker says that one thing happened and another thing happened, so therefore the first thing caused the second. Order in time does not prove causality. It is weak reasoning to jump from correlation to causation in an argument.

The Fallacy of Self-Contradiction

This is a fallacy introduced into the argument when an opposing team contradicts one of their previous arguments. You should point out that the arguments cannot be true simultaneously and then explain how this reduces their case's credibility.

The False Dichotomy

This is where the speaker is trying to divide the debate into only two sides even though there are more alternatives than they state. It's likely the speaker is doing this on purpose but in some cases they do not understand the debate.

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False Projections

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The opposition asks rhetorically "What would happen if what the other team is

suggesting were implemented?" and then proceeds to supply a description of consequences that would forcefully (and wrongly) invalidate the proposition being advanced.

The False Assertion

This is when a speaker presents a statement which isn't actually an argument because they offer no reason to believe that the statement is valid. You can point out that there has not been enough evidence offered to prove the assertion's validity and then show your own evidence of why the assertion is not valid.

The Fallacy of Composition

The fallacy of composition occurs when a debater assumes in his or her argument that what is true of the part is also true of the whole. For example, just because seven people in your class are great at art does not mean that the entire class is great at art.

The Fallicy of Division

The fallacy of division is the inverse of the fallacy of composition. It occurs when a debater assumes that something that is true of the whole is also true of all of its parts. For example, it may be that the average American family has 2.5 children, but that does not mean that the Jones family down the street has two children and a half child.

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Team Policy Debate

Team policy debate is the oldest, and arguably still probably the most popular format of debate practiced in American schools. The proposition side is called the Affirmative or AFF and the opposition side is called the Negative or NEG. Each side is a team composed of two debaters, so that there are four people participating in the debate (not including the judge and audience).

A round of team policy debate consists of eight speeches. The first four speeches are called constructive speeches, because the teams are perceived as laying out their most important arguments during these speeches. The last four speeches are called rebuttals, because the teams are expected to extend and apply arguments that have already been made, rather than make new arguments.

Here is a table of the eight speeches and their time limits:

Speech:	1AC	1NC	2AC	2NC	1NR	1AR	2NR	2AR
Time:	8 min.	8 min.	8 min.	8 min.	4 min.	4 min.	4 min.	4 min.

(A = Affirmative, N = Negative, C = Constructive, R = Rebuttal.)

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Two things are of interest in this structure. First, the affirmative team both begins and

ends the debate. Second, the negative team has two speeches in a row: the first negative rebuttal (1NR) immediately follows the second negative constructive (2NC).

In general, the members of each team alternate giving speeches, so that the same person gives both the 1AC and the 1AR, the same person gives the 2NC and the 2NR, etc. Occasionally, the rules will allow a change in this format. For example, affirmative teams will sometimes go "inside-outside" so that one person (usually the weaker member) gives the 1AC and the 2AR, while the other (stronger) debater gives the 2AC and the 1AR.

Usually, there is a 3-minute cross-examination period after each of the first four (constructive) speeches. The person who does the cross-examining is the person who will not be giving the next speech for his side. For instance, the person who will give the 2NC will cross-examine after the 1AC. (An exception to this rule is made when the affirmative team goes "inside-outside.") When team policy debate is done without cross-examination periods, the speech times are often extended to 10 minutes for constructives and 5 minutes for rebuttals.

Resolutions

Resolutions in team policy debate are always of a policy nature, usually governmental policy. The affirmative team almost always defends the resolution by means of a particular example, known as a "case"; if they can show the example (case) to be true, then the general proposition is also shown to be true.

Style

Team policy debate is focused on evidence gathering and organizational ability. Persuasiveness is not considered important -- or at least, not as important as covering ground and reading plenty of evidence. The best teams have huge file boxes packed to the gills with evidence on their own affirmative case and all the possible cases they might have to oppose. If you ever walk into a high-level team debate round, expect to see debaters talking at extremely high speeds, reading out the contents of page after page of evidence, gasping for breath between points, and using lots of jargon

There is very little discussion of values such as freedom, justice, equality, etc.; usually, the ultimate criterion on any issue is how many dead bodies will result from taking or not taking a particular action. This form of debate can be fun, it encourages good research and organizational skills, and it is good for getting novice debaters used to speaking in front of people. But if you want to learn how to speak persuasively, this form of debate is not for you.

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Lincoln-Douglas Debate

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Formal Debate Formats That Require Judges

Lincoln-Douglas (or L-D) debate began as a reaction to the excesses of team policy

debate in high school. The idea was to have a debate focused on discussing the merits of competing ethical values in a persuasive manner. The famed debates between senatorial candidates Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas in the 1850s inspired the name and format for this style of debate. L-D is a one-on-one debate, and as in team policy debate, the proposition and opposition teams are called the Affirmative (or Aff) and the Negative (or Neg), respectively.

Format

A round of L-D debate consists of five speeches and two cross-examination periods. The speeches and their times are as follows:

Speech:	Affirmative Constructive	Cross-Ex of Aff by Neg	Negative Constructive	Cross-Ex of Neg by Aff	Affirmative Rebuttal	Negative Rebuttal	Affirmative Rejoinder
Time:	6 min.	3 min.	7 min.	3 min.	4 min.	6 min.	3 min.

Notice that the Affirmative has more speeches than the Negative, but both have the same total speaking time (13 minutes).

Resolutions in L-D debate are usually stated as propositions of value. Although the propositions are sometimes related to issues of policy, this is not always the case. Typical resolutions include: "The spirit of the law ought to take precedence over the letter of the law to enhance justice," "Cooperation is superior to competition," "Violent revolution is a just response to oppression," etc. Unlike in team debate, the debaters are expected to debate the resolution as a whole, not just a particular example.

Parliamentary Debate

Parliamentary debate is yet another form of debate that arose as a reaction against the excesses of NDT and team policy debate. The emphasis in this form of debate is on persuasiveness, logic, and wit. Unlike in other forms of debate, where the resolution is established well in advance of a tournament and is the same for every round in the tournament, in Parliamentary debate the resolution is usually not established until 10 minutes before the debate round begins, and there is a new resolution for every round of debate. Since it would be unreasonable to expect teams to research every topic they could be possibly be asked to debate, parliamentary debate requires no evidence whatsoever.

This form of debate is called "parliamentary" because of its vague resemblance to the debates that take place in the British parliament. The proposition team is called the "Government," and the opposition team is called (appropriately) the "Opposition." The Government team consists of two debaters, the Prime Minister (PM) and the Member of Government (MG). The Opposition team also consists of two debaters, the Leader of the Opposition (LO) and the Member of the Opposition (MO).

Format

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Formal Debate Formats That Require Judges

A round of parliamentary debate consists of six speeches: four constructive speeches

and two rebuttal speeches. The speeches and their times are as follows:

Speech:	Prime Minister Constructive (PMC)	Leader of Opposition Constructive (LOC)	Member of Government Constructive (MG)	Member of Opposition Constructive (MO)	Leader of Opposition Rebuttal (LOR)	Prime Minister Rebuttal (PMR)
Time:	7 min.	8 min.	8 min.	8 min.	4 min.	5 min.

Several things are notable about this structure:

First, as in team policy and NDT debate, the proposition (Government) team -- specifically, the Prime Minister -- both begins and ends the debate.

Second, again as in team policy and NDT, the Opposition team has a block of two speeches in a row (the MO followed by the LOR).

Third, unlike in team policy and NDT, there are only two rebuttals instead of four.

Consequently, two people in the debate (the PM and the LO) have two speeches each, while the other two (the MG and MO) have only one speech each.

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Formal Debate Formats That Require Judges

There are no cross-examination periods in parliamentary debate. But there are various motions on which the debaters can rise during others' speeches.

These motion points are:

1. Point of Information.

During one person's speech, another debater (presumably from the opposite team) rises from his seat and says something like, "Point of information, sir?" The speaker has the option of whether or not to accept the point of information (it is usually good form to accept at least two points of information in a speech). If he accepts the point, the person who rose may ask a question of the speaker -- usually a rhetorical question designed to throw him off. The speaker then answers the question (or ignores it if he can't come up with a good answer) and moves on with his speech. There are two main rules for points of information: they may only be asked in constructive speeches, not in rebuttals; and they may not be asked during the first or last minute of any speech.

2. Point of Order

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A debater rises on a point of order when he believes one of the rules of debate is being

broken. The most common use of the point of order is to say that the speaker is bringing up a new argument in a rebuttal speech, which is not allowed. (The rebuttals are reserved for extending and applying old arguments.) The person making the point of order rises, says, "Point of order, argument X is a new argument." The judge makes a judgment as to whether the point of order is valid. If so, she says, "point well taken," and the speaker must quit making argument X. If not, she says, "point not well taken," and the speaker may continue with that argument if he wishes. The procedure is similar for other points of order.

3. Point of Personal Privilege

This rarely used motion has a couple of different uses. The most common is to protest a gross misrepresentation of one's statements or an attack on one's character. For example: "Mr. Jones says he likes lynching black people." "Point of personal privilege! I merely said sometimes the death penalty is justified." As with points of order, it is the job of the judge to rule the point well-taken or not-well-taken. A point of personal privilege can also be used to ask for a personal favor or exception from the judge; for example, "Point of personal privilege -- gotta go potty, please?"

Resolutions

In parliamentary debate, the resolution is usually in the form of a quotation or proverb provided to the debaters shortly before the round (say, about 10 minutes). Theoretically, the government team is supposed to come up with a specific case that is an example of the resolution, or at least in the spirit of the resolution. In practice, nobody really cares whether the case that the government team runs has anything to do with the resolution, so long as the prime minister makes some small pretense of linking the case to the resolution.

For example, the resolution might be "Religion is the opiate of the masses." A good case to link to this resolution might be that "creation science" should not be taught in public schools. A mediocre link might be something about the drug war, inspired by the word "opiate." A lousy link would go something like this: "This resolution made us think about how people believe things that aren't true. For example, some people think that rent control is a good idea, but that's not true. So in this debate, the

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government will argue that rent control should be abolished." At most parliamentary debate tournaments, nobody would even blink an eye at that link.

The upshot is that the government team has broad latitude to run almost any case they want. Although theoretically the government team is supposed to devise its case only after hearing the resolution, most often a team already has an idea what case it wants to run long before then.

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There is also no requirement that the government run a public policy case. All that is required is that the government team must establish a topic that has two (or more) clashing sides and is debatable.

Broadly speaking, there are only three types of cases that the government team cannot run:

A tautology

A tautological case is one that is immediately and logically true by construction. For example, "Bill Clinton and Barack Obama have been the best Democratic presidents since 1981" would be a tautology, since Bill and Barack have been the only Democrats to have attained the presidency in the specified time period.

A truism

A truistic case is one that no moral person could possibly disagree with. For example, "Infants should not be skinned alive for entertainment purposes" would be a truism. Of course, the definition of truistic is contentious, because it is almost always possible to find someone who disagrees with a proposition, and what is considered moral is often culture-specific.

Formal Debate Formats That Require Judges

A specific-knowledge case

A specific-knowledge case is one that would require the opposition to know more about a topic than it could reasonably be expected to know. In general, debaters are expected to be familiar with current events and popular culture. If the case requires more particularistic information, the government must provide all necessary information in the first speech of the round. If the government fails to do so, then the case is deemed specific-knowledge and hence

against the rules. An example of a specific-knowledge case would be, "The U.S. Air Force should discontinue use of the V26 Osprey helicopter because of its low flight-to-thrust ratio." Another would be, "My partner should dump his girlfriend." Unless the faults and advantages of his girlfriend were well known, it would be unreasonable to expect the opposition to refute the case.

Inasmuch as these are the only constraints on the government's choice of case, there is an astounding variety of cases that may be run. One popular variety is the "timespace" case, in which the government puts the judge in the shoes of a particular person or entity at some point in time, and then argues that she should make a particular decision. An example would be, "You are Abraham Lincoln in 1861. You should let the South go in peace."

At some tournaments, those running the tournament will provide a "tight-link" resolution (either in addition to or instead of the usual weak-link resolution). A tightlink resolution must be defended literally and in its entirety. For instance, if the tightlink resolution were, "The federal government should abolish the minimum wage," the government would be expected to argue for (you guessed it) abolishing the minimum wage. There are also some tournaments that provide "medium-link" resolutions, by which they mean that judges will be strict about the requirement that government cases be reasonably within the spirit of the quotation or proverb provided.

Style

Unlike CEDA, parliamentary debate has managed to preserve its emphasis on persuasion, logic, and humor; this success is most likely a result of eschewing excessive preparation and evidence. The spontaneity and openness of the format makes parliamentary debate free-wheeling and exciting, whereas other styles of debate can become boring because every debate round at a tournament revolves around the same topic.

The downside is that in the absence of any evidentiary burden, debaters are free to spew utter nonsense, or even outright lies, without providing any support for their assertions. (The prohibition against specific knowledge fortunately helps to curb this problem.) All things considered, parliamentary is the most entertaining of any debate style I've found, and also the most conducive to the development of good rhetorical skills.

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Variations

Parliamentary debate is actually a world-wide phenomenon, but the rules differ greatly from country to country. In Canada, for instance, the format is just as in the United States, with the following exceptions:

The speeches are all one minute shorter;

The two back-to-back opposition (MO and LOR) speeches are combined into one long speech delivered by the LO; and,

The Member of the Government (MG) is called the Minister of the Crown (MC) instead.

In the United Kingdom, there are actually four teams in every debate round -- two proposition teams and two opposition teams -- and each person speaks for only five minutes.

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NDT stands for National Debate Tournament. This is the oldest, and probably most popular, form of debate at the college level. NDT is just like the team policy debate of high school, except more so. The format is exactly the same as in team policy debate (4 constructive speeches, 4 rebuttals, 4 cross-examination periods, etc.). And the style is also the same: huge quantities of evidence read at high velocity, with little pretense of persuasion.

CEDA Debate

CEDA stands for Cross-Examination Debate Assocation. This is a newer form of college-level debate than NDT, and it was born as a reaction to NDT in the same way that Lincoln-Douglas debate was born as a reaction to team policy debate. CEDA is a two-on-two debate, with a structure very similar to that of NDT and team policy debate. The difference is in the style of resolution; while NDT resolutions are policy-oriented, this is not always the case in CEDA. In addition, CEDA was intended to be a values-driven debate. By the way, in case you've seen that movie "Listen to Me," starring Kirk Cameron: CEDA is the form of debate they were doing in that movie. Of course, they were doing it more persuasively in the movie than they do in real life.

(This Formal Debate Section Courtesy: California State University Northridge, 2000)

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Judge's "Cheat Sheet" for Formal Debate Events

Student Congress (CON)

Contestants in Student Congress become legislators charged with the task of fulfilling the responsibilities of the legislative branch of the US federal government.

Rules To Observe Closely:
- Rounds are usually about 2 hours and 30 minutes
- Student speeches are up to 3 minutes (PO will announce speech times)
- Legislation authors and first negative speakers have 2 minutes mandatory questioning period
- All other speakers have 1 minute mandatory questioning period
- Speech should be on appropriate topic/side

Evaluating Content:
- Focused on topic
- Organized
- Factual accuracy
- Good composition
- References

Keys To Delivery:
- Eye contact
- Confidence
- Appropriate/professional tone

Scoring:
- Score every speech; scores range from 1 (poor) to 6 (outstanding)
- Please make detailed positive and negative comments on each student ballot
- The Presiding Officer receives her/his scores on a special PO ballot
- At the end of the round, rank the top 8 legislators (including the PO)
- TIP: You should maintain some record for yourself as to who the best legislators are at any given time

Lincoln-Douglas Debate (LD)

Each debater will try to show why their position supports the more important fundamental principles inherent in their position and why that position is superior to the opponent's.

Rules To Observe Closely:
- Students should adhere to timing schedule on ballot (4 minutes prep time per side)

Evaluating Content::
- Focused on topic
- Arguments organized
- Factual accuracy
- Point of view supported
- References
- Support is germane to topic
- Counters arguments presented by opponent

Keys To Delivery:
- Confidence
- Appropriate/professional tone

Scoring:
- Speaker points: maximum of 30; winner must have higher points (no ties)
- Please make sure your comments justify your judging decision (win/loss) and your point score is reflective of your decision

Public Forum Debate (PFD)

Team event that advocates or rejects a position posed by the resolution which is on matters of public policy (example to the right).

Rules To Observe Closely:
- Do not flip for sides unless instructed; Pro always goes first (NCFL rule)
- Students should adhere to timing schedule on ballot (2 minutes prep time per team)

Evaluating Content::
- Focused on topic
- Arguments organized
- Factual accuracy
- Point of view supported
- References
- Support is germane to topic
- Counters arguments presented by opposing team

Keys To Delivery:
- Confidence
- Appropriate/professional tone

Scoring:
- Speaker points: maximum of 30; winning team must have higher points (no ties)
- Please make sure your comments justify your judging decision (win/loss) and your point score is reflective of your decision

Team/Policy Debate (TD)

Two-person events 2020-21 debating questions of policy related to the following resolution:

Suggested NSDA Policy Debate Topic 2020-2021

Be It Resolved That: The United States federal government should enact substantial criminal justice reform in the United States in one or more of the following:
(1) Forensic science;
(2) Policing;
(3) Sentencing.

Judge 's"Cheat Sheet" for Formal Speech Events

(from) https://www.fgccfl.net/

Extemporaneous Speaking (EXT)	Original Oratory (OO)	Declamation (DEC)	Dramatic Performance (DP)	Oral Interpretation (OI)	Duo Interpretation (DUO)
Students are given 30 minutes to prepare a speech on a given topic.	Students write, memorize, and deliver a speech they wrote themselves.	Students memorize and perform a speech written and previously delivered by someone else.	Students memorize and perform a published scene portraying either single or multiple characters.	Students deliver dramatic readings of published poetry or prose in alternating rounds.	Two students as team memorize and perform a published scene portraying either single or multiple characters.
Rules To Observe: • Time: up to 7 min (must time w/ stopwatch) • Time violations of more than 30 seconds cannot place first • No notes (those using notes must be reported to Tab)	Rules To Observe • Time: up to 10 min (must time w/ stopwatch) • Time violations of more than 30 seconds cannot place first • No scripts or notes (those using scripts/notes must be reported to Tab)	Rules To Observe: • Time: up to 10 min (must time w/ stopwatch) • Time violations of more than 30 seconds cannot place first • No scripts or notes (those using scripts/notes must be reported to Tab)	Rules To Observe: • Time: up to 10 min (must time w/ stopwatch) • Time violations of more than 30 seconds cannot place first • No scripts or notes (those using scripts/notes must be reported to Tab)	Rules To Observe • Time: up to 10 min (must time w/ stopwatch) • Time violations of more than 30 seconds cannot place first • Maintains impression of reading from script • Student may not walk away from performance spot	Rules To Observe: • Time: up to 10 min (must time w/ stopwatch) • Time violations of more than 30 seconds cannot place first • No scripts or notes (those using scripts/notes must be reported to Tab) • Students do not touch or have eye contact except during introduction
Evaluating Content: • Factually accurate • Organized • Focused on topic • Point of view supported • Research referenced	Evaluating Content: • Organized, flows, easy to follow • Clear message • Entertaining • Good composition	Evaluating Content: • Entertaining • Speech choice appropriate for competition	Evaluating Content: • Entertaining • Piece choice challenging and appropriate for competition	Evaluating Content: • Entertaining • Piece choice challenging and appropriate for competition	Evaluating Content: • Entertaining • Piece choice challenging and appropriate for competition
Keys To Delivery: • Eye contact • Volume • Speaking rate • Confidence	Keys To Delivery • Eye contact • Volume • Speaking rate • Confidence	Keys To Delivery: • Eye contact • Volume • Speaking rate • Confidence	Keys To Delivery • Characters clearly defined and differentiated • Eye contact • Volume • Speaking rate • Confidence	Keys To Delivery: • Characters clearly defined & differentiated • Eye contact • Volume • Speaking rate • Confidence	Keys To Delivery • Characters clearly defined and differentiated • Eye contact • Volume • Speaking rate • Confidence

In ALL Speech Events:

- Please make detailed positive & negative comments on each ballot
- Rank students from first place to last
- Award points, 80 to 100 (highest points to 1st, no ties)

Video Resources For Debate Judges

1 Debate Changes Lives
Anyone who has any doubts about the impact they can have by volunteering to be a debate judge will find those doubts evaporate if they watch this video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFpOrHn70Gg&list=PL273674CF9D6298BA&index=1

2 MIFA IE Judge Instructions Video
An excellent review of the practical steps that every debate judge must follow from beginning to end of the event. Very well done, very useful, and easy to follow.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=74&v=Bp4wY5HBGT8&feature=emb_logo

3 How To Judge Speech Events
Speech-competition oriented but a great High School Debate judging video too
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lc8-8VUcsmY

4 How To Judge Policy Debate
A 5 minute video with concise descriptions of the major tasks and pitfalls involved in judging Policy Debate.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPiwLmSnpSs

5 How To Judge Lincoln-Douglas Debate
A 5 minute video with concise descriptions of the major tasks and pitfalls involved in judging Lincoln-Douglas Debate
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hGjaLF3mnU

6 Judging & Flowing Debate
An 8 minute video on how to Judge and Flow a Lincoln Douglas/LD Debate Round
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9IQhG2LU-c

7 How To Judge A Public Forum Debate
A 15 minute video offers detailed observations on Public Forum Debate and why it offers different judging challenges from other formal debating formats.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtnrJZlbxKg

8 How To Judge Congressional Debate
A 5 minute outline of the tasks of a judge during a Congressional-Format Debate of the sort that may occur during a student “Congress” or “Legislature” as part of a state-level public debating event.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4S9XtKVlUI

9.Principles of Debate Judging
A short but detailed review of the basic pr inciples of judging debates
https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLbRmCbS7bdKJn2GAhHcWe6xIRj2NWPpgk&v=yq8gnbXDO10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

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10. Flowing – note taking during a debate
A 15 minute video on note-taking, or “Flowing”. This video is directed at debaters who have to flow a debate just as judges do, but from a somewhat different perspective. Very useful discussion of the principles of flowing.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yT0Sz6FTT0M

11. Flowing II
Another very nice lesson on ‘Flowing” your Judging notes during a debate https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rf6HBKgkSAM

12. How To Judge A Debate

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A 6 minute video by a young Korean debater (with excellent English) describing some of the 'back story' behind judging a debate. More a collection of interesting observations than a strict

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“how-to” video. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxRMokRDN7I

13. Judge Training
A very good short video on the basic steps in training to judge debates
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPiwLmSnpSs

14. More Flowing For Judges
An excellent slide-format video on Flowing by Callie Chappell, University of Michigan and Traverse City Central High School debater.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXTO_992FN8

15. How Debaters Adapt To The Judges Style
Anyone judging debate, whether an informal classroom event or a major tournament, is exquisitely aware that they are being thoroughly examined by every debater, each of whom is trying to figure out how to get on the top of the judge's rankings. This video offers a good look at the student psychology.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6OqgyJ6LJ4U&list=PLCqsyrHkja8Qq4kYMoAME4wcDHvVJWtEW

Classroom Debate Strategies & Games

The following dynamic strategies engage students at all grade levels and involve the entire class in lots of different ways. You might consider setting up these strategies as a weekly series for an entire semester in exploration of all the fun and challenging ways that debate fits into classroom learning.

1.T hree-Card strategy

This technique can be used as a pre-debate strategy to help students gather information about topics they might not know a lot about. It can also be used after students observe two groups in a debate, when the debatable question is put up for full classroom discussion. This strategy provides opportunities for all students to participate in discussions that might otherwise be monopolized by students who are frequent participators. In this strategy, the teacher provides each student with two or three cards on which are printed the words "Comment or Question."

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When a student wishes to make a point as part of the discussion, he or she raises one of

the cards; after making a comment or asking a question pertinent to the discussion, the student turns in the card. This strategy encourages participants to think before jumping in; those who are usually frequent participants in classroom discussions must weigh whether the point they wish to make is valuable enough to turn in a card. When a student has used all the cards, he or she cannot participate again in the discussion until all students have used all their cards.

2.P articipation Countdown strategy

Similar to the technique above, the countdown strategy helps students monitor their participation, so they don't monopolize the discussion. In this strategy, students raise a hand when they have something to say. The second time they have something to say, they must raise their hand with one finger pointing up (to indicate they have already participated once). When they raise their hand a third time, they do so with two fingers pointing up (to indicate they have participated twice before). After a student has participated three times, he or she cannot share again as long as any other student has something to add to the discussion.

Tag Team Debate strategy

This strategy can be used to help students learn about a topic before a debate, but it is probably better used when opening up discussion after a formal debate or as an alternative to the Lincoln-Douglas format. In a tag team debate, each team of five **3.** members represents one side of a debatable question. Each team has a set amount of time (say, 5 minutes) to present its point of view. When it's time for the team to state its point of view, one speaker from the team takes the floor. That speaker can speak for no more than 1 minute and must "tag" another member of the team to pick up the argument before his or her minute is up. Team members who are eager to pick up a point or add to the team's argument, can put out a hand to be tagged. That way, the current speaker knows who might be ready to pick up the team's argument. No member of the team can be tagged twice until all members have been tagged once.

4. Role Play Debate strategy

In the Lincoln-Douglas debate format, students play the roles of Constructor, CrossExaminer, and so on. But many topics lend themselves to a different form of debate -the role-play debate. In a role-play debate, students examine different points of view or perspectives related to an issue. See a sample lesson where students assume the roles of various stakeholders in a debate Role Play Debate.

5. Fishbowl strategy

This strategy helps focus the attention of students not immediately involved in the current classroom debate; or it can be used to put the most skilled and confident debaters center stage, as they model proper debate form and etiquette. As the debaters sit center-stage (in the "fishbowl"), other students observe the action from outside the fishbowl.

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To actively involve observers, appoint them to judge the debate; have each observer keep a running tally of new points introduced by each side as the debate progresses. Note: If you plan to use debates in the future, it might be a good idea to videotape the final student debates your current students present. Those videos can be used to help this year's students evaluate their participation, and students in the videos can serve as the "fishbowl" group when you introduce the debate structure to future students.

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6. Inner/Outer Circles strategy

This strategy is aimed at helping students gather facts and ideas about an issue that is up for debate. It focuses students on listening carefully. This strategy can be used to organize and run an information-gathering session prior to a debate or can be used to structure the debate itself. See a sample lesson: **Inner Circle/Outer Circle Debate.**

7. Think-Pair-Share Debate strategy

This strategy can be used during the information gathering part of a debate or as a stand-alone strategy. Students start the activity by gathering information on their own. Give students about 10 minutes to think and make notes. Next, pair each student with another student; give the pair about 10 minutes to share their ideas, combine their notes, and think more deeply about the topic. Then pair those students with another pair; give them about 10 minutes to share their thoughts and gather more notes… Eventually, the entire class will come together to share information they have gathered about the topic. Then students will be ready to knowledgeably debate the issue at hand. See the Think-Pair-Share strategy in action in an Education World article, Discussion Webs in the Classroom.

8. Four Corners Debate strategy

In this active debate strategy, students take one of four positions on an issue. They either strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. See a sample lesson: Four Corners Debate.

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9. Graphic Organizer strategy

A simple graphic organizer enables students to compare and contrast, to visualize, and to construct their position on any debatable question. See a sample lesson using a simple two-column comparison graphic organizer in the Education World article Discussion Webs in the Classroom.

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10. Focus Discussions strategy

The standard rules for a Lincoln-Douglas style debate allow students 3 minutes to prepare their arguments. The debatable question/policy is not introduced prior to that time. If your students might benefit from some research and/or discussion before the debate, you might pose the question and then have students spend one class period (or less or more) gathering information about the issue's affirmative arguments (no negative arguments allowed) and the same amount of time on the negative arguments
(no affirmative arguments allowed). See a sample lesson: Human Nature: Good or Evil?.

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University level competition formats:

While we're strongly committed to the use of classroom debating we recognize that the competitive aspects of formal debate are a great attraction to bright young minds and spirits. There are literally hundreds of variations on formal debating because there is no one set of rules on how debates must be structured. One of the appealing things about the sport of debating is that the teams and players can decide on what kind of debate they want to have depending on circumstances and preferences.

Here's a quick summary of the 12 most common formal debate structures encountered in debating in the US, Europe, Asia and elsewhere in the world of debate. Adapted from http://debate.uvm.edu/dcpdf/debateformatguide.pdf

1. WUDC/BP World Universities Debating Championship
2. NPDA/APDA American Parliamentary Debate, USA only
3. Policy Debate CEDA, NDT, USA only
4. Asians Format AUDC, NEAO, Asia only
5. Australs Australasian format, Australasian only
6. CUSID Canada only
7. NFA Lincoln Douglas, USA only High school level competition:

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8. WSDC World Schools Debating Championship

9. Karl Popper Debate IDEA
10. Policy Debate, USA only
11. Lincoln-Douglas Debate, USA only
12. Public Forum Debate, USA only

1. WUDC/BP

Topics: New topic for each debate.

Teams: Teams of 2, 4 teams in one debate, 2 proposition, 2 opposition, judges rank teams 1-4.
Length: 60 minutes

Preparation: 15 minutes before the debate, no electronic access, only talk to partner.
Interaction: Points of information from one side to the other. Content: No quoted material, usually. Very few procedural or definitional arguments. Style: Faster than normal conversation, but accessible to all people. Events: Worlds, Euros, Asians, Pan Africans, US, etc.

2. NPDA/APDA

Topics: New topic for each debate. Topic more binding for NPDA than APDA.

Teams: Teams of 2, 2 teams, proposition and opposition.

Length: 45 minutes

Preparation: 20-30 minutes open preparation.

Interaction: Points of information.

Content: No quoted material.

Style: Some jargon, some procedural arguments Events: NPDA tournaments, NPTE, APDA tournaments.

3. POLICY DEBATE

Topics: One topic for entire academic year.

Teams: Teams of 2, 2 teams, affirmative and negative.

Length: 2-2.5 hours.

Preparation: Intense preparation during the entire year, extensive research. Ten minutes preparation time to be used by each team during the debate.

Interaction: Cross examination

Content: Lots of quoted material, lots of jargon, many procedural arguments, but very open to innovation if you can defend it.

Style: Usually very rapid speaking. Events: NDT, CEDA tournaments.

4. ASIAN

Topics: Three topics before each debate, teams determine which to debate.

Teams: Teams of 3, 2 teams, government and opposition.

Length: About one hour.

Preparation: 30 minutes.

Interaction: Points of information.

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Content: No quoted material, usually.

Style: A little faster than conversational, but understandable by all. Events: UADC

5. AUSTRALS
Topics: Three topics before each debate, teams determine which to debate.
Teams: Teams of 3, 2 teams, proposition and opposition.
Length: About one hour.
Preparation: 30 minutes.
Interaction: Points of information.
Content: No quoted material, usually.
Style: A little faster than conversational, but understandable by all. Events: Australian tournaments, Australasians.

6. CUSID
Topics: 30 minutes before the debate, but topic is very loosely interpreted.
Teams: Teams of 2, 2 teams, government and opposition
Length: Less than 60 minutes
Preparation: Most preparation done before the tournament.
Interaction: Points of information.
Content: No quoted material, usually.
Style: A little faster than conversation, but understandable by all.
Events: CUSID tournaments.

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7.NFA LD
Topics: One topic for the entire academic year. Mostly topics about policy issues.
Teams: Teams of 1, two teams, affirmative and negative.
Length: About 45 minutes.
Preparation: Intense preparation and research during the year.
Interaction: Cross examination.
Content: Quoted material, prepared arguments.
Style: Appeals to an audience of average intelligent citizens. Events: NFA tournaments. High school level competition:

8.WSDC World Schools Debating Championship Topics: Mix of prepared and extemporaneous topics.
Teams: Teams of 3, two teams, affirmative/proposition and negative/opposition Length: One hour
Preparation: Significant pre-tournament preparation for prepared motions, one hour preparation for extemporaneous motions with no outside help except for almanac and dictionary.
Interaction: Points of information.
Content: No quoted material, usually.
Style: Faster than normal conversation, but understandable by all.

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various tournaments.

9.Karl Popper Debate IDEA
Topics: Announced, usually one month in advance.
Teams: Teams of 3, two teams, affirmative and negative.
Length: 45 minutes
Preparation: Significant preparation before the debate.
Interaction: Cross examination.
Content: Quoted material allowed, but must be able tom document sources.
Style: Accessible to all intelligent citizens.
Events: IDEA Youth Forum, IDEA affiliated tournaments.

10. Policy Debate, USA only
Topics: On topic for the entire academic year, concerns question of government policy.
Teams: Teams of 2, two teams, affirmative and negative Length: 90 minutes.
Preparation: Significant preparation and research during the year. Eight minutes preparation time for each team to be used during the debate.
Interaction: Cross examination.
Content: Substantial quoted material, procedural arguments, considerable jargon. Style: Very fast delivery.
Events: NFL tournaments, Tournament of Champions, NDCA championships.

JUDGING

11. Lincoln-Douglas Debate, USA only
Topics: Value topics announced in advanced.
Teams: Teams of 1, two teams, affirmative and negative.
Length: 35 minutes.
Preparation: Topics announced in advance. Three minutes preparation time for each side during the debate.
Interaction: Cross examination.
Content: Very little quoted material.
Style: Accessible to all intelligent citizens. Events: NFL, ToC, NDCA.

12. Public Forum Debate, USA only
Topics: Announced in advance. Topics of current popular interest. Teams: Teams of 2, two teams, pro and con, sides determined by coin flip at beginning, loser of flip can decide to speak first or second.
Length: 35 minutes.
Preparation: Significant preparation before the debate, two minutes of preparation time for each team to use during the debate. Interaction: Crossfire, debaters take turns asking questions. Content: Some quoted material but debate should not be driven by it Style: Accessible to all citizens.

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