

DEBATING

A debate creates a level playing field where opposing teams of 2 people each present opposing view points on an agreed upon topic. The topic is called a resolution and always begins with the phrase: Be it resolved that...

eg. Be it resolved that Santa Claus really does exist.

Each speaker is allowed to make a constructive speech without being interrupted. However, after the speaker has finished his/her speech, a member of the opposing team is allowed to question them.

There is a prescribed order of speaking and questioning.

ORDER OF SPEAKING

| Who | What | Time |
|--------------------|------------------------------|-----------|
| First affirmative | delivers constructive speech | 3 minutes |
| Second negative | questions first affirmative | 2 minutes |
| First negative | delivers constructive speech | 3 minutes |
| First affirmative | questions first negative | 1 minute |
| Second affirmative | delivers constructive speech | 3 minutes |
| First negative | questions second affirmative | 1 minute |
| Second negative | delivers constructive speech | 3 minutes |
| Second affirmative | questions second negative | 1 minute |

5 minute break to prepare rebuttal

A rebuttal provides the opportunity for speakers to critique their opponents' arguments. No new evidence may be presented during this time.

| | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| First negative | 2 minutes |
| First affirmative | 2 minutes |
| Second negative | 2 minutes |
| Second affirmative | 2 minutes |

Total time: 29 minutes

DEBATER'S RULES

All debaters are responsible for being familiar with the following rules.

A team consists of four debaters, two to debate the affirmative and two to debate the negative side. You will not change sides throughout your two rounds of debate. Also, you may not switch between first and second speaker during the tournament.

1. Defining the Resolution It is the responsibility of the first affirmative to define the resolution, or outline the terms of the debate. It must be defined in a reasonable and straightforward manner. You are not allowed to "squirrel" the resolution (define it in such a way that you are actually debating for the other side), or define it in an outrageous and ridiculous manner. You are also not allowed to define it in such a way that it becomes undebatable (this is called a truism). You will be penalized for doing this, with the maximum penalty being the loss of the debate. The negative team however, must accept the definition and debate on those terms. If they strongly disagree, they are allowed to state their displeasure during their speeches. The judge will then take this into consideration when scoring.

When delivering your speeches, you should not read your material, nor should you have it memorized verbatim. You will be marked on tone, style, deportment, persuasiveness, eye contact and mannerism.

2. Each constructive speech will be five minutes in length. In this speech, you are expected to introduce arguments supporting your side of the resolution. The negative side is also expected to refute the arguments of the affirmative side. If they fail to do this, then they cannot win the debate. You are allowed 15 seconds grace at the end of your speech to finish your concluding remarks. After this grace period, the timer will stand and you must stop talking. Should you continue to speak beyond the grace period, you will be penalized. The same holds true for the rebuttal, which is three minutes in length. You are not allowed to introduce new information in your rebuttal.

3. There are a few rules that apply to the cross examination:

- a) You must ask direct questions. You are not allowed to make statements in the hope that it will strengthen your argument. If you wish to comment on what the witness has said during his/her answering, then you must wait until your speech or rebuttal.
- b) You are not allowed to simply demand a “yes or no” answer. The witness is allowed to justify his/her answer.
- c) You must answer all questions as asked. If you evade a question, you will be penalized. However, you are not required to answer questions of a personal nature. Simply state: “That is an irrelevant question”
- d) You are allowed a maximum of approximately 30 seconds to answer a question. Should you exceed this and not allow the next question to be asked, then you will be penalized. However, if you answer the question appropriately before 30 seconds, and continue to babble and not allow the next question to be asked, then you will be penalized also.
- e) The examiner is not allowed to cut off the witness before he/she has had time to appropriately answer the question. However, after the question has been answered, or after 30 seconds, you are allowed to stop the witness with a “thank you” and continue with the next question.
- f) The witness is not allowed to ask any questions. If the examiner points this out to the judge, then the witness will be penalized. However, the witness is allowed to ask the examiner for clarification.
- g) The examiner should ask only relevant questions (or be leading up to a relevant question), and must always be courteous.

Debate Tips!!!

1) After you state your position on the resolution state clearly and very briefly your 3 or 4 supporting arguments.

2) Follow this introduction by elaborating on your first supporting argument. Give evidence that supports your argument .

3) Move onto your second supporting argument. State that this is your second supporting argument so that it is very clear to the judge that you have moved on. This may be your weakest argument as you should start and finish with strong supporting arguments. Again give the evidence that supports this second argument.

4) Repeat with the next supporting arguments.

5) Remember to recap (conclude) by briefly re-stating your supporting arguments

6) The most difficult skill in debating is the cross- examination. Often debates are won or lost during this period. Although debaters can have some prepared questions, the most effective cross-examination always relates directly to the arguments and the evidence that was contained in the preceding constructive speech. Try to find holes in your opponents arguments by attacking the evidence that they give. During cross-examination :

- question the validity by source, date, relevance.
- perhaps the analogy that they used is exaggerated or even false.
- perhaps the evidence they used for comparison has a major flaw, the differences outweigh the similarities.

7) Probing questions are often a very good strategy. Ask a series of questions relating to one piece of evidence that slowly dissolves the effectiveness of the evidence. Usually you start with very general questions that allow the witness to agree with you, and then move to undermine the evidence your opponent gave in their constructive speech.

Judge's Guideline

The following guideline is intended to provide judges with the necessary criteria of debates and to assist in making judging across the tournament consistent. You will be given one score card for each round of debating. **Remember: your scoring card will be given back to the student debaters at the end of the tournament. Comments should be constructive and encouraging! You must not give verbal remarks that indicate who won or lost the debate. However, general comments may be given.**

The score card is divided into 5 different categories

Delivery (10 marks) Look for tone, deportment, persuasiveness, eye contact, ability to speak without dependence on notes. Consider comments like:

good speaking voice, articulate, good voice projection, enthusiastic delivery, expressive body language, good gesturing, good eye contact, authoritative voice, poised, good intonation, heavy reliance on notes, speak with more enthusiasm

Content (20 marks) Look for organization. Have they clearly stated their three or four arguments in their opening statement? Have the second third and fourth speakers referred to their opponent's speech or did they simply recite a prepared speech? The negative team must refute the arguments of the affirmative team to win the debate. The resolution must be defined by the first affirmative speaker, and the negative team must debate the resolution as defined by the affirmative team. No squirreling is allowed (i.e. defining the resolution in a ridiculous, unintended way that renders the debate invalid). Judges must penalize the first speaker severely, but do not interrupt the debate. Consider comments like:

well defined resolution, organized logical development, compelling evidence, effective opening, well researched, good quotations, good analogies, valid facts, logical conclusion, logical reasoning, require stronger evidence to support arguments, repeated facts, evidence did not relate to argument, evidence not clear, argument unclear, did not refute opponents arguments

Cross examination (6 marks) By far the most difficult skill, questions posed should relate directly to the evidence the opponent gave in their constructive speech. The examiner can NOT demand a yes or no answer without allowing the witness (the person answering) to justify their answer. Examiners may terminate an answer with "thank you" after a reasonable amount of time, if the witness is rambling and not responding to the question. A witness should be penalized for speechmaking or asking questions. An examiner should pose concise questions. Consider comments like:

Judge's comments...Cross examination (con't)

good probing questions, questions were (or not) related to opponent's evidence, questions were concise, questions strengthened your position, questions need to be more concise, questions only, no speechmaking, logical questions, avoid personal questions, be sure to quote opponent accurately

Answering (6 marks) The second most difficult skill. Answers should be logical and consistent, not evasive. The witness (person answering) is allowed 30 seconds maximum to respond. Rambling or evasive responses should be penalized. A witness is not allowed to ask questions but may ask for clarification , eg. "Can you re-phrase the question please? "

Rebuttal (6 marks) Opponents must refute their opponent's arguments for a successful rebuttal. Simply re-stating their own arguments is not sufficient. New information can NOT be introduced during the rebuttal; however, new analogies or examples can be used to strengthen or weaken arguments. Consider comments like:

emphasize the strength of your position, refuted (or did not) opponent's arguments effectively, spoke with confidence and authority, no new information allowed, persuasive analogies used in summation, comparison or contrast was (was not) effective/relevant

Scoring It would be highly unlikely any debater will score below 30 (60%) as we want to encourage future participation. Only a very remarkable few would ever have a 48 or 49 (96%+) The majority of students will fall between 35-39 (70-78%) **No half marks. No ties!!!** If you can not decide a winner, then the affirmative side must win with a one point tie!