

Tino SD Debate Judging Handout

General Notes About Debate

All debate structured around a resolution, or topic. In every parliamentary debate, one side supports resolution, and others will oppose it. The supporters are referred to as the AFF (or sometimes the GOV), and the opposers as the NEG (or sometimes the OPP).

We urge judges to exercise their own judgment in deciding the outcome of a round. To maintain that all debates occur with fair judgment extended to both teams, we also ask that judges do not bring their personal opinions or knowledge into judging rounds, and instead focus only on what is presented by the debaters. For example, if a judge knows facts that support a debater's point, but the debater fails to mention it in the debate, we do ask that the judge not consider that fact in making their final decision.

Broadly speaking, we ask that parents refrain from using outside resources when making their decisions. It is generally the responsibility of the debaters to question facts and statistics, not the judge, however, an exception should be made for when there is significant controversy about the accuracy of evidence. Overall, we ask that judges Google debate contents only when it is absolutely critical to making your decision and only when there is a blatant lie (like saying France isn't real).

The format and arguments are purely up to the debaters and we again encourage parents to exercise their own judgment in deciding the winner of the round depending on which team was more convincing. As debate events and not a performance events, although how debaters carry themselves will invariably play some role in the strength of their arguments, we ask that parents do not evaluate the winner based upon who gave a better performance – for this purpose, there exists a separate scoring criteria, called speaker points.

Judges award speaker points to each of the four debaters based upon how well they speak. Although the speaker points range from 0 to 30, by tradition the minimum amount of speaker points is 25. An extremely subpar speech may score a 25, an average one a 27, and an exceptional one a 29 or 30. Decimals are allowed. A judge may choose to assign more speaker points to a losing team, should they make a superior presentation but fail to win the arguments in the round.

Parliamentary Debate

Each team will assign a "speaker 1" and "speaker 2", and may only speak in the speeches allotted to them. The speech times and order are as follows:

AFF 7 minutes (AFF speaker 1)
NEG 8 minutes (NEG speaker 1)
AFF 8 minutes (AFF speaker 2)
NEG 8 minutes (NEG speaker 2)
NEG 4 minutes (NEG speaker 1)
AFF 5 minutes (AFF speaker 1)

Teams are generally allowed 15 seconds over their time limit, but any content which exceeds this time limit should not be considered in round. Judges should refrain from taking into consideration any content that is delivered in violation of parliamentary debate rules.

Parliamentary debate has three types of rounds: policy, value, and fact. Policy rounds address topics in national governments and usually concern the US Congress but could also address other countries. The AFF will provide a plan to enact the resolution. An example would be: The United States Federal Government should withdraw from NATO. Value rounds cover issues of morality and reason, and although usually related to politics tend to force debaters to examine issues through a philosophical lens, rather than pretending to be a legislator. An example would be: Adolescents ought to have the right to make autonomous decisions concerning medical treatment. Fact rounds present to debaters a statement to evaluate the truth of, and tends to be primarily a competition about evidence and reasoning. An example would be: On net, currency manipulation has done more harm than good.

Congressional Debate

Congressional Debate is a mock legislative assembly competition where students draft bills (proposed laws) which they and their peers debate and vote to pass into law. Students choose whether they do or do not support the legislation and then craft an argumentative speech before a tournament. Rounds last roughly 1.5 - 2 hours, and speeches are 3 minutes long. Students generally have the opportunity to speak at least 2 times per round, but can always participate in cross-examination (questioning of others).. When judging Congress, there will be a student called a presiding officer, who will in essence manage the room in terms of speeches and questioning. As a judge, you can give a presiding officer a rank (separate from the regular speakers) as to how they did. For the core of your judging time in congress, you will be evaluating student speakers. As per any speech, rank students on tone, annunciation, handling of questions, and if their overall argument makes sense to you and they back it up with evidence. If he/she smoothly incorporates all these aspects into their speech, you give them a higher ranking. It is a free for all debate style, meaning that students from the same school do not share rankings.

Public Forum Debate

Cases (1st speakers, 4 minutes)

WHAT IS IT? Students will present their arguments (typically 1-4) in this speech.

WHAT SHOULD YOU TAKE NOTE OF? It is important to record these arguments along with any research, including statistics or evidence from credible sources, that they may have used to support them. Recording research can help you compare both sides and vote for a specific team. These speeches are not impromptu and are prepared beforehand - students typically read their cases to judges.

Crossfires (3 minutes, 1st speakers, 2nd speakers, all speakers)

WHAT IS IT? Speakers on either side will have the chance to ask and answer questions.

WHAT SHOULD YOU TAKE NOTE OF? Record any contradictions, clarifications, or additional information brought up during crossfire. Students may find fault in their opponent's arguments or strengthen their own.

Rebuttals (2nd speakers, 4 minutes)

WHAT IS IT? Students will refute the arguments brought up in their opponent's case.

WHAT SHOULD YOU TAKE NOTE OF? Record students' responses to arguments. Recognize the arguments that students are able to respond to and the arguments they leave out. Similar to the cases, be sure to also note the research they use to support their refutations. Rebuttals are impromptu, but supporting research is most likely prepared beforehand.

Summary/Final Focus Speeches (1st speakers, 2nd speakers, 2 minutes)

WHAT ARE THEY? The summary and final focus speeches are the last speeches of the round. This is the last opportunity for students to win your vote.

WHAT SHOULD YOU TAKE NOTE OF? Students will typically summarize the round and define the major points of argument. When listening to these last few speeches, pay close attention to the arguments that were dropped (not responded to) and which side won on the major points of clash (disagreement).

Lincoln-Douglas Debate

LD is a type of debate that incorporates philosophy and current policy issues, and is the only one-on-one debate event in which opponents directly debate each other. Each topic lasts two months, and students will debate both sides of the resolution for each tournament.

The format is as follows:

1AC - first affirmative constructive, the affirmative states their case, 6 minutes long

Cross-examination: 3 minutes, negative questions the affirmative

1NC/1NR - first negative constructive/rebuttal, the negative states their case and responds to the affirmative case, 7 minutes long

Cross-examination: Affirmative questions the negative, 3 minutes

1AR: Affirmative defends their case + responds to negative case, 4 minutes long

2NR: Negative refutes affirmative arguments, crystallizes and summarizes round, 6 minutes long

2AR: 3 minutes, affirmative summarizes arguments and crystallizes

Judges should pay close attention to the content of the cases, the arguments that debaters make in response to each case, as well as the quality of arguments being made.