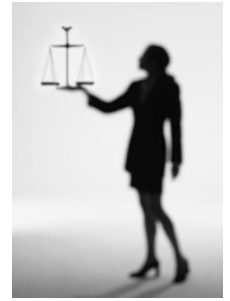




Judging Debate: Overview

Debate teaches critical thinking and public presentation skills. Your service as a judge helps provide students with an educational, productive, and encouraging experience. You must determine which debater or team more effectively convinced you that his/her side of the resolution is, as a general principle, more valid. Following is a chronology of judging a debate round.



Before the Round

- ❖ Find out the exact wording of the resolution and write it down.
- ❖ Read and follow instructions on the judging ballot you will receive.
- ❖ Report conflicts of interest (relative, personal friend, past teammate, coach, etc.) to tournament officials before the round begins.
- ❖ You may talk with debaters before the round starts, but the conversation should not demonstrate favoritism toward a debater or side of the resolution. Debaters should always be respectful of one another and of you, and you should set a tone of decorum and professionalism.

Beginning the Round

- ❖ The debaters will be pre-assigned a side; or in Public Forum, you will conduct a coin toss, at which time the winner will select side (pro or con) or speaking order (first or second).
- ❖ Record each debater's or team's code and side. You can confirm this information with the debaters. You may ask the debater/team speaking first to sit to *your* left, and the opposing side to sit to *your* right.
- ❖ When both debaters are ready, the affirmative debater (in Public Forum, the team speaking first) will stand in the front of the room to deliver the initial speech.

During the Round

- ❖ While the debaters may keep track of their own time, judges need to monitor speaking times during the round. Speech times and order are listed on the Lincoln Douglas and Public Forum ballots.
- ❖ Each debater or team has preparation time that can be used prior to any of speeches or cross-examination period. Judges must monitor how much preparation time has elapsed for each debater/side.
- ❖ During the debate, you are encouraged to take notes of arguments (often called the *flow*, referring to the relationship of arguments and responses) made by debaters to assist you in making a decision at the end of the round.
- ❖ Also keep track of what each side says in response to the other side's arguments. To ensure fairness, your notes should help you determine if a debater is improperly making brand new arguments in the final rebuttal or summary speeches to which the opposing debater has no opportunity to respond.
- ❖ Judges shall not ask questions during the round.
- ❖ During questioning periods in Lincoln Douglas and Policy Debate, time belongs to the debater asking questions. Questions should be brief, and answers should be short and specific. The person answering questions should not be permitted to refute, but should be limited to simply answering the questions. The questioner should not be permitted to comment on the answers.
- ❖ During *crossfire* periods in Public Forum Debate, the time belongs to all debaters to ask and answer questions. The first speaking team should ask the first question in each period. Questions and answers should be brief and specific. Speakers should stand during regular crossfire and should remain seated for the grand crossfire.

After the Round

- ❖ Check codes and sides carefully. This is especially important when marking the winner of the debate. Completely and neatly fill in all requested information on the ballot.
- ❖ In your written comments, please be as specific and constructive (educational) as possible.
- ❖ Provide a detailed justification of your decision, referring to the central issues the debaters presented in the round. Evaluate the round based only on arguments debaters made and not on personal opinions or on arguments that you would have made.
- ❖ A judge must promptly render a decision no later than 10 minutes after the final speaker concludes, and return to the designated location or staff. If disclosing the winner and/or oral critiques are allowed at a particular tournament, do not do so until the ballot has been turned in.

Ballot Checklist

- Include all names and codes requested.
- Select a winner.
- Assign points (and ranks, if requested).
- Provide useful suggestions for improvement.
- Justify your decision thoroughly.

Awarding Points: You may be asked to rate each team or debater. Following is a general guide to range, based on a 30-point scale.

20-21: Poor/Weakest 5-10%	22-23: Weakest 25%	24-26: Average	27-28: Strongest 25%	29-30: Outstanding/Strongest 5-10%
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