

Adjudicator Guide – World Schools

PART I: RULES

STRUCTURE

- 2 teams: Government/Proposition and Opposition
- 3-5 members in a team, but only 3 members can speak for each debate round; the other two can prepare with the team before the debate, but not participate or communicate with the three speakers once the debate starts
- 3 substantive speeches (8 minutes each) and 1 reply speech (4 minutes each) per team; reply speeches can only be delivered by either of the first 2 speakers of each team
- Speakers speak in alternating order starting with the Proposition, except for the reply speeches, which is first delivered by Opposition
- Between the 1st and 7th minute of substantive speeches, members of the other side can offer Points of Information (which last for a max of 15 seconds). No POIs can be offered during the Reply speeches
- No communication with the coach or other teams is allowed during the preparation for impromptu rounds and during the actual debates
- No low-point wins... Not even draws! 😊 The winning team must also have the highest sum of speaker points.

TEAM ROLES

Definitions: The 1st Speaker of the Proposition team defines the motion and the 1st Speaker of the Opposition team accepts or rejects the definition (more on this later).

BURDENS

The Proposition team does not have to prove its case beyond reasonable doubt, but merely that its case is true in the majority of cases. The Opposition team must prove more than a reasonable doubt - they should prove at least a significant minority of cases.

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IF THE MOTION IS WORDED AS AN ABSOLUTE (ex. never or always), the Proposition must prove the topic true in a significant majority of cases, though not in every conceivable case. The Opposition must prove that it is not true for a significant minority of cases (not just a single instance).

Opposition has the option to present a positive case of their own or simply attack Proposition's case. However, they must discharge their burden (see above), and thus, a straight negation case may be risky.

SPEAKER ROLES

1ST SPEAKER OF PROPOSITION

Define the motion (explain team's understanding of key words in the motion, set reasonable debate parameters)

Discuss plan/policy if their team has one/if needed

Introduce division of arguments of their team

Discuss constructive arguments in support of their side

1ST SPEAKER OF OPPOSITION

Accept or reject the definition of the 1st Prop speaker; definitional challenges need to be explicit! Not saying anything about the definition, means that the Opposition is accepting it as it is.

Introduce division of arguments of their team

Refute the plan/arguments discussed by the previous speaker

Defend their side, usually with distinct constructive material

2ND SPEAKERS FOR BOTH TEAMS

Deal with definitional challenges (if needed) – more on this later

Refute the case of the speaker(s) before them and defend/extend the case of their first speakers

Continue with their team's case as outlined by their first speakers

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3RD SPEAKERS FOR BOTH TEAMS

Focus on responding to the other team's case and the other team's attacks to their own case

May present a part of their team's positive case, but this has to be announced by the first speaker of their team in their case division (not always strategic, because it takes time away from responding to material already existing in the debate)

New refutations or new examples/analysis that is tethered to previously made arguments are not 'new material'; 'new positive material' is likely to have a traction different to what previous speakers established

REPLY SPEECHES

- Provide a holistic overview of own team's case and responses to other side
- Compare the argumentation and cases of both sides (i.e. "biased adjudication")
- Cannot introduce any new material – that part of the debate is over; this is about reviewing the debate from a more detached perspective but that still focuses on why one's team won. A new example / illustration is not considered new material, so long as it is consistent with the examples / illustrations that have already been used by the team
- If significant new material is introduced in 3rd Opp and Opp reply, the Prop reply speaker should point out material that is entirely new in Third Opp and/or Opp Reply and why this was strategically problematic for Opp, rather than engage in new rebuttal.
- No POIs in the reply speeches

DEFINITIONS

a) The Proposition must present a reasonable definition of the motion:

- Choose the obvious meaning of the motion - Reasonable parameters are okay (ex. excluding burn victims from a cosmetic surgery ban); unreasonable parameters are not (tautologies, truisms, time/place set)

b) The definition must match the level of abstraction or specificity of the motion;

motions set as general principles must be proven true as general principles (for example, if the motion is THW restrict civil liberties in the name of national security, a definition that defends exclusively compulsory ID cards is too narrow in its focus)

c) Here and now rule – unless otherwise specified in the motion, the context for the debate is in the present

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OPPOSITION, IN THEIR 1ST SPEECH, CAN:

(a) accept the definition and proceed with the debate (this can be done implicitly, by not commenting on the definition, the 1st Opposition speaker does not have to explicitly state that they accept the definition); (b) explicitly challenge the definition, explain the grounds for challenging, and supply an alternative reasonable definition; (c) broaden the debate back to the motion if it has been unfairly restricted by Proposition; (d) challenge the definition, but still provide 'even-if' arguments

Note: in cases where the Opposition challenges the definition, legitimate grounds for challenging are a definition that creates an undebatable proposition (truism, tautology, too restrictive time / place set). If Opp chooses to challenge the definition, they have to explain why the definition is actually illegitimate. Even in cases of bad definitions, there is no obligation on Opposition to challenge - they are allowed to choose to proceed with the faulty definition.

POINTS OF INFORMATION

- Short comment or question addressed to the person currently speaking by a member of the opposing team (max of 15 seconds)
- POIs allow for real-time engagement in the debate
- The speaker who has the floor has a right to refuse POIs, but as a general rule, must accept at least 1 (but judges should consider when and how many points were offered by the other side, so if a speaker is not offered several POIs, and spread out consistently throughout their speech, it is unreasonable to expect them to accept more than one)
- If a speaker accepts a POI, they must ensure that the person offering the POI is given adequate time to express their point
- Speakers may offer POIs any time between the 1st and 7th minute of the current speech, but do so in a way that doesn't obstruct the speech (ex. wait a bit after being denied before offering POIs again; offering in a way that is audible to the speaker, but not so loud that it interrupts the flow; etc

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PART II: JUDGING

MINDSET

As judges we:

- Are experts on the rules
- Understand the words in the motion, and the burdens the motion creates for the teams
- Are impartial (conflicted from judging teams/individuals with whom we have/had personal relationships/formal professional relationships; we set aside our own biases in relation to the motion or specific arguments we personally agree with);
- Judge the debate in front of us, not the debate we wanted to happen, which means we don't impose arguments on teams;
- Don't complete arguments for debaters, when we can see where they are going or are intuitive to us, or discount arguments we personally dislike - we look for substantiation and evidence
- Diligently track arguments, responses, and POIs – judges should be able to fairly and accurately summarize the debate (not necessarily to the debaters, even just to themselves) before evaluating it
- Are an average reasonable person: we have a general knowledge base/ are aware of current events, but do not use specialist knowledge in evaluating debates
- Accountable and constructive: we explain the decision to debaters persuasively, using criteria (content/style/strategy) and rules, and if needed we can provide suggestions for improvement (after explaining the decision)

CRITERIA: CONTENT, STYLE, STRATEGY

- The three categories are important, because they improve standardization in judging, if we all think along the same lines and give the same weight to the categories
- It also makes it easier to explain to teams the decision
- It helps guide our own thinking while judging
- Shouldn't be too rigid in their application as separate criteria, because they are heavily interconnected as well

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STYLE

- Deals with HOW content is presented (i.e. manner)
 - NOT about language proficiency / accents, but does involve effective use of language (clarity, rhetorical tools, etc.; often, overly technical or overly general language is unpersuasive)
 - Body language (eye contact, effective use of gestures, movement, stance)
 - Voice and tone (tonal variation, audibility, speed, use of pauses)
 - Demeanor (appropriate use of humor or emotion; in general, rudeness is unpersuasive)
 - Notes must facilitate speech, not obstruct contact with audience
 - No single 'superior' style exists, regardless of your personal preference. Different speakers make different styles work effectively, and they should be rewarded when they do it well.

CONTENT

- Deals with WHAT is being presented
 - The material presented by a speaker on its own terms (ex. arguments, refutation, POIs, definition, etc.) as though it were written down
 - Assessing the quality of analysis (logical links) and evidence presented (credible, relevant, representative, etc. examples)
 - Accurate grasp of opponents' arguments and quality of responses (for example responding to an example vs the underlying logic of an argument or responding to weaker parts of the argument)
 - Actual content of the POIs offered and quality of responses to POIs taken

STRATEGY

- Overarching question: WHY is content being said
- Does the speaker/team demonstrate an understanding of the key issues of the debate?
- Do they have a reasonable interpretation of the motion/tactical choices about challenging/broadening the definition?
- Does their team position/stance in the debate help their side win?
- Are they making tactical decisions about responding to a policy/plan?
- Are they prioritizing arguments/responses and allocating / managing time effectively (will also reveal

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whether they understood critical issues of debate)? Misrepresenting another side's argument reveals a weak understanding of the debate.

- Is there consistency between arguments and speeches of the same side?
- Are they willing to accept POIs?
- How do they select and use examples/stories/rhetorical devices?

GUIDELINES FOR JUDGING

Be able to answer (both to teams and to yourself):

- What points (e.g. points of argumentation, points of style, etc.) were more persuasive on the winning side?
- Why are these specific reasons important in the context of this particular debate? (i.e. how did they play a role in the dynamic of the debate / compared to what the other team did)

Requirement to be specific:

- Avoid generic phrases like “provided more analysis”, “were more persuasive”, etc., unless you can then also give specific points of reference where that was observable

Debates are won on the comparative:

- Teams do not lose debates because they made a mistake / or because they were not perfect. The decision is determined based on who, on balance, was better able to persuade you of their side, and met their burden compared to the other team. Explaining the decision vs. providing constructive feedback:
 - Our job in the Oral Adjudication after the debate is first and foremost to explain why the win was awarded to one team over another. This should include explicit explanations, following the guidelines above. This should be distinct from giving feedback towards the future improvement of the teams (so, pointers on how to do something better, or arguments that could have been made, should not be conflated with the reason for decision).

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Explaining the decision in the Oral Adjudication:

- Reveal your decision first
- Provide reasons for your decision. Reasons can be structured as follows:
 - Comparing teams on how they did based on the three criteria (style, strategy, content);
 - Key clashes in the debate and why one team won them
 - In some cases, one overriding issue and how this affected all others; or how the issues were weighed against each other
- Invite teams to approach you personally for constructive feedback

Giving feedback to teams:

- Keep it short: teams also need to get some rest, food and prepare for the next round. So please prioritise what is most useful for debaters to hear, and focus on that.
- Keep it constructive: give the teams / speakers pointers on how to improve, instead of listing things they do wrong.
- Target it to their level: speakers with different levels of experience can process different feedback. Try to make your feedback useful in each particular case, not just good advice in general.
- Make it useful for the next rounds: sometimes it's useful to also discuss things that could have been said in this particular round / on this particular motion, but usually teams find feedback that they can apply in the next round, regardless of the motion, more useful, so make sure you don't spend too much time telling them what they could have said instead, but focus more on helping them do even better in the next round.
- Don't forget it's a team sport: Don't target individual speakers in a way that makes them feel they are to blame for the result. Giving individual feedback to each speaker is encouraged, but make sure you don't isolate in placing blame.
- Keep it structured and organised: make notes before it's time to give feedback, so you know what you need to say to each team / speaker, without rambling!
- Keep it positive: the end result should be positive. Yes, criticism is useful and that requires pointing at certain mistakes. But it must be done in a way that makes speakers improve and not in a way that makes them feel inadequate / out of their league.

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MARKING

Total

60 – 80 pts. per speaker / 30 – 40 pts per reply

Average is 70 points per speaker / 35 points for a reply

Half marks (0.5) are allowed for 1st, 2nd and 3rd speeches

Style: 40% overall, 24 – 32 pts for main speeches, 12 – 16 pts for reply speeches

Content: 40% overall, 24 – 32 pts for main speeches, 12 – 16 pts for reply speeches

Strategy: 20% overall, 12 – 16 pts for main speeches, 6 – 8 pts for reply speeches

POI adjustment

You can add or subtract up to 2 points per speaker, so long as the total does not exceed the 60-80 range.

Note: it is an adjustment column, not a bonus / penalty column. This means that it should only be used if the quality of the POIs offered was substantially different from the quality of the speech given by that speaker.

Margins between teams

0-2 – a very close debate
3-5 – close but rather clear
5-10 – one team clearly better, but not dominating
10-20 – winning team dominated the debate
20+ points – winning team “shredded” the losing team

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WE'D LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES

Judging guidance documents for WSDC 2016 in Stuttgart, Germany (prepared by the WSDC 2016 CAP)

Judging guide for Bratislava Schools Debating Championship 2017

Debate Judging Guide for the Panhellenic Forensics Association Tournament in January 2017