

International Speech and Debate Initiative (ISDI) - Onboarding Manual

Dear Coaches, Administrators, and Students,

Welcome! We are happy to introduce the HDC–TOC Global Debate Project, a pioneering partnership between the Harvard Debate Council (HDC) and the University of Kentucky Tournament of Champions (TOC). Our organizations are united by a shared mission to expand access to speech and debate practices and competitions throughout the world. This initiative seeks to expand training for students, administrators, judges as well as increase overall knowledge and familiarity with debate and speech formats supported by global competitions.

We hope to see you at our events and to help grow and develop debate organizations around the world.

Sincerely,

[Organizational Signature]

Who We Are

The **Harvard Debate Council (HDC)** is one of the most storied and respected academic debate programs in the world. As a student organization affiliated with Harvard College and directed by the university's Coach of Debate, HDC blends rigorous academic values with a commitment to public discourse. Its legacy includes decades of national and international competition, curriculum development, and student leadership.

The **Tournament of Champions (TOC)**, hosted by the University of Kentucky, is the gold standard for high school debate competition in the United States. Since its founding in 1972, the TOC has evolved into a symbol of academic excellence, attracting the most competitive and committed debaters from across the country—and increasingly, around the world. The TOC is recognized not only for its rigorous standards but also for its role in shaping the trajectory of debate globally.

Together, the Harvard Debate Council and the Tournament of Champions seek to expand speech and debate opportunities for students around the world. With a shared history of excellence in speech & debate, the HDC and TOC hope to provide the tools necessary for students with a variety of backgrounds to compete at the highest levels of competition.

[I think we should put staff bios here]

Our Mission

The mission of the HDC–TOC Global Debate Project is to **expand access to debate and speech education, nurture sustainable debate ecosystems throughout the world, and build a globally connected community of students, educators, and institutions** committed to public discourse, advocacy, and leadership.

We aim to achieve this through:

- **Training:** Delivering workshops, curriculum development sessions, and instructional programming for students, educators, and administrators at all levels of experience.
- **Competition:** Expanding access to elite tournaments, including TOC-qualifying events and the HDC–TOC Global Debate Series, while supporting the development of new international competitions aimed at increasing regional and global competition.
- **Leadership:** Empowering students through ambassador programs, global community meetings, and opportunities for youth leadership and collaboration.
- **Outreach:** Partnering with schools and organizations worldwide to launch new debate programs, develop existing programs, and cultivate long-term growth.

This initiative supports a vision where every student—regardless of geography, background, or resources—has the opportunity to learn the skills of critical thinking, argumentation, public speaking, and advocacy.

The Value of Debate and Speech

“As I look back on my own experience [and] try to single out from the long line of students some one group which shall stand forth as intellectually the best—best in college work and best in promise of future intellectual achievement - much as I should like to do so, I cannot draw the line round my own favorite students in philosophy, nor the leaders in mathematics, nor those successful in biology; nor could I fairly award the palm to the Phi Beta Kappa [students] who have excelled in all their subjects. It seems to me that stronger than any other group, tougher in intellectual fiber, keener in intellectual interest, better equipped to battle with coming problems, are the college debaters — the [students] who, apart from their regular studies, band themselves together for intellectual controversy with each other and with their friends in other colleges”

-- President of Amherst College and later Brown University, Alexander Meiklejohn

Debate and speech is a transformative activity that builds essential academic, communication, and leadership skills. It also opens doors to higher achievement, college admissions, and global engagement.

Academic Benefits

- **Improved Test Scores** – Studies show that students involved in speech & debate perform better on test scores and achieve higher academic success than students who do not participate ([Collier, 2004](#)). Students who participated in debate gained roughly 50 points on SAT Math and Reading tests compared to comparable non-debate students ([Ko & Mezuk, 2021](#)).
- **Stronger Coursework** – Supports success in **English, History, Civics**, and other analytical subjects as well as improved presentations, discussions, and writing and research.
- **Deeper Literacy** – Regular exposure to current events, scholarly sources, and literature provides students with an increased knowledge and familiarity with a wide variety of topics.

College Admissions Edge

- **Competitive Advantage** – Debate showcases leadership, initiative, and academic engagement.
- **Entry Point to College Debate** – Many of the top universities in the United States such as Harvard, Georgetown, Dartmouth, Cornell, and USC have storied debate teams that look closely at college applicants for their next debaters.
- **Prestige Tournaments** – Success at events like the **TOC** and **Harvard National Speech and Debate Tournament** enhances applications.

Core Skills Developed

- **Critical Thinking** – Analyze complex issues, evaluate evidence, and build logical arguments.
- **Effective Communication Skills** - Whether in primary school or secondary school, speech & debate offers students a valuable opportunity to improve their communication skills which can be valuable for coursework, extracurriculars, interviews, and life outside of school.
- **Research & Writing** – Develop persuasive, well-sourced content across topics.
- **Public Speaking** – Build confidence, poise, and clarity when speaking in front of large audiences and subject matter experts.

Leadership & Life Skills

- **Teamwork & Leadership** – Especially through formats like **World Schools Debate** and **Public Forum Debate**.
- **Empathy & Expression** – Gained through collaboration, partnership, competition, and self-expression through speech events such as **Public Address and Interpretation**.
- **Civic Engagement** – Encourages advocacy, awareness, and ethical reasoning.

Global Connections

- **International Events** – Compete with and learn from peers from around the globe.
- **Student Ambassadors** – Lead local teams and contribute to global initiatives.
- **Lifelong Community** – Alumni networks span law, policy, education, and public service.

Bottom Line:

Debate and speech events build confident, articulate, and informed students who are well prepared to overcome challenges associated with primary school, secondary school, and college as well as a post-graduate career.

Student Ambassador Program

The HDC–TOC Global Debate Project invites each participating school to nominate a **Student Ambassador**—a student leader who will serve as a bridge between their school and the global HDC–TOC community.

This program is designed to empower students with leadership opportunities, foster team-building across cultures, and create a network of young advocates committed to expanding access to debate and speech .

What Is the Student Ambassador Program?

Student Ambassadors represent their school in a year-round leadership initiative that includes:

- **Monthly online ambassador meetings** with peers from around the world as well as leading debate experts including esteemed college coaches.
- **Leadership development workshops** led by experienced educators and champions
- **Community-building activities** to strengthen team identity and regional outreach
- **An in-person summer leadership event at Harvard University**, featuring collaborative labs, strategy summits, and cultural exchange

Roles and Responsibilities

Student Ambassadors are expected to:

- **Serve as liaisons** between their local team and the HDC–TOC Global Project
- **Promote debate at their school** through outreach, recruitment, and mentorship
- **Lead by example** in behavior, preparation, and advocacy
- **Contribute to global conversations** about access, equity, and growth in debate and speech
- **Participate actively** in online meetings, workshops, and planning sessions

Ambassadors may also help organize events, assist with regional programming, and present at clinics or summits.

Eligibility

- Must be enrolled at a participating school in the HDC–TOC Global Debate Project
- Should have at least one season of experience in speech and/or debate
- Demonstrate a commitment to leadership, inclusion, and educational growth
- Must be able to attend monthly meetings (virtual) and the summer event (in-person, pending eligibility)

Schools are encouraged to select students who reflect their program's diversity and values.

Benefits for Students

- **Recognition** as a school and international student leader
- **Networking** with peers, mentors, and TOC alumni from around the world
- **Access to exclusive leadership training** and summer programming
- **Opportunities to shape the direction** of debate education globally
- **Certificate of participation and leadership portfolio development** for college applications

How to Nominate a Student

1. School administrators/coaches complete a [nomination form](#).
2. Each school may nominate **one Student Ambassador**
3. Selected students will be notified and onboarded by the HDC–TOC coordination team
4. Additional leadership opportunities may be offered based on region or project expansion

Conclusion

The Student Ambassador Program is a cornerstone of the HDC–TOC mission: empowering young leaders to grow not just as debaters, but as builders of teams, communities, and a more inclusive global future. By nominating an ambassador, your school helps shape the next generation of public thinkers and changemakers.

Overview of Formats

“Great leaders are almost always great simplifiers, who can cut through argument, debate and doubt, to offer a solution everybody can understand.” – Colin Powell

Debate and speech events offer a rich and diverse set of competitive formats that allow students to find their voice, explore ideas, and build critical academic and life skills. This section introduces the main categories of events, with a focus on the formats most relevant to the Harvard Debate Council–Tournament of Champions Global Debate Project: **World Schools Debate**, **Public Forum Debate**, **Public Address**, and **Interpretation**.

1. Overview of Debate and Speech Events

Debate and Speech competitions typically fall into two main categories:

- **Debate** – These involve structured argumentation between individuals or teams on policy, values, or current events.
- **Speech (Individual Events)** – These focus on prepared or improvised speaking, often rooted in personal narrative, persuasion, or literary performance.

Each format within these categories challenges students to develop a unique combination of communication, analytical, and interpersonal skills. Whether a student is a natural performer, a deep researcher, or a spontaneous thinker, there is a format to fit their strengths and encourage growth.

2. Debate Events

Debate formats involve the structured exchange of arguments between opposing teams. These events teach research, advocacy, collaboration, and respectful disagreement. The HDC–TOC Global Debate Project emphasizes two debate formats: **World Schools Debate (WSDC)** and **Public Forum (PF)** both of which are accessible, globally recognized, and aligned with 21st-century skill development.

3. Speech Events

Speech events empower students to express themselves, refine their public speaking, and engage audiences through compelling content and delivery. These events are divided into two subcategories: **Public Address** and **Interpretation (Interp)**.

A. Public Address

Public Address events involve original speeches written and performed by students. They emphasize clarity of message, logical structure, persuasive impact, and speaker presence.

Key examples include:

- **Original Oratory (OO)**
In Original Oratory, students craft and deliver a 10-minute persuasive speech on a topic of their choice. The speech must be memorized, original in content, and supported by evidence and personal insight. Topics range from social justice and mental health to cultural phenomena or education policy. Students are judged on argument construction, organization, delivery, and emotional engagement.
- **Impromptu Speaking**
Impromptu is a limited preparation event in which students receive a prompt—typically a quote, word, or abstract concept—and have only a few minutes (often 2 minutes prep, 5 minutes speaking) to organize and deliver a speech. This format encourages quick thinking, creativity, and structure under pressure. Impromptu is especially useful in training students for real-world communication scenarios like interviews, classroom discussions, or civic engagement.
- **Informative Speaking (Optional in some circuits)**
Though not the focus of the HDC–TOC initiative, Informative Speaking allows students to educate audiences about a topic without advocating a specific policy or viewpoint. It emphasizes clarity, visual aids, and delivery of factual content.

Public Address events help students build their voice as communicators and advocates, often connecting their personal experiences with wider societal concerns.

B. Interpretation (Interp)

Interpretation events challenge students to perform published works of literature—prose, poetry, or drama—with strong characterization, emotional depth, and narrative understanding. These events blend acting, analysis, and public speaking.

Key example:

- **Dramatic Interpretation (DI)**
In DI, students perform a 10-minute excerpt from a published dramatic work, such as a play, novel, or screenplay. The focus is on emotional storytelling, character differentiation, and dramatic intensity. While no props or costumes are allowed, students use voice, facial expression, and body movement to bring the piece to life. Dramatic Interpretation teaches empathy, literary analysis, and emotional discipline.

Other interpretation formats include **Humorous Interpretation (HI)** and **Program Oral Interpretation (POI)**, but DI remains the most universally accessible and is recommended for international and cross-format instruction.

Interp events are especially valuable for students with a passion for performance, storytelling, or expressive literature.

4. Integrating Formats into School Programs

Both debate and speech formats can be incorporated into existing school curricula, extracurricular programs, or co-curricular activities. Some schools develop focused teams around a single format, while others build comprehensive programs offering multiple event options.

The HDC–TOC Global Debate Project encourages schools to begin with:

- **Debate:** Public Forum or World Schools
- **Speech:** Original Oratory or Dramatic Interpretation

Resources, sample curricula, and training workshops are available to help new programs get started or to expand existing teams.

Conclusion

Debate and speech formats offer pathways for every kind of learner—from the analytical researcher to the creative performer. By engaging with Public Address, Interpretation, Public Forum, or World Schools Debate, students develop transferable skills, build confidence, and connect to a global community of engaged, articulate, and ethical young leaders.

Through the HDC–TOC Global Debate Project, schools gain the support, resources, and connections needed to bring these powerful formats to life.

World Schools Debate (WSDC)

[World Schools Debate](#) is the flagship international format used in the World Schools Debating Championships and many cross-cultural events. It offers a blend of British Parliamentary and American debate styles.

Structure:

- 3 speakers per team (although the team may include up to five students), each giving an 8-minute speech concluding with four minute speeches from both sides.
- Alternating government and opposition speeches
- No formal cross-examination; instead, **Points of Information (POIs)** may be offered during opponent speeches during which students may interrupt to ask questions. POIs are not required to be answered.

Key Features:

- Teams of **three to five** students (three debate per round)
- Combines **prepared** and **impromptu** motions
- Focuses on **policy, values, and global topics**
- Speeches are 8 minutes, with a structured format of constructive speeches and rebuttals
- Use of **Points of Information (POIs)**—brief interruptions allowed during opponent speeches

World Schools Debate emphasizes well-rounded speaking—blending logic, style, and global awareness. It values persuasive delivery, logical consistency, and the ability to respond respectfully and quickly.

Skills Developed:

- Cross-cultural collaboration and diplomacy
- Ethical reasoning and philosophical analysis
- Audience adaptation and stylistic versatility
- Grace under pressure and team synergy

World Schools is particularly well-suited for international programs because it levels the playing field across educational systems and allows for both content depth and stylistic flexibility.

Judge Information:

- **Matter (Content):** Quality of arguments, examples, and evidence. Holistically assess both argumentation and presentation.
- **Manner (Style):** Delivery—voice, engagement, confidence, and clarity.

- **Method (Structure):** Organization of the speech and strategic positioning in the round.
- **POIs** - Judges should reward well-timed and effective POI's.
- **Judging Philosophy:** You are expected to be a lay, but informed adjudicator - not a policy expert. Focus on the round's internal logic, not personal beliefs or outside information. Taking diligent notes throughout the debate helps!
- **Feedback:** When providing feedback, highlight strengths in style, structure, and substance. Suggest how speakers can enhance engagement, strengthen arguments, or manage POIs more effectively.

Video Resources:

- [World Schools Debate - Five Minute Introduction](#)
- [World Schools Debate Sample Video - NSDA Finals 2023](#)

Public Forum Debate (PF)

[Public Forum](#) is one of the most popular formats in the United States and is rapidly expanding globally due to its clarity, relevance, and team-based structure.

Structure:

- Two-person teams
- Alternating constructive, rebuttal, summary, and final focus speeches
- Crossfires (questioning periods) between speeches

Key Features:

- Teams of **two** students
- Debates focus on **current events and public policy**
- Monthly resolutions (e.g., environmental policy, international relations, civil liberties)
- Speeches range from 4 to 2 minutes, with crossfire questioning between speeches
- Judges can be educators, experts, or laypersons—emphasizing persuasion to a “citizen audience”

Public Forum values real-world research, clear communication, teamwork, and rhetorical adaptability. It balances formal debate structure with accessibility for new students, making it ideal for programs seeking to scale quickly or reach diverse student populations.

Skills Developed:

- Argument construction and refutation
- Strategic collaboration and role-sharing
- Public speaking and persuasion skills for a general audience
- Efficient, high-level research and topic fluency

Judge Information:

- **Lay Adjudicator:** You are not expected to be a subject matter expert as a judge in these debates.
- **“Flow” the round:** Take notes on each argument and how it’s answered. Pay close attention to which arguments are extended in each speech and which arguments fade into the background.
- **Weigh arguments:** Consider which issues were most important and which side addressed them better.
- **Write detailed feedback:** Focus on argument clarity, impact analysis, and speaking strategy.

- **Declare a winner with justification:** Students should understand why you voted the way you did.

Video Resources:

- [Public Forum Debate - Five Minute Introduction](#)
- [Public Forum Debate Sample Video](#)

Original Oratory (OO)

In [Original Oratory](#), students craft and deliver a 10-minute persuasive speech on a topic of their choice. The speech must be memorized, original in content, and supported by evidence and personal insight. Topics range from social justice and mental health to cultural phenomena or education policy. Students are judged on argument construction, organization, delivery, and emotional engagement.

Structure:

- Students compete individually against other students in a room with a judge who ranks speakers at the conclusion of the round.
- Each student delivers a speech no longer than 10 minutes in length.

Key Features:

- Writing, revising, and memorizing an original speech
- Delivering a persuasive speech with emotion, evidence, and personal insight

Skills Developed:

- Critical thinking skills
- Audience engagement
- Public speaking
- Persuasion

Judge Information:

- **Content:** Is the speech well-written, with clear thesis, reasoning, and evidence?
- **Organization:** Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion? Are transitions smooth?
- **Delivery:** Does the speaker maintain eye contact, use gestures effectively, and control their tone, pace, and volume? Reward depth over theatrics.
- **Impact:** Does the message align with the prompt? Did the speech connect emotionally or intellectually?

Video Resources:

- [Original Oratory - Five Minute Introduction](#)
- [Original Oratory - Sample Video](#)

Impromptu Speaking

[Impromptu Speaking](#) is a limited preparation event in which students receive a prompt—typically a quote, word, or abstract concept—and have only 7 minutes (often 2 minutes prep, 5 minutes speaking) to organize and deliver a speech. This format encourages quick thinking, creativity, and structure under pressure. Impromptu is especially useful in training students for real-world communication scenarios like interviews, classroom discussions, or civic engagement.

Structure:

- Students compete individually against other students in a room with a judge who ranks speakers at the conclusion of the round.
- Each student generally has 7 minutes to prepare and deliver a speech - often broken down into 2 minutes prep, 5 minutes speaking.

Key Features:

- Writing and delivering a speech in a short amount of time
- Critically thinking to develop a strong speech based on a component of the prompt
- Delivering a persuasive speech with emotion, evidence, and personal insight

Skills Developed:

- Research & writing
- Audience engagement
- Public speaking
- Persuasion

Judge Information:

- **Content:** Is the speech well-written, with clear thesis, reasoning, and evidence?
- **Organization:** Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion? Are transitions smooth?
- **Delivery:** Does the speaker maintain eye contact, use gestures effectively, and control their tone, pace, and volume? Reward depth over theatrics.
- **Impact:** Is the message compelling? Did the speech connect emotionally or intellectually?

Video Resources:

- [Impromptu Speaking - Sample Video](#)

Dramatic Interpretation (DI)

Interpretation events challenge students to perform published works of literature—prose, poetry, or drama—with strong characterization, emotional depth, and narrative understanding. These events blend acting, analysis, and public speaking. In [Dramatic Interpretation \(DI\)](#), students perform a 10-minute excerpt from a published dramatic work, such as a play, novel, or screenplay. The focus is on emotional storytelling, character differentiation, and dramatic intensity. While no props or costumes are allowed, students use voice, facial expression, and body movement to bring the piece to life. Dramatic Interpretation teaches empathy, literary analysis, and emotional discipline.

Other interpretation formats include **Humorous Interpretation (HI)** and **Program Oral Interpretation (POI)**, but DI remains the most universally accessible and is recommended for international and cross-format instruction.

Structure:

- Students compete individually against other students in a room with a judge who ranks speakers at the conclusion of the round.
- Each student generally has 10 minutes to deliver a prepared speech from a published dramatic work.

Key Features:

- Delivering a dramatic speech with emotion and intensity.
- Understanding the dramatic context of the published work

Skills Developed:

- Persuasion and performance
- Literary analysis

Judge Information:

- **Content:** Is the content appropriate and does it have emotional value?
- **Organization:** Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion? Are transitions smooth?
- **Delivery:** Does the speaker maintain eye contact, use gestures effectively, and control their tone, pace, and volume? Does the speaker's delivery match the content?
- **Impact:** Is the message compelling? Did the speech connect emotionally?

Video Resources:

- [Dramatic Interpretation - Sample Video](#)

Team Building and Organizing Practice Rounds

Building a successful debate and speech team is not just about skill development—it's about fostering a culture of collaboration, shared growth, mutual accountability, and inclusivity. Effective team building and well-organized practice sessions help transform a group of individual competitors into a dynamic, supportive, and high-performing team. Whether your program is just beginning or expanding internationally, intentional planning around team development and practice structure will ensure long-term success.

1. Building a Team Culture

A. Define Your Mission and Values

Start by clarifying your team's purpose and identity. Ask:

- Why do we debate? Why do we participate in speech events?
- What do we value on our team? Respect, effort, excellence, inclusion?
- How do we want to grow together? How do we handle disputes or disagreements?

Make these values visible—in team meetings, handbooks, and recruitment materials. A shared mission empowers students to take ownership and pride in their program.

B. Foster Inclusion and Belonging

New members, especially those with limited English proficiency or public speaking anxiety, need to feel safe and encouraged. Strategies include:

- Pairing novices (new debaters) with experienced mentors
- Celebrating progress, not just trophies
- Encouraging every voice during meetings and critiques

Students who feel included are more likely to grow, stay involved, and eventually lead. Thinking through how to structure the team is also important – will there be event captains? A team president? Providing leadership roles inspires students to stay involved and support their teammates.

C. Celebrate Wins—Big and Small

Recognition fuels motivation. Celebrate:

- Tournament achievements
- “Firsts” (first round won, first speech delivered)
- Improvement over time

- Acts of leadership and sportsmanship

Highlight these milestones at meetings, on social media, and through team awards.

2. Recruiting and Retaining Team Members

Successful programs plan for both short- and long-term team growth.

Recruitment Tips

- Host demo debates or performances at school events
- Visit English, social studies, or drama classes
- Invite interested students to a no-pressure intro session
- Use peer ambassadors and social media to spread the word

Focus on attracting diverse talents—not just traditional “strong speakers.” Interpretation, research, logistics, and tech skills are all vital.

Retention Tips

- Provide early wins: low-stakes scrimmages or novice tournaments
- Assign students meaningful roles (e.g., outreach coordinator, warm-up leader)
- Keep practices engaging and student-centered

Retention grows when students feel they are part of a team—not just a roster.

3. Organizing Practice Rounds

Effective practices are the engine of a successful team. They help students internalize skills, refine arguments, and build chemistry.

A. Structure of Weekly Practice

Aim for **two to three practice sessions per week**, adapted to your students’ schedules and school resources.

Suggested weekly breakdown:

- **Day 1: Skill-building and drills** (e.g., rebuttal sparring, interpretation critique)
- **Day 2: Practice rounds or speech run-throughs**
- **Day 3: Research sessions, team meetings, or topic prep**

Balance structure with flexibility—don’t over-program every minute. Leave space for Q&A, peer feedback, and fun.

B. Setting Up Debate Practice Rounds

Whether in Public Forum or World Schools Debate, rounds should follow formal tournament procedures whenever possible. Use Tabroom.com ballots, timers, and judge roles.

Tips:

- Rotate judging duties among students and coaches
- Use video recording for self-review
- Pair stronger and weaker teams to ensure growth opportunities
- Practice both sides of the resolution regularly

In World Schools, simulate impromptu rounds with limited prep time (45 mins or less). For Public Forum, assign practice topics based on current or past TOC resolutions.

C. Structuring Speech Practices

Speech events benefit from targeted coaching and repeated performance.

Tips:

- Create “speech blocks” where students perform in rotation (OO, DI, Impromptu)
- Use warm-ups (tongue twisters, emotion lines, topic spins) to loosen up
- Provide written and verbal feedback immediately
- Focus on one element per round (e.g., introduction, transitions, vocal variety)

Interpretation students benefit from standing rehearsals, character development exercises, and script annotation.

4. Mentorship and Peer Feedback

One of the most powerful tools in team building is a structured peer feedback model. It empowers students to take ownership and builds a learning community.

Mentorship Models

- **Novice/Varsity Pairing:** Experienced students guide new ones on events, tournament prep, and confidence-building.
- **Leadership Pods:** Divide the team into groups with student leaders responsible for communication and morale.
- **Topic Leads:** In PF or WSDC, assign certain students to lead prep on specific motions or issues.

Peer Feedback Framework

Encourage a simple, repeatable model like:

- **“Glow, Grow, Goal”**
 - *Glow*: What worked well
 - *Grow*: What needs improvement
 - *Goal*: One actionable next step

Coach-facilitated feedback sessions can also help reinforce judging standards and build critique skills.

5. Using Technology to Organize

Take advantage of free and low-cost tools to streamline your practices.

- **Google Drive/Dropbox**: Organize cases, scripts, topic briefs, and ballots
- **Tabroom.com**: Register for tournaments, track feedback
- **Remind or Slack**: Communicate schedule updates and reminders
- **Canva or Notion**: Create team calendars, handbooks, or shared goals

Create templates for practice rounds, ballots, and feedback forms to save time and maintain consistency.

6. Planning Team Goals

Set team goals at the beginning of each semester or season. Examples:

- Qualify 2 teams to TOC
- Host a scrimmage with another school
- Launch an outreach program to recruit middle school students
- Publish a newsletter or social media update after each tournament

Make goals **visible**, **trackable**, and **inclusive**—everyone should contribute to and benefit from team progress.

7. Building Tradition and Identity

The strongest teams have a sense of identity that outlasts any individual class or captain.

Ideas:

- Create a team motto, logo, or colors
- Establish rituals: pre-tournament chants, post-tournament reflections
- Keep a team archive of photos, recordings, and success stories
- Host an end of year awards ceremonies and create custom awards for Best Debater, MVP, Most Improved, etc.
- Invite alumni back to judge or lead sessions

These traditions become part of your school's culture and make the program more sustainable.

Conclusion

A debate team is more than a training ground for competitive success—it's a community where students grow as leaders, learners, and citizens. Through purposeful team building, structured practices, and peer-driven feedback, programs can develop not only skilled competitors but confident communicators ready to contribute to the global debate community.

Whether your students are preparing for their first online round or their final Tournament of Champions, the foundation you build as a team will define their experience.

Judging Debate and Speech Events

Judging is one of the most essential and impactful roles in debate and speech. As a judge, you are not just scoring performances—you are shaping the educational experience of students, fostering growth, and reinforcing the values of argumentation, empathy, and respectful discourse. Whether you're an experienced coach, a classroom teacher, a parent, or a university volunteer, this guide will help you judge debate and speech events effectively and confidently.

1. Core Principles of Judging

No matter the format or event, strong judging is grounded in a few key principles:

- **Educational Focus:** Judges are teachers first. Your comments should help students learn, improve, and feel supported—even when they lose a round.
- **Fairness and Objectivity:** Personal beliefs about a topic, argument style, or delivery method should not influence your decision. Be conscious of any biases that might impact judging and try to approach the debate and the debaters neutrally.
- **Consistency:** Apply your judging criteria equally across rounds and competitors.
- **Clarity:** Be clear and specific in both your oral and written feedback.
- **Cultural Awareness:** Especially in international or online formats, be mindful of accents, idioms, or delivery styles that may differ from your local norms.

2. Judging Public Address Speech Events

Public Address events include **Original Oratory (OO)**, **Impromptu Speaking**, and occasionally **Informative Speaking**. These events are judged based on content, organization, delivery, and impact.

A. Original Oratory

- **Content:** Is the speech well-written, with clear thesis, reasoning, and evidence?
- **Organization:** Does the speech have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion? Are transitions smooth?
- **Delivery:** Does the speaker maintain eye contact, use gestures effectively, and control their tone, pace, and volume?
- **Impact:** Is the message compelling? Did the speech connect emotionally or intellectually?

Judge Tip: Reward depth over theatrics. Strong oratory should feel like persuasive conversation, not overacting.

B. Impromptu Speaking

- **Structure:** Even in limited prep, does the speaker organize their thoughts clearly? (e.g., intro–main point 1–main point 2–main point 3–conclusion)
- **Creativity:** How effectively did the speaker interpret the prompt?
- **Delivery:** Did the speaker maintain composure, pacing, and logical flow? Did they use gestures effectively, maintain eye contact, control their tone, pace, and volume?

Judge Tip: Be understanding of the time pressure, but reward students who clearly outline and develop ideas.

3. Judging Interpretation Events

Interpretation (Interp) events include **Dramatic Interpretation (DI)** and possibly **Poetry, Prose, or Program Oral Interp (POI)** in certain leagues.

In DI, students perform an excerpt from a published work with a focus on character, emotion, and narrative control.

Key judging criteria:

- **Characterization:** Can you clearly distinguish the characters? Are voice and posture consistent?
- **Emotional Impact:** Does the piece evoke a response?
- **Pacing and Clarity:** Is the story easy to follow? Are tone and timing used effectively?
- **Technical Precision:** Is the performance memorized and smoothly delivered?

Judge Tip: Don't judge based on the emotional content alone—evaluate the student's technical and artistic control of the performance.

4. Judging Public Forum Debate

Public Forum (PF) debates focus on current event topics and are designed for accessibility to a “citizen judge.”

Structure of a PF Round

- Two-person teams
- Alternating constructive, rebuttal, summary, and final focus speeches
- Crossfires (questioning periods) between speeches

Key Criteria

- **Clash and Refutation:** Did each team respond directly to the arguments of the other? Did each team consistently extend and explain their own arguments throughout the debate?

- **Evidence Use:** Are claims supported with reliable sources and clear warrants?
- **Organization:** Is the round easy to follow? Are arguments grouped logically?
- **Delivery and Persuasion:** Are speakers clear, confident, and respectful?

Judging Best Practices

- **“Flow” the round:** Take notes on each argument and how it’s answered. Pay close attention to which arguments are extended in each speech and which arguments fade into the background.
- **Weigh arguments:** Consider which issues were most important and which side addressed them better.
- **Write detailed feedback:** Focus on argument clarity, impact analysis, and speaking strategy.
- **Declare a winner with justification:** Students should understand why you voted the way you did.

Judge Tip: Avoid intervening. Don’t inject your own knowledge—decide the round based on what was said and defended.

5. Judging World Schools Debate

World Schools Debate (WSDC) is a globally recognized format blending prepared and impromptu motions.

Structure of a WSDC Round

- 3 speakers per team (although the team may include up to five students), each giving an 8-minute speech
- Alternating government and opposition speeches
- No formal cross-examination; instead, **Points of Information (POIs)** may be offered during opponent speeches during which students may interrupt to ask questions. POIs are not required to be answered.

Key Criteria

- **Matter (Content):** Quality of arguments, examples, and evidence.
- **Manner (Style):** Delivery—voice, engagement, confidence, and clarity.
- **Method (Structure):** Organization of the speech and strategic positioning in the round.

Points of Information

- POIs are short interjections (questions or challenges) allowed between minutes 1–7.
- Judges evaluate how well speakers **offer** and **handle** POIs.

Judge Tip: Strong debaters offer well-timed POIs and handle them with composure and strategy.

World Schools Judging Philosophy

- You are expected to be a **lay but informed adjudicator**—not a policy expert.
- Focus on the round's internal logic, not your personal beliefs.
- Holistically assess both argumentation and presentation.

Feedback Tips:

- Highlight strengths in **style, structure, and substance**.
- Suggest how speakers can enhance engagement, deepen arguments, or manage POIs more effectively.

6. Written Feedback and Ballots

Feedback is most valuable when it is:

- **Constructive:** Include actionable suggestions (“Work on signposting,” “Try pausing after major points”).
- **Balanced:** Acknowledge strengths and note areas to improve.
- **Professional:** Avoid sarcasm or overgeneralization.

Sample comments:

- “Excellent clarity and eye contact; try to link your impacts more directly to reasons why I should vote for you (voters).”
- “Great use of transitions. Work on slowing down in rebuttal for clarity.”

Judge Tip: Don’t just write “great job” or “more energy”—be specific so students can learn and coaches can guide improvement.

7. Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- **Bias:** Favoring confident speakers over those with better content, or judging based on accents or style differences.
- **Over-Intervention:** Deciding based on what you *wish* had been argued instead of what was or rejecting arguments based on personal beliefs or understandings of the topic.
- **Minimal Feedback:** A score with no written notes leaves students and coaches with nothing to improve on.

8. Judge Training and Support

New judges should:

- Attend live or recorded judge training sessions, often available online or offered by tournaments.
- Practice with sample rounds or ballots in practice debates/speeches.
- Ask questions—experienced coaches are usually happy to help

The HDC–TOC Global Debate Project provides training materials and expectations tailored to both experienced and first-time judges, particularly for online or international formats. Reach out to access:

- Sample ballots
- Round videos with judging commentary
- Event-specific rubrics and checklists

Conclusion

Judging debate and speech is an honor—and a responsibility. Your decisions and comments shape how students see themselves, the activity, and the power of public discourse. By approaching the role with fairness, clarity, and educational intent, you not only elevate the quality of the competition but help young people grow as speakers, thinkers, and citizens.

Introduction to Online Debate and Speech

Events – FAQ & Best Practices

Online debate and speech competitions have become a critical tool for expanding global access to competitive opportunities. Whether you're new to virtual formats or looking to refine your team's approach, this guide outlines the essentials for participating effectively and professionally in online events.

Why Participate Online?

- **Global Access:** Compete with teams worldwide without travel costs
- **Flexible Scheduling:** Events may span time zones, offering asynchronous or weekend options
- **Equity and Opportunity:** Allows students in remote or underserved regions to join national and international circuits
- **Skill Transferability:** Builds digital presentation skills essential for modern education and careers

Common Online Formats

- **Live (Synchronous):** Students compete in real-time using platforms like Zoom, NSDA Campus, or Jitsi
- **Recorded (Asynchronous):** Students submit video performances/judging is completed offline
- **Hybrid Events:** Some rounds live, others pre-recorded or time-shifted across regions

Technology Requirements

- **Stable Internet** (minimum 5 Mbps upload/download recommended)
- **Device with Camera & Microphone** (laptop preferred; phones and tablets as backup)
- **Headphones/Earbuds** (reduce background noise)
- **Quiet, Well-Lit Space** with a neutral background
- **Updated Software** for chosen platform (Zoom, Chrome, etc.)

Best Practices for Online Competitors

Before the Tournament

- Run a full tech check the day before (audio, video, platform access). Reach out to tournament administrators with any issues.
- Charge all devices; have a backup plan for connectivity
- Prepare digital copies of speeches/cases, timers, and prep tools

- Name yourself appropriately on the platform (e.g., “Jane Lee – PF – Aff”)

During Rounds

- Log in at least 15 minutes early
- Keep cameras on (unless rules specify otherwise)
- Mute when not speaking
- Avoid clutter or distracting backgrounds—virtual backgrounds are often discouraged unless standardized
- Use a clear speaking voice and look into the camera for eye contact

After Rounds

- Thank judges and opponents
- Take screenshots of ballots or notes (if allowed)
- Debrief with teammates and coaches
- Note judge feedback for future improvement

Best Practices for Coaches & Schools

- Create a central tournament “home base” (Google Meet, Discord, Slack) for check-ins, updates, and support
- Assign a team tech lead or coach to monitor scheduling, tech issues, and student wellbeing
- Emphasize etiquette—students should dress appropriately and behave professionally in the online environment
- Be mindful of time zones and daylight saving changes for international events

Judging Online

- Use headphones and sit in a quiet space
- Mute notifications and distractions
- Notify family members, roommates, etc. of your judging obligations to avoid interruptions
- Take clear digital notes (Google Docs, FlowPad, etc.)
- Be prepared to submit ballots online promptly after each round
- Leave written feedback that reflects the unique context of online speech (e.g., mic quality, screen presence)

FAQs

Q: What happens if a student loses connection mid-round?

A: Most tournaments allow a short reconnection period (usually 3–5 minutes). Judges may pause the round, but consistent delays could result in forfeiture. Always contact tournament staff immediately.

Q: Can students use scripts or notes?

A: This depends on the event. Interpretation and oratory typically require memorization; extemp and impromptu allow limited notes. Public Forum and World Schools Debate permit flowing and prep notes.

Q: Are judges allowed to have cameras off?

A: It's preferred that judges keep cameras on, but this varies by tournament. Communication with students is clearer when nonverbal cues are visible.

Q: Can students record rounds?

A: Only with tournament permission. Some events record rounds for transparency or review, but others prohibit it for privacy reasons.

Q: How should students handle interruptions (e.g., pets, family noise)?

A: Judges are instructed to be understanding, but students should minimize disruptions with advance planning. Use signs, quiet zones, or tech tools (like background noise filters).

Troubleshooting Checklist

- **Audio issues?** Try toggling mute, checking mic permissions, or switching devices/browsers.
- **Video frozen?** Turn off HD video or switch to a lower-bandwidth setting
- **Kicked from a room?** Re-enter immediately or contact help desk
- **Need help?** Every online tournament provides a tech contact or Zoom help room

Conclusion

Online debate and speech opens doors to inclusive, international competition. With preparation, professionalism, and a proactive mindset, students and coaches can thrive in virtual environments. As part of the HDC–TOC Global Debate Project, we are committed to supporting online engagement as a bridge to opportunity—regardless of location.

Tabroom.com – Introduction and Guide

Tabroom.com is the central hub for managing debate and speech competition across the United States and in many international circuits. Developed by the National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA), Tabroom enables schools to register students and judges, track tournament entries, view postings and ballots, and access tournament results.

For the HDC–TOC Global Debate Project, **Tabroom is the primary platform for accessing TOC-qualifying events**, managing team logistics, and participating in both online and in-person tournaments.

1. Creating a Tabroom Account

Each user (coach, student, or judge) needs a free account:

1. Visit www.tabroom.com
2. Click “**Sign Up**” in the top right corner
3. Fill in personal information (name, email, password)
4. Link your account to a **school** or **team** (you may request to join if your program is already listed)

TABROOM.COM Log In

NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION Home Circuits Results

Do you already have an old Tabroom account?

Even if you left your old school, or changed email addresses, there's no need to create a new Tabroom account! You should just change your email address. Log into Tabroom and go to your [Profile](#) – the person shaped icon at top right.

If you forgot your password and cannot access your email, contact us at help@tabroom.com.

Are you already a member of the National Speech & Debate Association?

If you have an NSDA member login for <https://www.speechanddebate.org>, enter it here to create a Tabroom.com account with the same email & password. If you're an NSDA chapter advisor, your school, competitor roster, and co-coaches will all be imported to Tabroom.

NSDA Account Email Your NSDA account email NSDA Password Login

Otherwise, create a new account!

Email Address *

First Name *

Middle Name

Last Name *

Phone Number

State

Country

Time Zone

Password * Strength

Repeat Password *

* These fields are required Create Account

Tabroom uses cookies stored on your computer when you log in. Tabroom's cookies permit your authentication to Tabroom for a limited time and authenticate you to tournaments you administer, and contain no other data, and are used for no other purpose. By creating a login and logging into Tabroom, you consent to the storage & use of these cookies. You also consent to the NSDA [Terms & Conditions For Use](#) and the NSDA [Code of Honor](#).

Tip: Coaches and directors should create the school profile and invite students and judges to join.

2. Registering a School and Students

Once you're logged in and connected to your school:

- Click **"Your School"** at the top
- Under **"Competitors"**, click **"Add a New Student"**
- Fill in student info and assign events. Please note, students and judges have Tabroom accounts and the student/judge info entered by administrators must match the student/judge email from their accounts.
- Under **"Judges"**, click **"Add a New Judge"** and assign judging pools

To register for a tournament:

- Go to the **"Calendar"** or search for the tournament directly
- Click the tournament name, then **"Registration"**
- Add students to events, assign judges, and double-check eligibility or fees

TOC-qualifying tournaments may require early deadlines or password access for entry. Consult with the tournament invitation(s) or administrator(s) for additional information.

3. Judge Ballots and Feedback

At most modern tournaments, **judges receive and submit ballots electronically through Tabroom**:

- Log in and click **"Judging"**
- Assigned rounds appear under **"Current Ballots & Panels"**
- Click the round, watch/score the performance, and fill in speaker points and written feedback
- Click **"Submit Ballot"** to complete the round

Feedback should be educational, specific, and respectful—students and coaches read these carefully.

4. Accessing Tournament Information

Each tournament's Tabroom page includes:

- **Invitation and logistics**
- **Event rules and divisions**
- **Live postings** (pairings including opponents, judges and room numbers, round start times, results)
- **Help desk links** for online support

During tournaments, students and coaches should check Tabroom regularly for updates, especially in online formats.

5. Finding TOC-Qualifying Events

To find bid tournaments for the TOC:

1. Go to www.tabroom.com
2. Click “**Circuit**” in the main menu
3. Choose “**TOC - Tournament of Champions**”
4. Filter by:
 - Format (Public Forum, World Schools, Speech)
 - Region (Asia, U.S., etc.)
 - Dates

The **bid system** identifies which tournaments award automatic or partial qualification to the TOC based on placement.

You can also access the full list directly here: [TOC Bid List](#).

6. Helpful Features for Coaches and Programs

- **Team Roster Management** – Track all competitors and judges under one login
- **Payment Invoices** – View tournament entry fees and balances
- **Postings and Room Info** – Easily access round pairings and judge assignments
- **Results Tracking** – See wins/losses, speaker awards, and ballot records after each tournament

Note: Many tournaments now require entries and judge confirmations well in advance. Monitor deadlines closely.

7. Common Tips and Best Practices

- **Confirm Judge Requirements Early** – Many tournaments require 1 judge per 2 entries
- **Check for Waitlists** – Popular events may cap entries; early registration helps
- **Read the Invitation** – Each tournament has unique rules (time limits, event divisions, platform used)
- **Keep Judge Ratings Updated** – Some formats allow coaches to rate judge preferences in advance

8. Getting Help with Tabroom

If you're new to Tabroom or experience any issues:

- Visit the official Tabroom Help Guide

- Search “Tabroom walkthroughs” on YouTube for video tutorials
- Ask your tournament host for tech support contacts
- Join the **HDC–TOC mailing list or Discord** (if available) for peer support

Conclusion

Mastering Tabroom.com is essential for participation in modern debate and speech . It’s the centralized system of registration, judging, and tournament operations. As part of the HDC–TOC Global Debate Project, all participating schools are expected to learn and utilize Tabroom for local and international events. With practice, this tool becomes an efficient way to manage your team’s competitive season and unlock opportunities across the globe.

Tournaments and Competitive Opportunities

Debate and speech tournaments are more than competitions—they are classrooms, communities, and catalysts for student growth. Participating in competitive events helps students refine their skills, receive expert feedback, connect with global peers, and prepare for high-level performance in academics, leadership, and life.

For schools partnered with the HDC–TOC Global Debate Project, tournaments offer structured benchmarks, recognition pathways, and a window into the world’s most rigorous and rewarding debate circuits.

The value of competitive participation

- **Skill Development:** Improve public speaking, research, and communication skills under pressure in a rewarding and engaging environment.
- **Feedback and Improvement:** Receive expert input from judges with a depth of experience.
- **Global Community:** Engage with peers worldwide.
- **Recognition:** Earn TOC bids and build competitive résumés.

The TOC Circuit: A Global Competitive Network

The Tournament of Champions (TOC), hosted by the University of Kentucky, represents the gold standard in competitive high school debate. It is a **season-long circuit** of elite qualifying tournaments held around the world.

Schools that participate in TOC bid tournaments gain access to:

- National-caliber judging and feedback from some of the best high school and college coaches
- High-level matchups simulating championship conditions
- A transparent, qualification-based pathway to the JW Patterson TOC
- Global visibility and recognition

Bid tournaments are interconnected. Success at one event opens doors to others.

For a full and up-to-date list of TOC qualifying tournaments:

<https://ci.uky.edu/debate/toc/dates/tournament-dates>

In-Person Flagship Competitions:

Harvard National Speech and Debate Tournament

Dates: February 14–16, 2026

Hosted by Harvard College, this is one of the largest and most prestigious tournaments in the world. It offers TOC bids in Public Forum, World Schools, Original Oratory, and more. It is a cornerstone of the season for schools globally.

JW Patterson Tournament of Champions

Dates: April 11–13, 2026

Held at the University of Kentucky, this invitation-only event is the culminating championship of the TOC circuit. Only students who qualify through bid tournaments or

at-large review may attend. It is widely regarded as the most prestigious event in U.S. high school debate.

Recommended Online Competitions

The HDC–TOC Global Debate Project supports a robust slate of online competitions to ensure year-round access.

Online Calendar Highlights:

- **National Speech and Debate Season Opener** – September 6–8, 2025
- **Harvard Debate Council – TOC Series (Fall)** – October 2025
- **Vietnam Speech and Debate Invitational** – November 2025
- **Digital Series #1** – December 5–7, 2025
- **Harvard Debate Council – TOC Series (Winter)** – January 2026
- **Digital Series #2** – February 20–22, 2026
- **Digital Series #3** – March 6–8, 2026
- **Middle School TOC** – May 1–3, 2026

Finding additional opportunities

- **TOC Bid List:** <https://ci.uky.edu/debate/toc/dates/tournament-dates>
- **Asia-Specific Events:** [Insert regional calendar or Asia hub link]

Conclusion

Tournaments offer more than trophies—they offer transformation. With each round, students develop discipline, discover their voice, and join a global community of thinkers, speakers, and leaders. The HDC–TOC Global Debate Project ensures that every school, regardless of location, has a pathway to participate in the world’s most respected debate and speech competitions.

Summer Programs

Summer programs are a powerful way for students to hone their skills, connect with national and international peers, and receive personalized coaching outside of the regular academic year from speech & debate experts. For schools participating in the HDC–TOC Global Debate Project, summer programs also serve as a vital bridge to long-term growth and competitive success.

These immersive experiences help students refine speaking, research, and performance techniques while gaining confidence in high-level competition formats such as Public Forum, World Schools Debate, Original Oratory, and Interpretation.

Harvard Debate Council Summer Workshops (HDC Summer Workshops)

Website: <https://hdcsw.org>

The Harvard Debate Council Summer Workshops offer one of the most rigorous and inclusive summer debate experiences available to high school and middle school students globally. Hosted annually on the Harvard campus, this program draws top students, coaches, and instructors from around the world.

Program Highlights

- **World Schools Debate, Public Forum, Original Oratory, and Interpretation labs**
- Taught by experienced national champions, Ivy League debaters, and TOC-qualified coaches
- Small-group instruction with curriculum differentiated by experience level (novice through advanced)
- Collaborative, inclusive environment emphasizing growth and community
- Final showcase rounds, speaking challenges, and mentorship opportunities

Why HDC Summer Workshops?

- One of the few U.S.-based summer programs welcoming large numbers of **international students**
- Lab formats aligned with **TOC event standards**
- Prepares students for the fall season with advanced case prep and strategy development
- Students join a network of global alumni and TOC participants

Benefits of Summer Debate Programs

- **Focused Learning:** Students gain 2–3 weeks of uninterrupted practice and coaching
- **Head Start on the Season:** Develop cases, speeches, and strategies before fall tournaments
- **Access to Elite Instruction:** Learn from TOC finalists, Ivy League debaters, and global educators
- **Cultural Exchange:** Meet students from diverse countries, backgrounds, and circuits
- **Leadership Growth:** Return to school ready to lead teams, mentor peers, and drive success

Other Recommended Programs

While HDC Summer Workshops is a flagship option, there are additional regional and online summer offerings that support TOC-qualifying formats. HDC–TOC will maintain a list of partner programs that align with our instructional values and competitive standards.

For a list of recommended summer programs and scholarships, visit:

[Insert project link or resource directory]

HDC–TOC Clinics and Workshops

As part of our commitment to accessibility and high-impact learning, the Harvard Debate Council–Tournament of Champions Global Debate Project offers customized **clinics and workshops** directly at schools around the world. These 1–3 day immersive programs are led by experienced coaches, national champions, and TOC-qualified instructors who bring elite instruction to your campus.

Whether your program is just beginning or preparing for international competition, an in-person clinic can spark rapid growth, energize students and teachers, and create a foundation for long-term success.

What We Offer

HDC–TOC Clinics are tailored to meet the specific needs of your school or region. Options include:

Format-Specific Instruction

- **Public Forum Debate** – Strategy, structure, topic prep, flowing, and refutation
- **World Schools Debate** – Constructive argumentation, POIs, and impromptu practice
- **Original Oratory & Public Address** – Speech structure, delivery, and message development
- **Interpretation Events** – Dramatic performance, cutting literature, and character work

Skill-Based Sessions

- Argument construction and clash
- Persuasive delivery and presence
- Research techniques and case building
- Judge adaptation and audience engagement
- Tournament prep and scrimmaging

Educator & Coach Training

- Curriculum integration
- Practice round planning
- Team culture and recruitment
- Navigating online debate
- Tournament logistics and Tabroom training

Clinic Structure

Clinics may range from 1 to 3 days depending on your program’s goals and schedule. A typical structure includes:

Day	Focus	Sample Activities
Day 1	Fundamentals	Intro to formats, drills, and feedback
Day 2	Advanced Strategy	Case work, live critiques, scrimmages
Day 3	Tournament Simulation	Practice rounds, judge feedback, Q&A

Schools may request single-format intensives or mixed-format programming to suit combined teams.

Who Leads the Clinics?

Our instructor network includes:

- Former and current TOC competitors
- Ivy League and national-level coaches
- HDC alumni and workshop faculty
- Experienced educators from across the global debate community

All instructors are vetted and trained to deliver high-quality, inclusive, and engaging instruction that aligns with HDC–TOC values.

Why Host a Clinic?

- **Jumpstart your team** with expert guidance
- **Prepare for upcoming seasons or bid tournaments**
- **Showcase the benefits of debate and speech competition** to administrators
- **Train new coaches or student leaders**
- **Engage your school community** through showcase rounds or parent sessions
- **Establish your school as a regional hub** for debate development

How to Request a Clinic

To request an HDC–TOC Clinic at your school:

1. **EMAIL OR FORM? to request a clinic.**
2. Fill out the Clinic Request Form with preferred dates, format needs, and participant info
3. A staff member will follow up to confirm availability, travel logistics, and cost

Conclusion

HDC–TOC Clinics bring world-class debate instruction to your doorstep. These workshops offer a high-return, low-barrier opportunity to transform your students' abilities, train your staff, and connect your school to a global network of excellence in debate and speech .

Online Classes

To ensure year-round access to high-quality instruction, the Harvard Debate Council–Tournament of Champions Global Debate Project offers a robust schedule of **online classes** open to students, educators, administrators, and programs across the globe. These classes are designed to accommodate varying experience levels, time zones, and debate event preferences.

Whether you're just starting out or preparing for the Tournament of Champions, our online offerings provide flexible, structured, and expert-led instruction in all major formats supported by the HDC–TOC initiative.

Who Can Participate?

- **Students** (middle school and high school)
- **Teachers and coaches** looking to enhance instructional skills
- **Administrators** looking to learn more about the benefits of debate and speech and how to include aspects of debate and speech into curriculum
- **Clubs and teams** seeking supplemental training

All classes are open to both affiliated and non-affiliated schools. Enrollment is typically organized by term (fall, winter, spring, summer).

Available Tracks

Classes are divided by experience level and focus area:

Introductory Track

For students with 0–1 year of experience

- Intro to Public Forum or World Schools Debate
- Basics of argumentation and refutation
- Foundations of persuasive speaking and structure
- Intro to Original Oratory or Dramatic Interpretation

Intermediate Track

For students with 1–2 years of competitive experience

- Case writing labs for current TOC bid topics
- Research skills, warrant development, and impact framing
- Practice rounds with instructor feedback
- Performance refinement in speech events

Advanced Track

For students with 2+ years of experience or prior TOC qualification

- Strategic refutation and round framing
- Advanced crossfire, POI management, and weighing
- Tournament prep sessions with real-time coaching
- Masterclass series with champion debaters and coaches

Key Features

- **Live instruction via Zoom** (or equivalent platforms)
- **Small-group breakout sessions** and lab groups
- **Practice rounds and performance reviews**
- **Access to recordings** for asynchronous review
- **Ongoing feedback** through written evaluations and office hours
- **Optional competitive scrimmages** between enrolled students

Why Take HDC–TOC Online Classes?

- Taught by **TOC alumni, Harvard debaters, and national champions**
- Curriculum aligned with the **TOC competitive calendar**
- Emphasizes both **skill development and student leadership**
- Supports **global participation** across time zones
- Flexible for schools with limited local resources or coaching staff

Sample Schedule (Subject to Change)

Course	Days	Time	Duration
Intro to PF Debate	Mon/Wed	7–8 PM EST	6 weeks
World Schools Advanced Lab	Sat	9–11 AM EST	8 weeks
Oratory & Impromptu Intensive	Tue/Thu	8–9 PM EST	4 weeks
Coach Essentials Workshop	Sundays	12 PM EST	3 sessions

Times adjusted or duplicated to accommodate international zones.

Enrollment and Cost

- Registration opens prior to each session cycle
- Scholarships available for students from underserved or emerging debate regions
- Group discounts may be available for full school/team sign-ups

Visit: [\[Insert link to registration or calendar\]](#) to view upcoming classes and sign up.

Conclusion

HDC–TOC Online Classes make elite debate instruction accessible to students anywhere in the world. With expert educators, dynamic lesson plans, and a flexible schedule, these virtual programs ensure that geography is never a barrier to growth in debate and speech .

Tournament Administration Training – Host a TOC Qualifier

Want to host a tournament at your school? We can help.

One of the most impactful ways to expand access to high-quality competition is to **host your own tournament**—and the HDC–TOC Global Debate Project is here to support you every step of the way.

Through our **Tournament Administration Training program**, we equip schools with the tools, training, and guidance needed to successfully run local, regional, or international events. Whether your goal is to host a novice scrimmage, a regional invitational, or apply for TOC bid status, we help turn your vision into a reality.

Why Host a Tournament?

- **Create local opportunities** for your students and neighboring schools
- **Build prestige and visibility** for your program and institution
- **Develop leadership** among students, coaches, and administrators
- **Earn revenue** to support team travel, scholarships, and outreach
- **Contribute to the TOC ecosystem** by becoming a qualifying bid tournament

What We Offer

Our training and support covers every major aspect of tournament hosting:

Pre-Tournament Planning

- Selecting dates and securing facilities (or setting up online platforms)
- Choosing events and divisions
- Crafting a schedule
- Coordinating with TOC staff for bid alignment
- Creating an invitation and registration plan
- Budgeting and sponsorship strategies

Tabroom.com and Technology Setup

- Creating a tournament page
- Setting registration limits and judge requirements
- Posting schedules and setting up event configurations
- Managing digital ballots and tab staff coordination
- Live support and walk-throughs for first-time hosts

Equity, Adjudication & Ethics Standards

- Creating inclusive judging pools
- Setting community norms for behavior and accessibility
- Training judges and volunteers
- Handling conflicts and protests fairly

Student and Coach Leadership

- Empowering students to run help desks, tech checks, or judge hospitality
- Mentoring novice tabbers and room managers
- Building year-over-year tournament leadership capacity

Host Tiers

We work with programs at all levels:

- **Local Scrimmage Hosts** – Schools just beginning to host; we assist with 1-day or intra-district events
- **Regional Invitational Hosts** – Schools ready to host multi-state or international online competitions
- **TOC Bid Hosts** – Programs interested in becoming official TOC-qualifying events; we help guide the application and execution process

How to Get Started

1. Email [EMAIL ADDRESS] if you're interest in hosting
2. Share your goals, available dates, and capacity
3. We'll match you with an HDC–TOC advisor who will assist in planning
4. You'll receive access to our Tournament Hosting Toolkit and join an orientation session

Conclusion

Hosting a tournament is one of the most powerful ways to grow the debate and speech community in your region and give students a platform to lead. With HDC–TOC training and support, you'll be equipped to run a high-quality event that makes a lasting impact—locally and globally.

Support & Contact

We're here to help. The Harvard Debate Council–Tournament of Champions Global Debate Project is committed to providing responsive, accessible, and ongoing support to every participating school, educator, and student.

Whether you have questions about tournament registration, curriculum planning, summer programs, or starting a team—we're just a click or message away.

Ways to Reach Us

Website

Visit our project homepage for resources, event listings, curriculum tools, and updates:
[Insert website URL here]

Email Support

Have a question? Reach out to our coordination team at:
[Insert dedicated support email address]
 Typical response time: 1–2 business days

Live Support During Events

During HDC–TOC series events and digital tournaments, we provide a live help desk via Zoom, Discord, or Tabroom links—check the tournament page for access instructions.

What We Can Help With

- Tabroom setup and tournament registration
- Joining online classes or requesting workshops
- Clinic and summer program coordination
- Nomination questions for ambassadors or educators
- Guidance for new programs and administrators

Conclusion

As part of the HDC–TOC community, you are never navigating the debate world alone. We are committed to making global debate and speech more connected, more inclusive, and more impactful—starting with direct support for schools like yours.