

Judging Guidelines



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Thank You!

Thank you for supporting your student's participation in speech and debate and for sharing your feedback with the broad community of speech and debate competitors. We sincerely appreciate you and your time! Without an audience, students can't perform—and without a thoughtful, attentive audience willing to write their feedback and rank the students' performances, our students can't receive the full educational value of this activity!

Foundational Thoughts About Judging

By Michaela Northrop, Leland Speech and Debate Policy Debate and Spontaneous Coach

The students look forward to your constructive criticism. In consideration of the students' many hours of preparation and rehearsal, we ask that in general, you do the following:

- **Offer each student your full, undivided attention.** They're so excited for you to hear their work and they don't want you to miss a critical part of the performance.
- **Write balanced and detailed feedback for the students.** Please include some comments on the specific details of their performances. Offer insight as to what was strong / effective and what could use some improvement.
- **Please be forthright and specific.** Vague comments like "Good job! The competition was tough!" don't teach the students how to improve.
- **However, also please remember these are students doing their best. Find something positive to comment upon for each speaker.** You have the opportunity to inspire them to continue in this challenging activity!
- **Lastly, please ENJOY these wonderful students' efforts.** They're here to inform, entertain, persuade, and inspire you in their various public speaking events. Isn't it amazing what students can do when they work hard to prepare and expand their skills?

General Guidelines: Before the Tournament

- **Please familiarize yourself with [Tabroom.com](https://www.tabroom.com) and create an individual account on that website several days before the tournament. This is the website used for receiving and submitting "ballots" which are your online feedback forms and ranking / win or loss forms for speech and debate tournaments.**
 - **You need an individual Tabroom.com account as a judge.** (Do not share it within your family. Each different individual needs an individual account so judge assignments and histories are accurate.)
 - **Include your contact information (phone / email) in your Tabroom.com account** so you receive alerts about ballots during tournaments and so the tournament staff can contact you quickly if need be.

- [Brief guide to Tabroom.com accounts and submitting ballots online](#) (How to create an account on Tabroom.com, use online ballots, link accounts, and submit results and comments)
- [Step-by-step information on checking for upcoming ballots - with screen shots](#)
- [Trouble-shooting guide for using NSDA Campus online rooms on Tabroom](#) for online tournaments (in case sound or video aren't working...or you're having trouble with any log-in issues)
- **Make sure your Tabroom.com account is linked to Leland**, so you can be assigned to judge rounds. (See above for advice on how to link your account. Have your student help you contact our teachers / coaching staff if you have any difficulty with this process.)
- **Please familiarize yourself with the basic rules for the speech and debate events you will be judging.** You may be judging several events beyond the ones in which your own student competes (to reduce conflicts - since you cannot judge Leland students whom you know), so confirm with your student which events you might be judging. In general, you may be slated to judge ANY EVENT offered at the tournament, however!
- Please consult the full [Coast Forensic League \(CFL\) safety rules for 2022-2023 here](#); **all participants are required to follow these rules, including the requirement to wear surgical masks or N95/ KN95/ KF94 respirators while indoors.**
- **What to bring / how to prepare:**
 - internet-enabled device for connecting to Tabroom.com and writing online ballots. Most judges bring a laptop. A tablet can also work. Be certain to bring it fully charged and with a cord
 - water bottle
 - Snacks / other food for personal meals if you wish (most tournaments will also provide judges with snacks and perhaps a meal as well)
 - paper for jotting down notes during the round (debate judges are asked to take detailed notes on the clash of the round - this is called "flowing" - and speech judges should take notes - either on paper or on a document from which they can copy and paste) to write specific feedback for each speaker on their ballots
 - Mask (if required by the tournament) - Coast Forensic League tournaments this year are requiring all judges and competitors to wear **surgical masks or N95/ KN95/ KF94 respirators while indoors with very limited non-mask time. Check the updated rules (linked above) for details on that.**

General Guidelines: At the tournament

- 1) **Check in at the judges' lounge / judge room.** There should be signs guiding you there if it is in person. If it's a virtual tournament, there will be a separate virtual room for this.
- 2) **Check your Tabroom.com account for upcoming ballots** (on your laptop or other online device). Be sure to *refresh* the website often near the start time of each round. You should also receive email / text alerts if you provided all of your contact information when you registered.
- 3) **Once you see an upcoming ballot / round assignment, go to your round a.s.a.p. Be early for rounds.** The judge should enter the physical classroom (or virtual room if it is an online tournament) **at least 10 minutes before the round begins, or however early the tournament specifies.**
- 4) **Once you arrive in the tournament competition room, the judge should confirm that all competitors are present.**
- 5) **Double-check that you don't have any "conflicts."** Before starting the round, if there are any conflicts, such as you having a close relationship or familiarity with a competitor assigned to your room, inform the Tabroom staff immediately (through the help desk contact form / text line / phone line) so you are reassigned. You should **not** judge a student with whom you have a close friendly or family relationship but instead contact the tournament staff to avoid this scenario.
- 6) **Click "START ROUND" on your Tabroom upcoming ballot page.** Once you have verified the competitors are present and are in the correct room (in-person or virtual room), press "start round" on your ballot a.s.a.p. (according to the tournament's guidelines). This is the tournament's method of knowing the judge and all competitors are present. If you do not do so, you will delay the tournament for everyone, so "start round" is a very important step.
- 7) **During the round, enjoy the performances but also be sure to:**
 - a) **type comments for each speaker on the ballot,**
 - For help with this, refer to specific guidelines below for an overview of the particular event you are judging, as well as tips on judging instructions. More details can be found in the rules from the tournament itself. Coast Forensic League tournaments email judge instructions before / during the tournament.
 - b) **ensure the round runs smoothly** (Don't interrupt speakers unless there is an emergency - but help with the flow of the round between speeches if needed, reminding speakers who is due to speak next if they do not immediately rise to speak or indicate they are taking debate "prep time.")

- c) **keep time (to ensure time limits are observed and preserve fairness)**
- **It is important to keep track of the time on your own, even if students offer to time their own performances. Being over time or radically under time - according to the rules of a specific event - can be a factor in your decision and sometimes students may forget to start their timers.**
 - **Speech overtime:** There are “grace periods” in most speech events for going a few seconds over time (see specific rules) but if students speak over the grace period, you must indicate that on your ballot so the proper penalties can be assessed.
 - **Debate overtime:** There is no grace period for debate speeches. They should conclude their sentence when the time elapses. You may choose to let a debater finish a sentence when the time ends but no new arguments should be initiated.
 - **Keep a record of debaters’ allowed “prep time” if judging a debate.** (See rules for each debate event below.)
- 8) **After the round is over, check that your ballot is submitted via Tabroom.com as soon as possible** to ensure that the tournament can progress on schedule.
- You must make sure to **confirm your ballot** before submitting. (You will be asked to click a confirmation button to ensure you have selected the correct winner / ranking order and that your information is correct. Please double-check thoroughly.)
 - After turning in the ballot, you cannot change your rankings, but you can go back and add more **comments**. You can access these comments on your **upcoming list**. It can help the tournament flow to offer basic comments and then go back and add more but **please be sure to offer detailed comments for each speaker**. The students work so hard and a “Good job! Tough round!” sort of comment without details is discouraging. The students want to know what was strong and how to improve.
 - Wait - don’t leave yet! Double check that your event isn’t “flighted” with two parts of a round in a row. **If you are judging Public Forum Debate, LD / Lincoln Douglas Debate, or Parli Debate, you most likely have two “flights” - two mini rounds in a row - a Flight A and Flight B** - meaning two different debates in the space of one round in one room. Don’t leave if you have a Flight B indicated on your ballot postings!
- 9) **After confirming your ballot and that all competition for your round is completed, you are free to leave the tournament competition room (or virtual room if at an online tournament) and please await the next judging assignment; you will be notified by Tabroom via email and / or texts if you have correctly entered your contact information.** You should also refresh the tournament website to check for a new judging assignment as each new round is released in case there is a problem with your contact information.

General Speech Guidelines

- A typical round contains 7 contestants, but can fluctuate depending on how many students are entered in the event.
- A judge will meet with the students in the assigned room and watch the entirety of the round, which usually lasts a bit more than an hour. The judge must remain for the duration of the round and fully hear each speech.
- If a contestant does not join by the allotted time, wait a couple minutes and have people go before them, and the contestant should email you if they are experiencing technical difficulties.
- Before each speech, **verify the code of the speaker** so you're sure you are assigning the proper comments and rankings to the correct speakers.

Event Specific:

Interpretation Events

General Guidelines

- Interpretation speeches are 8-10 minutes long, with a grace period of 30 seconds. They are scripted and memorized before the tournament, and they can be thought of as acting performances, where speakers will perform in character.
- Interpretation speeches utilize previously written scripts (taken from plays, books, or other media); speakers will have edited and cut those scripts to create their performances, and will perform as the character or characters in the original media, frequently with their own spin on the characters and the story.
- Competitors will utilize the following elements in their speech:
 - *Blocking*, or using movement to demonstrate the environment of the story and the actions that characters are taking.
 - *Characterization*, or the usage of different voices, facial expressions, line delivery, stance, and movements to distinguish one character from another. Characters should be easily distinguishable.
- When evaluating an interpretation round, refer to the Dramatic Structure, taken from NSDA:
Exposition > Incident > Rising Action > Climax > Falling Action > Resolution.
 - An exposition that sets the scene. Expositions occur throughout the speech and enhance the audience's understanding of what the characters in the program are experiencing.
 - An incident sets the conflict into motion.
 - Action rises until the climax, which is the turning point of greatest intensity in the speech.
 - Falling action resolves the conflict.
 - Resolution is the conclusion of the plot.

- Not all speeches will follow the same format. Judges should look out for and encourage creativity.
- Evaluate the speeches to the best of your ability. Treat interpretation speeches as artistic works, but make sure they include solid themes that are effectively conveyed.

General Criteria for Judging Interpretation Events

This applies to all interpretation events below but also see and apply the goals and rules for the particular interpretation events.

- **Clarity of presentation and delivery fundamentals:**
 - Is there strong vocal variety for achieving the purpose / message of the presentation?
 - Does the performer demonstrate effective physical control and use physical movement and control for clear purposes?
 - Does the performer demonstrate strong facial involvement to make any characters, moods, or messages clear?
- **Clarity of theme / message as shared in the student's introduction:**
 - Is the theme or message clear in the introduction?
 - Is the theme or message clear in the presentation or at least by the end of the presentation?
- **Character(s) and Mood(s):**
 - Are any characters and moods presented clearly?
 - Is characterization consistent and easy to follow?
 - The number of characters shouldn't be a controlling factor here as there is no requirement for multiple characters. However, if there are multiple characters, are they distinct? Are they clearly and effectively conveyed? If the performer chooses to portray multiple characters, can you tell when a performer is changing into a new character?
- **Effectiveness of blocking:**
 - Does the performer's movement add to the story vs. distract from it?
 - Does movement convey a sense of the setting, emotions, and action?
- **Event Rules & Objectives:**
 - Does the performance seem to fulfill the objectives of the particular interpretation event?
 - Does the performance follow the rules of the particular interpretation event?
 - Does the performance seem to meet the objectives *better* than other performances in the round?

Specific Goals & Rules for Particular Interpretation Events

Program of Oral Interpretation [POI]

- POI is a performance that combines Poetry, Prose and Drama into a 8 to 10-minute long advocacy.
- Topics for POI typically advocate or argue for some greater societal change.
- Students are permitted to use a small binder as a prop, which also contains their manuscript.
- In POI, students use *programming*, or piecing together multiple sources to form a cohesive argument. Students often use memorable transitions (i.e. a specific sound or movement or flipping a page) when switching between a source or story.
- Pieces should cover a wide array of different characters and tones.
 - The program should be a blend of both dramatic and humorous moments.

Humorous Interpretation [HI]

- HI is an individual event that mostly consists of humorous or funny performances between 8-10 minutes. This should be a performance of a story, not a stand-up comedy performance. Some dramatic material may be included but the performance, on balance, should be humorous.
- No visual aids/props allowed.
- Students are allowed to portray different characters, voices and postures throughout the speech. They may choose to present as many characters as they wish to effectively convey their story but they are not required to present a minimum or maximum amount of characters. It is recommended that speakers differentiate their characters clearly via different movements, facial expressions, voices and body positions.
- There must be an out-of-character introduction, usually near the beginning of the performance, stating the author and title of the piece.

Dramatic Interpretation [DI]

- Dramatic Interpretation is an event that consists of a dramatic performance that can be between 8-10 minutes long.
- No visual aids/props allowed.
- Dramatic Interpretation tends to include sad, dramatic, and traumatizing events. There may be some humor but the performance should, on balance, be dramatic.
- Performers can have as many or as few characters as they please; monologues are as common and acceptable as stories with multiple characters.
- There must be an out-of-character introduction, usually near the beginning of the performance, stating the author and title of the piece.

Duo Interpretation [DUO]

- Duo is a partner event that requires two competitors to present an 8-10 minute performance.
- The speech can be either dramatic or humorous.
- No visual aids/props allowed.
- Each competitor can play multiple characters there is no limit. There is not necessarily a reason to prefer a performance for its number of characters, although the performers' effectiveness in conveying one or more characters can be a criterion for judging.
- There must be an out-of-character introduction, usually near the beginning of the performance, stating the author and title of the piece.

Oratorical Interpretation [OI]

- OI is an individual event that requires the speaker to present a published speech which has previously been delivered in public that is 8-10 minutes long.
- The speeches can be a mix of dramatic and humorous.
- The performers are not required to impersonate the original speakers but instead to focus on clearly conveying the message of the speech. They may choose to take on a persona while delivering the speech.
- No visual aids/props are allowed.
- There must be an out-of-character introduction, usually near the beginning of the performance with the author, title, source, date and place where the speech was previously delivered.

Platform Events (Original Oratory, Original Advocacy, and Expository / Informative Speaking)

General Guidelines

- Platform speeches are generally 8-10 minutes long with a 30 second grace period, and are written and memorized by the speakers before the tournament. They generally aim to inform or convince the audience about a given topic or issue.
- Unlike interpretation events, platform speeches are not given in character; in fact, performers are only allowed to perform as themselves.

General Criteria for Judging Platform Speaking Events

This applies to all platform speaking events below but also see and apply the goals and rules for the particular platform speaking events.

- **Clarity of presentation and delivery fundamentals:**
 - Is there strong vocal variety for achieving the purpose / message of the presentation? Consider:

- Rate
- Volume
- Tone
- Pause placement
- Does the performer demonstrate effective physical control and use physical movement and control for clear purposes?
 - Effective and varied use of gestures
 - Effective and appropriate eye contact
 - Effective and appropriate movement
- Does the performer demonstrate strong facial involvement to help portray the appropriate emotions during the speech?
- Does the performer demonstrate effective eye contact?
- **Clarity of theme / message as shared in the student's introduction:**
 - Is the theme or message clear in the introduction?
 - Is the theme or message clear in the speech?
- **Content:**
 - Is it well organized? (Note: In Expository / Informative Speaking, organization may not follow a conventional speech organization and may instead be organized according to a variety of themes, although some system of organization should be evident.)
 - Is the writing skillful and clear?
 - Does the speech prove its point using a variety of strong evidence, logic, emotional appeals, and other types of support (e.g. stories)?
 - Does the speech seem to prove its point?
- **Event Rules & Objectives:**
 - Does the performance seem to fulfill the objectives of the particular platform speaking event?
 - Does the performance follow the rules of the particular platform speaking event?
 - Does the performance seem to meet the objectives *better* than other performances in the round?

Expository [Expos]

- Expository speeches are ten minute, prepared (memorized) presentations in which the student speaks about a chosen topic.
- Ideal speech times are between 8 - 10 minutes.
 - Speeches have a 30 second grace period, so the maximum time is 10:30.

- If a speaker passes the maximum time, the penalty varies between tournaments; follow the instructions given in the tournament's judge briefing.
- The purpose of the speech is to inform the audience about a topic of the speaker's choice, and is often highly evidence-based. The speech should not directly advocate for an arguable position.
- Speakers should balance delivery, including eloquence, performance, and movement (walking, gestures), with content to keep the speech interesting *and* informative.
 - Emotion may be important during serious/impactful portions of the speech, but should not be overdone.
- When evaluating the round consider (3 key points):
 - **Relevance:** the speaker should explain why the topic is important in this timeline; they should also make the topic feel relevant and interesting to the audience.
 - **Interest:** does the speaker consistently engage the audience's attention? Are they an interesting and memorable performer to watch?
 - **Originality:** how does the speaker present the topic in their own, unique way? Note that few topics are wholly original—rather, look at the speaker's *rhetoric*, and unique perspective. Remarkable, unique, or otherwise memorable visuals can be an asset here as well.
- Visual aids should be interesting and justified in the context of the speech, as well as contribute to both audience enjoyment and understanding.
 - Visual aids cannot be on the speaker's body at the beginning or the end of the speech.

Original Oratory and Original Advocacy [OO and OA]

- Original Oratory and Original Advocacy are individual events where students draft and present a persuasive speech on concerns, current trends, or evaluating a person/trend of their choosing.
- There should not be more than 150 quoted words.
- Speeches are usually up to 10 minutes.
- No visual aids/props are allowed.
- Students should be judged on the purpose of the speech, gestures speakers used throughout the speech, and the evidence the speaker uses to support their points.
- *Oratory vs. Advocacy:* Different events / styles:
 - **Original Advocacy** is limited to subjects concerning public policy issues of a tangible nature. The contestant must advocate a specific legislative and/or regulatory governmental action or remedy. All legislative solutions must identify the specific agent of action.
 - **Original Oratory** speeches do not have to present a legislative problem area or legislative solution. Any appropriate subject may be used, but the primary purpose of an oration is to persuade, motivate, and/or inspire. Oratories tend to address an issue

of concern for individuals and / or society. To resolve the issue, they tend to present alternate mindsets, personal solutions, and societal rethinking to address an issue.

Spontaneous Events

General Guidelines

- Spontaneous events are speech events in which competitors will *not* have a prepared performance and instead are given a topic and a certain amount of preparation time during which they will prepare their speech *during* the tournament
- Because of the improvised nature of these speeches, competitors will frequently ask for hand signals to indicate the amount of time they have to keep speaking. **You are required to provide time signals for students; if you do not provide them, you may not penalize them for going over time.**
 - Use hand signals to give time signals. Show fingers for the amount of time left (i.e. hold up two fingers for two minutes left, etc.) and hold your hand held up in a “C” shape for 30 seconds left (sign for half a minute remaining).
 - Students ARE allowed to also time themselves but the judge should still time the speech to keep track of the time limits and the full development of the speech, including whether or not the time is used effectively.
 - **Never give time signals orally and do not interrupt overtime speakers.** Instead, mark overtime speakers on the ballot.
- Take notes on the ballot (fluency, comprehension, vocal/facial expressions, and response to the topic) during the round to make sure each speaker receives detailed feedback.

General Criteria for Judging Spontaneous Speaking Events

This applies to all platform speaking events below but also see and apply the goals and rules for the particular platform speaking events.

- **Clarity of presentation and delivery fundamentals:**
 - Does the speaker have good fluency? (Does the mental train of thought keep chugging without awkward or unnatural pauses?)
 - Is there strong vocal variety for achieving the purpose / message of the presentation? Consider:
 - Rate
 - Volume
 - Tone
 - Pause placement
 - Does the performer demonstrate effective physical control and use physical movement and control for clear purposes?
 - Effective and varied use of gestures

- Effective and appropriate eye contact
 - Effective and appropriate movement
- Does the performer demonstrate strong facial involvement to help portray the appropriate emotions during the speech?
- Does the performer demonstrate effective eye contact?
- **Effective response to the topic**
 - Does the speech clearly address the topic at hand?
 - Does the speech stay on topic?
 - Does the speech seem to prove its point?
- **Content:**
 - Is it well organized?
 - Does the speech prove its point using a variety of evidence, logic, and other types of support (e.g. historical or literary references, current events, etc.)?
 - Note: Extemporaneous speakers are **REQUIRED** to cite sources in their speech, since they have a full 30 minutes to prepare and are expected to analyze and synthesize published evidence in their speeches.
 - If the event is Extemporaneous (not for Impromptu):
 - Are the sources of high quality and relevant?
 - Does the student utilize sources effectively to prove the point and answer the topic's question?
 - Does the source material aid audience understanding?
 - Impromptu speakers are **NOT REQUIRED** to cite sources since they have only 2 minutes to prepare and are not required to analyze published materials in their speeches. They may, however, choose to cite some sources.
- **Use of Time**
 - Does the speaker use the time well? (In spontaneous speaking, if all other factors are equal, a strong speech that uses the full time is better than a strong speech that doesn't last as long. Time shouldn't be the only criterion but it can be a factor. The difference of a few seconds, though, shouldn't matter as much as the overall quality of the presentation. Sometimes a speech that is shorter can be of far higher quality overall!)
- **Event Rules & Objectives:**
 - Does the performance seem to fulfill the objectives of the spontaneous speaking event?
 - Does the performance follow the rules of the spontaneous speaking event?
 - Does the performance seem to meet the objectives *better* than other performances in the round?

Impromptu

- This is a spontaneous speech in which the judge gives each speaker a tournament-provided choice of three topics. The speaker chooses one of those three topics and has a maximum of 2 minutes to prepare for a speech of up to 5 minutes.
- Carefully time the preparation time so each student receives no more than 2 minutes to prepare before delivering a speech. We must keep the preparation time equal and fair.
- Speakers should specify when they will begin their prep time after selecting a topic.
- The speech should have a clear **introduction, body, and conclusion**.
- The speech must provide a clear interpretation of / response to the topic.
- **Do not penalize students for their topics.** They are given topic options by the tournament and are required to address those tournament-provided topics in specific categories during each round of competition (e.g. quotations, current events, abstract nouns, and concrete objects).
 - For concrete object speeches, students are not required to take an informative stance. If they draw a topic of “pen” for example, they tend to interpret the significance of a pen rather than spend 5 minutes informing you about various types of pens or the history of pens. They have only 2 minutes to prepare and no access to research, so they will be creatively interpreting their topics as opposed to informing you with research.
- The speech may include various types of supporting material (examples, stories, historical points, references to literature, current events, personal experiences, etc.) from the student’s education and life experience. There is not a requirement to use a particular type of supporting material but they should provide support for their main idea(s).
- Students are working from memory and experience, since they cannot bring pre-prepared materials. They may have some prepared ideas to integrate but any **ideas presented should be linked to the topic** at hand.

Extemporaneous Speaking [Extemp]

- This speech is a one on one current events speech for the judge. Each student has 30 minutes to prepare a response to a tournament-provided current events question BEFORE arriving to speak before the judge.
- This is a speech of up to 7 minutes with a 30 second grace period. Since students are developing a thorough response to a topic, you should take into account whether or not they fully use the time allotted.
- The topics are phrased as questions about current events. The student should frame the speech as a clear response to the question at hand and should definitely mention the question during their speech.

- **Do not penalize students for their topics.** They are given topic options by the tournament and are required to address tournament-provided current events questions.
- This is an **evidence-based** event. Students are allowed to consult news articles and online publications during their preparation time and should include some of this evidence to support ideas during their speeches. During the speech, they must present their ideas and sources from memory. (They are not allowed to consult notes.)
- Students must **clearly cite their sources** in the speech and include the source and a date. There isn't a minimum requirement for a number of sources but a general trend for a strong extemporaneous speech is 5-7 source citations in a speech. Students may present fewer sources or more sources but sources should definitely be cited.
- Each major idea / main point / claim should be supported by some sort of support, e.g. historical examples, references to current events, and quoted material (cited evidence sources).

Congress

- Student Congress is modeled upon the procedure in a legislature. It is designed to test a student's ability to speak to an issue in both an extemporaneous (prepared, researched) and spontaneous manner, enabled by a student's ability to use parliamentary procedure to participate in an orderly manner.
- There are between 10 and 20 debaters in the round and there will be one elected student Presiding Officer (PO).
- The PO should be ranked among the speakers based on their ability to efficiently/effectively run the round.
- Each speech will be 3 minutes long alternating between affirmation and negation speakers. You should judge based upon:
 - **Delivery:** the speaker's ability to communicate clearly and effectively, with strong skills in eye contact, physical control, gestures, and vocal variety
 - **Logical arguments and analysis:** the validity of their content, strength of reasoning, and solid supporting evidence
 - **Clash:** how well they engage their opponents' arguments (speakers should clash with opposing views in the chamber unless presenting a first "authorship" speech for a proposal; they may also identify some areas of agreement but they should be clashing with at least some perspectives)
 - **Questioning** (direct, concise, knowledgeable, and effective questions)
 - **Parliamentary procedure:** effective use of procedures to participate in the debate and the chamber's business
 - **Participation:** This may be a factor in ranking debaters who seem irreconcilably close in skill but it is not decisive. A participant who delivers two excellent speeches should

generally be ranked higher than a participant who gives more than two speeches which are of relatively low quality. Quality > quantity.

- Whether the bill or resolution being discussed passes or fails **should not** affect your decision. Focus on the students' quality of participation within the Congress chamber.

Debate Events

General Guidelines

- **Take notes and track argument clash, concessions, and admissibility of “New Arguments” in Constructive Speeches vs. Rebuttal Speeches** Keep a flowchart or “flow” of the arguments in the round. This is important for keeping track of which arguments are addressed in the clash and which arguments are conceded by the opponent(s). If a debater's argument is conceded (not addressed or explicitly granted by the opponent), it is considered won by the side that advanced it. Part of your job is to pay attention to which arguments are clashed upon and which are conceded, as this is a factor in the debate and in fairness.
 - **One a debater's constructive speeches are over, they may NOT present new arguments in the rebuttals. This is another reason to keep track of arguments on a flow chart so you can DISREGARD any new arguments after the constructive period.** (A new argument is not admissible in the rebuttals. You need not say anything and should not interrupt the debaters. Just cross out any new argument during a rebuttal and don't factor new arguments into your decision.)
 - Exception: Judges should only allow new responses during rebuttal speeches if those responses address an argument first made in the immediately preceding speech. *New analysis* of prior arguments is allowed in rebuttal speeches.
- **Please wait for the debate to end before submitting a ballot decision.** The students have worked hard to prepare all of their arguments and it is respectful and important to wait to hear all speeches before submitting your ballot. Also, it is possible for a late speech to sway your opinion!
- **Timing:** Each debate event has its own rules for particular speeches' times and preparation time. Be certain to follow the timing rules and time each speech and each debater's preparation time to be sure students adhere to the rules. Debaters will often speak right up until the final second of time has elapsed. It is in your discretion to allow a debater to finish a sentence as time elapses but do not allow a debater to start a new point once time has elapsed.
 - Timing exception: “Road Maps”: Road maps are brief pre-speech remarks to list an order of arguments to be addressed. This is intended to help judges and competitors pre-organize their note-taking “flow sheets” before a speech begins. Roadmaps do not count toward speech time, so long as:
 - The roadmap is not argumentative in nature;
 - The roadmap does not exceed 15 seconds.

- **Judge Objectivity:** Do not allow personal bias or personal knowledge of the topic to intrude on your decision when voting—only judge the rounds based on the arguments that were presented. Students are ASSIGNED to their sides in the debate and have no control over the topic. You are there to judge the relative quality of the argumentation and speaking. The students are there to debate their opponents and their preparation, not their judges and their judges’ knowledge of the topic.
 - **Don’t dismiss evidence / points on your own (unless they are new points and not allowed during rebuttals):** If a piece of evidence or an idea is demonstrably false and you know it, it’s still up to the debaters to flag that point as false. You can mention the problem on your ballot but you should not factor it into your decision if the debaters don’t point out the problem.
 - **Do not interrupt the debaters** to ask them questions or correct them during speeches. You are there to listen and evaluate them, not debate them or question them.
- **Speaker Points / Speaker Skills vs. Content:** Make sure to note how each speaker speaks and award speaker points accordingly. 30 is the highest that can be given, and 25 is generally the lowest that can be given unless there has been a blatant violation of ethical norms during the round. (Some tournaments will not require speaking points.)
 - You may factor the debaters’ speaking skills / “delivery” into your decision but the primary purpose of the debate is to showcase better debating skills and meet the criteria for the debate event. Content > delivery in debate, although if speaking style hampers communication, you may make that a factor in your decision, or if a debate seems irreconcilably close on the issues, superior delivery might help you resolve the decision.
 - Decorum can be a factor in your decision if a debater’s behavior is rude, racist, sexist, or otherwise seriously offensive.
 - It is possible to assign a “low point win” - even if speaking points aren’t required by the tournament. The idea here is that a debater / debate team may speak with less skill but actually provide a better clash and overall better evidence or case. This is a judgement call (and quality speaking / clarity and quality clash often do go hand in hand), but speaking more beautifully should not automatically mean a debater wins the round absent a strong clash and strong evidence for their side.
- **Cross-Examination**
 - **Cross-examination is** a time for debaters to clarify and undermine their opponents’ arguments. Cross-examination might factor into your decision but the debaters’ speeches are the crux of the debate and cross-examination is secondary. Arguments made in cross-examination should be leveraged in speeches if debaters want you to vote on that content.
 - **Cross-examination is present in all forms of debate but in different debate events, it is conducted differently. Please don’t hold debaters accountable for**

the cross-examination conventions of OTHER debate events in their own particular debate events. Details:

- **Policy Debate:** the speaker who just finished speaking receives question from opponent who is not due to speak next; questions flow in one direction from the questioner to the respondent (unless a respondent asks for a quick clarification)
 - **Lincoln Douglas Debate:** the speaker who just finished speaking receives questions from opponent; questions flow in one direction from the questioner to the respondent (unless a respondent asks for a quick clarification)
 - **Public Forum Debate:** cross-examination is a “crossfire” in which questions may flow freely back and forth between the debaters who have just spoken (after each set of two speeches before the final speeches). The first two crossfires are between the set of two speakers who have just finished speeches. The final crossfire is a “grand crossfire” in which all 4 debaters may participate. Debaters should attempt to charitably share the questioning time but if debaters aren’t strong in their questioning or answering skills, opponents may use more of the time in response to that.
 - **Parliamentary Debate:** questions are asked as “Points of Information” which are requested DURING an opponent’s speech and the speaker may choose to accept or deny the question; see the detailed Parliamentary Debate rules for the rules on this procedure.
- **Criteria for Judging: Defer to the Event Rules Plus Standards the Debaters Forward During the Debates:** Your decision should be somewhat guided by the objectives of the particular debate event and by the criteria established by the debaters in the round at hand. What do they set as the guideposts for reaching your decision? Do the debaters agree on a common criterion or present a rationale for their own side’s interpretation of the most meaningful points in the debate?
 - Particular debate events have their own objectives and guideposts for decision making. Be sure to check the particular debate event’s rules and guidelines below.
 - This year, due to the online nature of some tournaments, if the tournament is online, at many tournaments, debaters are allowed to use the Internet during rounds to conduct research. However, they are expected to come to their debate rounds prepared.
 - Debaters are not allowed to use any form of communication to receive help during their debate rounds from anyone other than their partner (if in a partnered debate event). They may contact coaches / teachers for an emergency situation; however, they may not consult anyone outside the round (coaches, teammates, etc.) for help with the content of the debate during the debate itself.
 - **Evidence Sharing Details:**

- **Debaters' requests for / sharing of evidence: Debaters must be given access to opponents' evidence upon request.** BEFORE THE ROUND BEGINS, debaters should agree upon a method for evidence sharing (e.g. e-mail, online through the tournament parameters, or through a shared group document).
 - In Policy Debate, Lincoln-Douglas Debate, and Public Forum Debate, teams or individuals may request evidence from opponents during cross examination/cross-fire or preparation only. The specific evidence cited must be provided. The requesting team must have access to the evidence during their subsequent speech, but must return it at the conclusion of that speech if requested. In Parliamentary Debate, the opposing debaters may ask to see the debaters' notes containing any cited material as part of a Point of Information and the team reading the cited materials must show the handwritten notes, with citation, upon such request.
- **Judge requests for evidence: Generally NOT allowed** at LEAGUE debate tournaments: At league tournaments, debaters may not send judges evidence to evaluate and judges are not allowed to request evidence to personally evaluate after the round. The debaters themselves should be discussing the relative quality of evidence. (See the guidance above about how you should not factor your own interpretation of the evidence or its quality into the decision but instead evaluate how the debaters settle these questions of evidence quality. Are the debaters persuasive in upholding or attacking the evidence at hand?)
 - The only exception allowing for judges to request to see evidence is if a debater asserts a violation of rules (e.g. evidence fabrication or evidence manipulation). This should be VERY rare. Stop the round in progress and contact the tournament's tab room help line / help desk for assistance if a formal allegation of breaking the evidence rules—evidence fabrication or manipulation—arises.
 - A quibble over whether or not the evidence is “strong enough” or says exactly what debaters claim it says is a matter of interpretation for debaters to settle in the debate. This is not the same as a rules violation requiring judge intervention. You should attempt to settle issues of evidence QUALITY by listening to the debaters' arguments as opposed to calling for their evidence.

Specific Goals & Rules for Particular Debate Events

Lincoln-Douglas Debate [LD]

- LD is a one-on-one debate event where the affirmative supports the resolution and the negative side doesn't.
- Generally, LD debaters don't focus on implementation (ex. Can we get rid of nuclear weapons? How can we do so?) but instead focus on the **reasoning** / **justification** for doing so

and the **implications of affirming or negating** the resolution (ex. How would getting rid of nuclear weapons impact international relationships? What should our ethical guidelines be in doing so?).

- It is conventional for LD debaters to focus on overarching values or goals to be achieved and which criteria (or a “criterion” or “standard”) best achieve those values or goals; however, this convention is not required.
- At league tournaments, **plans are prohibited in LD debate.**
- The resolution changes every two months, and the September-October resolution is Resolved: In a democracy, voting ought to be compulsory.
- The following presents the structure of the round, and while the debaters should be keeping track of their own time, you should as well to help maintain fairness.
 - Affirmative Constructive = 6 Minutes
 - Cross Examination by the Neg against the Aff = 3 min
 - Negative Constructive = 7 minutes
 - Cross Examination by the Aff against the Neg = 3 min
 - First Affirmative Rebuttal = 4 minutes
 - Negative Rebuttal = 6 minutes
 - Second Affirmative Rebuttal = 3 minutes
 - Both debaters get 4 minutes of prep time to use in rounds between speeches.

Parliamentary Debate [Parli]

- Parli is a spontaneous partner debate in which debaters are given the topic of debate 20 minutes before the round starts. In other words, debaters **ONLY** have 20 minutes for preparing for their side with internet access.
- As such, Parli is a debate based on thinking on the spot and refuting, as well as being centered more around logical arguments rather than having a long list of evidence.
- Parli debaters (because of virtual debate) are now allowed internet access **DURING THE MIDDLE** of the round, so any sort of evidence used **MUST** be cited; however, this must be at the request of the opposing team.
- Debaters are allowed to ask questions during the middle of the opponents speech **EXCEPT** the **first and last minute** of each speech and **the final speeches**. Questions are referred to as “Point of Information” and follow up questions are not permitted. Also note that debaters can refuse to accept questions.
- If debaters bring up new arguments in the last speech, the opponents have the opportunity to stop the opponents during the speech by saying “Point Out of Order.” After this, the team who called a “Point Out of Order” is given 15 seconds to explain what the “Point Out of Order” is, and the speaker is given 15 seconds to respond; after that, it is up to the judge’s decision to exclude that argument.
- The following are speech times and explanations:

Parliamentary Debate Speech Times and Purpose			
Speech	CHSSA Name	Purpose	Time
1st Affirmative Constructive	First Proposition	AFF states their case.	7 min
1st Negative Constructive	First Opposition	NEG states their case and refutes AFF's case.	8 min
2nd Affirmative Constructive	Second Proposition	AFF responds to refutations and refutes NEG's case.	8 min
2nd Negative Constructive	Second Opposition	NEG responds to AFF refutations and refutes AFF's case.	8 min
3rd Negative Final Speech	Opposition Rebuttal	Brief summary on how NEG wins. No new evidence or arguments.	4 min
3rd Affirmative Final Speech	Proposition Rebuttal	Responds to NEG 2nd speech; brief summary on how AFF wins; no new evidence or arguments.	5 min

- Flow their impacts and compare which **side better reaches the weighing mechanism** (evaluative criteria forwarded by the debaters) for the debate, and which team better solves for the problems of the status quo, and **provides stronger impacts (outcomes / benefits / avoided disadvantages) than the other.** (This shouldn't simply be a numerical tally but rather should be based on the explanation of the particular impacts.)

Policy Debate [sometimes called “Team Debate” or “CX” (cross-examination) debate]

- Policy is a partner debate event in which the affirmative team proposes a plan or other concrete action (and case for change) under the resolution and the negative team presents reasons to negate. The negative team may present a variety of counter strategies but no specific strategies are prohibited or required.
 - Argument Content Exception: Novice Case Limits:** One exception to content regulations is for novice league tournaments. Cases must fall within the “novice policy case limits”—the list of coach-approved cases for novices. Debaters will raise an objection if a case falls outside the case limits. If there is an objection like this, you should let the round continue in case this is a misunderstanding, but contact the tabroom for assistance in rendering your final decision.

- **Argument Content Exception: Topicality:** Debaters may raise an argument called “Topicality” in which they argue that a particular plan falls outside the bounds of the resolution (topic). If this happens, allow the full debate to continue and settle this based upon the strength of argumentation you see.
- **The 2020-2021 yearlong resolution for policy debate is Resolved: the United States Federal Government should enact substantial criminal justice reform in the United States in one or more of the following: policing, sentencing, forensic science.**
- **Paradigms (approaches / ways of thinking) in judging Policy Debate:**
 - Debaters may urge the judge to adopt a particular paradigm or way of viewing and judging the debate. Common suggestions are:
 - **Policymaking:** This is based upon a congressional-style model of decision-making in which the judge assesses the relative benefits of each side. Debaters will typically urge a vote based upon the net benefits of the plan vs. the net benefits of either the current system or any counterplan by the negative. This is a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of each team’s position, factoring in criteria such as evidence / proof for those points as well as the probability (likelihood), time frame, and magnitude of any disadvantages or advantages.
 - **Stock Issues:** This is based upon a legal model of debate in which the affirmative is like the prosecution and the negative is like the defense. To prove a case for change, the affirmative must argue a case that meets a burden of proof for the suggested change. The affirmative is asked to prove “stock issues” (“common” issues) to show the current system is guilty of ignoring a problem and action is necessary, beneficial, and definitely achievable by the affirmative plan. The stock issues typically argued include:
 - **Topicality:** Does the plan follow / represent the topic at hand?
 - **Inherency:** Is the current system guilty of ignoring a problem or taking insufficient action on that problem?
 - **Significance & Harms:** Is the problem quantitatively important (significant in scope / #s) and qualitatively impactful (serious effects)?
 - **Solvency:** Does the plan solve the harms presented or at least do so to a better extent than the current system? (Debaters may set certain criteria for solvency and those are debatable.)
 - **Disadvantages:** Does the plan, on balance, have more significant advantages than disadvantages?
 - **Counterplan:** If a counterplan is presented, is it more desirable than the plan?
- **The speech times are as follows.** *Debaters should be keeping track of their own speech and prep times, but the judge should be doing so as well to maintain fairness.*

- 1st Affirmative Constructive (1AC) - 8 minutes
- Cross examination of the 1AC by the 2nd Negative Speaker - 3 minutes
- 1st Negative Constructive (1NC) - 8 minutes
- Cross examination of the 1NC by the 1st Affirmative Speaker - 3 minutes
- 2nd Affirmative Constructive (2AC) - 8 minutes
- Cross examination of the 2AC by the 1st Negative Speaker - 3 minutes
- 2nd Negative Constructive (2NC) - 8 minutes
- Cross examination of the 2NC by the 2nd Affirmative Speaker - 3 minutes
- 1st Negative Rebuttal (1NR) - 5 minutes
- 1st Affirmative Rebuttal (1AR) - 5 minutes
- 2nd Negative Rebuttal (2NR) - 5 minutes
- 2nd Affirmative Rebuttal (2AR) - 5 minutes
- Each team has 8 minutes of prep time at League tournaments

Public Forum Debate [PF]

- Public Forum is a partner debate event in which the affirmative team argues that the given resolution is true and the negative team presents reasons that the resolution is false.
- **Resolutions vary based on the month**, so quickly check what the current resolution is using the tournament web page or the NSDA topic site.
- For League debate tournaments, according to CHSSA rules (our state's speech and debate organization), "In Public Forum debate a plan is defined as a formalized, comprehensive proposal for implementation. Neither the Pro or Con side is permitted to offer a plan or counterplan; rather they should offer reasoning to support a position of advocacy. Debaters may offer generalized, practical solutions."
- Debaters should manage the lengths of their own speeches and their opponents'. In general, speech lengths have a 15 second grace period after they end. If a debate team goes grossly over time, it is the other team's responsibility to call it out and prevent it from happening in the future. Judges should still time each speech and preparation time to ensure fairness.
- The round should primarily be judged based on the **content** presented in the round, rather than the speaking skills and behavior in the round. This does not apply if a debater's speaking skill affects their communication, or if their behavior is rude, racist, or sexist.
- When judging the content of the round in the form of arguments, vote for the argument that is the most important and the least contested.
- The speech times are as follows. Debaters should be keeping track of their own speech and prep times, but the judge should be doing so as well.
 - Aff Case (4 min)
 - Neg Case (4 min)
 - Crossfire (3 min)
 - Aff Rebuttal (4 min)
 - Neg Rebuttal (4 minutes)

- Crossfire (3 min)
- Aff Summary (3 min)
- Neg Summary (3 min)
- Grand Crossfire (4 min)
- Aff Final Focus (2 min)
- Neg Final Focus (2 min)
- Make sure to give each team up to 3 minutes of preparation time as they desire.
- When a team looks at another team's evidence, it counts as prep time. Preparation time begins for a debater as soon as the other debater has finished with a speech or cross-examination.