



Rules: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Does it have to be in the rebuttal speech for you to win on it?

A: An argument does NOT have to be in the rebuttal speech for you to win the round on that argument. However, if it is in the rebuttal speech, it is usually weighed more effectively and therefore most winning arguments are in the rebuttal speeches.

Q: Is preparation time allowed in between speeches?

A: No. After the 15 minutes of preparation time before the round, there is no preparation time between speeches.

Q: Is a debater allowed to pass a note to their partner while their partner is giving a speech?

A: While online, “passing notes” is allowed, but strongly discouraged. In person, you are not allowed to pass notes to your partner.

Q: Is heckling allowed?

A: No. However, in an in-person format, knocking on desks is allowed as a sign of approval or support of a point.

Q: What is a POC?

A: A POC (Point of Clarification) is a genuine question from the judge or the opposing team towards the speaker. It is not a way for a debater to poke a hole in the other team’s argument, nor is it a way for a debater to clarify their own case. For example, if a debater has a poor internet connection and their speech is unclear, the judge may call a POC and ask the debater to repeat themselves.

Q: Does a POI have to be in the form of a question?

A: Yes. POIs cannot be statements.

Q: When are new arguments not allowed?

A: New arguments are not allowed in the final two speeches of the round. The one exception to this is in the final Government speech: Government may bring up new responses to arguments

that the Opposition mentioned for the first time in the second Opposition speech. A debater can call a Point of Order (POO) to identify a new argument in a rebuttal.

Q: Are theory and kritiks allowed?

A: Kritiks are not allowed. Theory is discouraged.

Q: Are low-point wins allowed?

A: No, the team with the higher speaker points must be the team that wins the round. Judges should give speaker points based on each speaker's contribution to the round, rather than based on the eloquence of their speech.

Q: What is an abusive case?

A: Abusive cases are generally cases that prevent both teams from debating on equal grounds. Abusive calls must be made in the LOC (Side Opposition's first speech). There are six types of abusive cases:

1. Tautologies – these cases effectively prove themselves.
 - a. Example: the motion is THBT California is the most important U.S. State. It would be abusive if the Government defined “important” as “largest in population” because then the Government's side is empirically true.
2. Cases that do not allow the Opposition a path to victory.
 - a. Example: the motion is THW raise the minimum wage. It is abusive for the Government to argue that they will be raising the minimum wage by one cent, because they give the opposition no real way to win the debate.
3. Cases that don't meet the “intensity threshold of the debate.”
 - a. Example: the motion is THS eco-terrorism. It is abusive for the Government to define eco-terrorism as peaceful protests.
4. Cases that are clearly not in the spirit of the debate.
 - a. Example: the motion is THBT the US should rapidly withdraw its military forces from the Middle East. It is abusive for the Government to propose a 10-year-long withdrawal plan.
5. Cases that require specific knowledge that is not up to the *New York Times* standard of knowledge.
 - a. Example: the motion is THW make significant changes to the criminal justice system. It is abusive for the Government to define TH as Lithuania and go into the depths of the Lithuanian criminal justice system, because that requires specific knowledge. As for meeting the *New York Times* standard of knowledge, it is unlikely that the NYT will cover the Lithuanian criminal justice system in-depth (Knowledge cohering with the *New York Times* standard of knowledge is knowledge which a regular, informed reader of the NYT would have)

6. Tight definitions that only debate a small subset of a larger topic
 - a. Example: the motion is THW legalize all drugs and the government defines all drugs as marijuana.