

Miami-Dade Urban Debate League Judge's Quick Reference

Resolved: The United States federal government should significantly increase its exploration and/or development of the Arctic.

High School Debate Speeches	Time (Minutes)
1st Affirmative Constructive	8
Cross-Examination by 2 Neg	3
1st Negative Constructive	8
Cross-Examination by 1 Aff	3
2nd Affirmative Constructive	8
Cross-Examination by 1 Neg	3
2nd Negative Constructive	8
Cross-Examination by 2Aff	3
1st Negative Rebuttal	5
1st Affirmative Rebuttal	5
2nd Negative Rebuttal	5
2nd Affirmative Rebuttal	5
TOTAL	64
Prep Time Allowed – Affirmative	8
Prep Time Allowed – Negative	8

Middle School Debate Speeches	Time (Minutes)
1st Affirmative Constructive	5
Cross-Examination by 2 Neg	1.5
1st Negative Constructive	5
Cross-Examination by 1Aff	1.5
2nd Affirmative Constructive	5
Cross-Examination by 1 Neg	1.5
2nd Negative Constructive	5
Cross-Examination by 2Aff	1.5
1st Negative Rebuttal	3.5
1st Affirmative Rebuttal	3.5
2nd Negative Rebuttal	3.5
2nd Affirmative Rebuttal	3.5
TOTAL	40
Prep Time Allowed – Affirmative	5
Prep Time Allowed – Negative	5

[Judging 101 Video](#)

[Eballots Guide \(start at 45 seconds\)](#)

MDUDL Philosophy

- Main goals: Education and fun.
- Competition is important, but learning comes first.
- Debaters must adapt to the judge's speed and clarity needs.
- If the judge can't understand, it's the debater's responsibility — just like real life.
- Do not disclose the round.

Affirmative Case

The Affirmative team supports the resolution and proposes a plan.

1. Inherency – Why the plan isn't already happening.
 - Judge it: If they can't prove the problem exists or hasn't been fixed, their case is weaker.
 - Example: "Right now, only low-income students get free breakfast."
2. Plan Text – A clear, specific proposal.
 - Judge it: Must be specific so both sides know what's being debated.
 - Example: "All public schools will provide free breakfast to every student daily."
3. Harms – Problems the plan will fix.
 - Judge it: Are the harms real and important?
 - Example: Kids who skip breakfast struggle in class → lower test scores.
4. Solvency – Why the plan will work.
 - Judge it: If the Negative proves the plan won't work, that's a major hit to the Affirmative.
 - Example: Studies show students who eat breakfast score higher and focus better.
5. Optional Framework – How to weigh arguments.
 - Judge it: If they say "Improving education should be the top priority," use that unless the Negative beats it.

Negative Arguments: The Negative team argues against the Affirmative's plan.

On-Case Attacks (directly against Affirmative's points)

- Inherency Attack: Problem is already solved.
 - *Example:* Many schools already offer free breakfast.
- Harms Attack: Problem isn't serious, or plan makes it worse.
 - *Example:* No proven link between breakfast and grades; plan wastes money.
- Solvency Attack: Plan won't solve.
 - *Example:* Students will still skip breakfast even if it's free.

Plan Attacks (*A type of On-Case argument*)

The plan text itself can be attacked if it is unclear, flawed, unrealistic, or unable to solve.

- Solvency Deficit: Plan can't solve the harm.
 - Example: Students may still skip breakfast → learning problem remains.
- Implementation Problems: Plan can't be done as written.
 - Example: Schools lack kitchen space or staff to serve everyone.
- Internal Link Break: Plan happens but doesn't connect to claimed benefits.
 - Example: Eating breakfast doesn't guarantee better test scores.
- Already Done: Plan duplicates what exists now.
 - Example: Many states already run universal breakfast programs.

Judge it: If the Negative wins here, the plan loses credibility and the Affirmative's case weakens even if harms are real.

Off-Case Negative Arguments (separate from the Affirmative case)

1. Disadvantage (DA) – Plan causes bad results.

- Parts:
 - Uniqueness – This bad thing isn't happening now.
 - Link – How the plan causes it.
 - Impact – Why it matters.
- Judge it: Compare the size and likelihood of the DA's harm with the Affirmative's benefits.
- Example: Budget balanced now → free breakfast costs too much → budget cuts kill sports and arts.

2. Topicality (T) – Plan doesn't fit the resolution.

- Parts:
 - Definition – Negative's meaning of a key term.
 - Violation – Plan doesn't fit that meaning.
 - Standards – Why Negative's definition is better.
 - Voting Issue – If not topical, Affirmative loses.
- Judge it: If Negative wins on T, vote Negative regardless of other arguments.
- Example: The resolution is about "improving health," but plan is about education, not health.

3. Counterplan (CP) – Better solution.

- Parts:
 - Text – What CP does.
 - Solvency – How it fixes the problem.
 - Net Benefit – Why it's better than the Affirmative's plan.
- Judge it: If CP solves the harm and avoids Affirmative's problems, vote Negative.
- Example: Give breakfast vouchers to students in need — cheaper, no budget cuts.

4. Kritik (K) – Philosophical challenge.

- Parts:
 - Link – How the plan connects to a harmful idea/system.
 - Impact – Why that harm matters.
 - Alternative – What to do instead.
- Judge it: If Negative proves the mindset is harmful and their alternative avoids it, they can win even if the plan fixes the harm.
- Example: Plan assumes kids can't care for themselves → promotes dependency.
Alternative: Teach cooking and nutrition instead.

Impact Calculus – Comparing Arguments

- Utilitarianism: Who helps the most people?
 - *Example:* Breakfast helps all students vs. DA harms fewer → Affirmative wins.
- Ethics/Deontology: Who follows moral rules best?
 - *Example:* Feeding kids is a moral duty → if prioritized, Affirmative wins.
- Discourse: Whose language/message is less harmful?
 - *Example:* Negative uses stereotypes about poor students → could weigh against them.

How Judges Should Decide the Round

1. Listen & Flow – Write down all arguments and responses.
2. Compare Directly – If an argument is not answered (“dropped”), it counts for the other side.
3. Weigh Impacts – Which side’s impacts are bigger, more likely, or more important?
4. Stay Neutral – Only decide based on what debaters say and prove.
5. Give Short Feedback – One strength and one improvement for each team.
6. Don’t Announce the Winner – Fill out the ballot only.

Judge Rules & Practices

- Prep Time: 8 minutes (5 for middle school) per team, used anytime.
- Judge Courtesy: Stay focused, no side conversations.
- Evidence Checks: Allowed after speeches if requested.
- No Judge Intervention: Don’t make arguments for teams.
- We love constructive feedback after the round, but keep it concise (2-3 minutes max).
- MDUDL debaters bear the burden of arguing so that the judge can understand their points, adapting to the knowledge and skill level of the judge. If the judge fails to hear or understand points, the debaters (not the judge) are at fault. (This is how “real life” works.)
- Speaker Points:
 - 29–30 = Exceptional
 - 28 = Strong
 - 27 = Average
 - Below 26 = Rare, for poor performance or conduct.