

Lincoln Douglas Debate Instructions

1. Debaters have been given a topic, and during the tournament, they will debate both sides of the issue.
2. Please look at the schematic and pick up your ballot. Usually, the affirmative debater is listed on the left and the negative on the right. Occasionally, debaters will flip a coin for sides. This is noted on the schematic.
3. Lincoln Douglas Debate is a debate of values. Each side will attempt to prove that they can provide a better value than the other side.
4. Debaters will use a combination of logic, research, and analysis to prove their side.
5. Fill out the top of the ballot.
6. While the debate takes place, you should be taking notes (or flowing).
7. The debate will begin:
 - A) Affirmative Constructive (6 minutes): The affirmative will speak for 6 minutes to explain why the topic should be affirmed. The affirmative should define terms and explain his value. The affirmative speech should prove the value inherent in the resolution. This speech is usually written out.
 - B) Cross Examination (3 minutes): The Negative will ask questions of the affirmative. Both speakers should face the judge. During this time, the negative may only ask questions, and the affirmative may only answer questions. Both speakers should remain respectful, yet both speakers should be able to control the question period.
 - C) Negative Constructive (7 minutes): The Negative will use 7 minutes to do 2 things: 1) Prove the negation of the topics and 2) Present a direct clash with the affirmative's case. Negative debaters will usually use between 3 and 4 minutes of "negative" case (the negation of the topic), and the rest of the time to clash.
 - D) Cross Examination (3 minutes): The Affirmative will ask questions of the negative. Both speakers should face the judge. During this time, the affirmative may only ask questions, and the negative may only answer questions. Both speakers should remain respectful, yet both speakers should be able to control the question period.
 - E) 1st Affirmative Rebuttal (4 minutes): The Affirmative will have 4 minutes to rebut the Negative's points. This is a difficult speech, as the Negative has had 7 minutes. A good affirmative will need to creatively structure the speech to refute as much as possible in the short amount of time given. After this speech, no one may introduce new arguments.

F) Negative Rebuttal (6 minutes): The Negative will have 6 minutes to rebut the affirmative's points. As the end of the speech, a negative will often "crystallize", i.e. give 2 or 3 points to explain why the Negative wins.

G) 2nd Affirmative Rebuttal (3 minutes): The Affirmative will have 3 minutes to wrap up the debate and explain why the Affirmative wins. An affirmative will often "crystallize", i.e. explain why the Affirmative wins.

8. During the debate, please time the debaters. Debaters may also choose to time themselves, but you are the official time of the round.

9. During the debate, debaters may use "prep time." Each debater is given a specific amount of time to prepare their ideas. The amount varies from level to level, so please be sure to check the postings to be sure that you know the correct amount of prep time. You should count the prep time of the speaker who is about to speak. However, the other debater is also permitted to use that time.

10. During the debate, please fill out the ballot. Please explain to the debaters which ideas worked and which ideas did not. Please give the debaters information about how they can perform better next time.

11. The stance of a debate judge is unusual. Debate is an intellectual exercise, not an ultimate search for truth. Your job is not to judge the debaters against what you know to be true; you judge the debaters against each other. If the affirmative makes a weak argument, the negative must point that out. If the argument goes unanswered, it stands, even if you as the judge know the correct answer. Thus, to win, a debater need not convince you of his side; the debater must merely be better.

12. After you choose a winner, please assign each debater points between 18 and 30. Please give more points to the winner. Please also realize that the points are relative. Thus, a 30 for a novice debater might only be a 24 for a varsity debater.

13. Please bring the ballot to the Tab Room as soon as possible. If you need to write more substantive comments, please bring the top sheet to the Tab Room and continue writing on the bottom two sheets.