

Public Forum Debate

1. Debaters have been given a topic, and during the tournament, they will debate both sides of the issue.
2. If you are signed up to do eballoting, please go to your room when you receive a text message. If not, 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. Please sit in the back of the room, not the teacher's desk. Please close the door before the round begins. Have debaters silence cell phones. Please do not ask students which school they attend. The best thing a judge can do is to say nothing other than a brief welcome.
4. Public Forum Debate is a debate of a proposition. Debaters will argue for or against a proposition.
5. Debaters will use a combination of logic, research, and analysis to prove their side.
6. Fill out the top of the ballot.
7. While the debate takes place, you should be taking notes (or flowing).
8. The debate will begin:
 - A) 1st Pro Speaker (4 minutes): The 1st Pro speaker will speak for 4 minutes to explain why the topic should be affirmed. The Pro should define any terms of importance. This speech is usually written out.
 - B) 1st Con Speaker (4 minutes): The 1st Con speaker will speak for 4 minutes to explain why the topic should not be affirmed. This speech is usually written out.
 - C) Crossfire (3 minutes): The first speakers will question each other. The Pro asks the first question. After the first question, either one may ask a question of the other. Each debater should show skill in asking and answering questions.
 - D) 2nd Pro Speaker (4 minutes): The 2nd Pro speaker will speak for 4 minutes to clash with what the Con said and to rebuild the Pro case. Therefore, it is not usually written out. A good speech will refer to what has been said before in the debate.
 - E) 2nd Con Speaker (4 minutes): The 2nd Con speaker will speak for 4 minutes to clash with what the Pro said and to rebuild the Con case. Therefore, it is not usually written out. A good speech will refer to what has been said before in the debate.
 - F) Crossfire (3 minutes): The second speakers will question each other. The Pro asks the first question. After the first question, either one may ask a question of the other. Each debater should show skill in asking and answering questions.
 - G) Pro Summary (2 minutes): The 1st Pro will try to summarize the salient points of the case and explain why the Pro's position is stronger.
 - H) Con Summary (2 minutes): The 1st Con will try to summarize the salient points of the case and explain why the Con's position is stronger.

I) Grand Crossfire (3 minutes): Both members of each team ask questions of the other side. Pro asks the first question. After the first question, either member of a team may ask a question of the other. Each debater should show skill in asking and answering questions.

J) Pro Final Focus (2 minutes): The 2nd Pro will give one or two reasons why the Pro should win. No new ideas may be introduced during this speech.

K) Con Final Focus (2 minutes): The 2nd Con will give one or two reasons why the Con should win. No new ideas may be introduced during this speech.

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

10. During the debate, debaters may use “prep time.” Each team has 2 minutes of prep time. You should count the prep time of the team that is about to speak. However, the other team is also permitted to use that time.

11. During the debate, please fill out the ballot, either electronically or on paper. 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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. Comments on ballots may be done up until the awards ceremony.