

Worlds Debate Format

1) Each team will consist of between 3 and 5 debaters. During any round, 3 of those debaters may compete. The other debaters are permitted to assist in preparation of the topic and may give time signals during the debate, but may not interact in any other way with members of their team.

2) For each debate, there will be four rounds. Two of those rounds will be prepared. The other two will be impromptu.

3) Impromptu Rounds

A) For impromptu rounds, topics and sides will be announced 30 minutes before the round is scheduled to begin (please note that in NSDA format, the time is 60 minutes.)

B) After the topic is released, teams will begin preparation by themselves, with no help from any coach or any outside persons. For preparations, teams may use an almanac and a dictionary. Teams may not use internet connectivity, nor may they use any articles or notes prepared before the topic was released. Failure to follow these rules will result in disqualification from the tournament.

C) Debaters will decide which debaters will participate in the round, but all members of the team may assist in preparation.

D) After the preparation times, teams will proceed to their rooms. The only information teams may bring into the round are handwritten notes prepared during the previous 30 minutes and an almanac and dictionary.

4) Prepared Debates

A) Topics for prepared rounds will be released prior to the actual day of the tournament.

B) For prepared debates, debaters may bring in any evidence that is pertinent to the topic. This would include data, opinions, etc. Just as in other forms of debate, debaters should cite these sources and have the information available during the round.

C) Evidence presented must be in paper form. Debaters may NOT use computers during the round.

4) Topics

A) Topics will be presented in the form, "This House proposes that . . ." or "This House believes that . . ." or "This House regrets that . . ."

B) For prepared topics, teams should prepare both sides of the argument, even though they will only debate one side during the debate.

C) For Worlds Debate, unless specifically noted, all topics shall be of a worldwide scope (e.g. an economics topic would not be limited to the US economy).

5) Format of the Debate.

A) As teams begin the round, they should inform the judge which debater will be first, second, third, and reply speakers. The reply speaker may only be the first or second speaker, not the third speaker.

B) The debate will begin with the first speaker for the Affirmative (Proposition or Prop) team. This speaker will be followed by a speech by the first speaker for the Negative (Opposition or Opp) team. These speeches will be followed by second and third speeches by each team. These speeches, called Substantive Speeches, are followed by a reply speech by the Prop and the Opp teams.

C) Substantive Speeches are 5 minutes long. (Please note, in NSDA format, Substantive Speeches are 8 minutes long). Reply Speeches are 3 minutes long (In NSDA format, Reply Speeches are 4 minutes long.) Judges shall time debaters. Team members who are not participating in a specific round may give time signals to their teammates, provided that the signals are unobtrusive.

D) There is no prep time in Worlds Debate. Speakers are expected to speak immediately after the previous speech is completed.

E) Interruptions

i) During a substantive speech, a member of the opposing team may rise to offer a Point of Information.

ii) A point of information may be a question or a statement.

iii) The first full minute and the last full minute of a Substantive Speech are protected time. No Points of Information may be offered during this time.

iv) No Points of Information may be offered during the Reply Speeches.

v) The Speaker may choose to accept a Point of Information or to reject or wave down the Point of Information. Rejection may take the form of an obvious hand gesture or a verbal comment from the Speaker.

vi) While the statements above are rules governing Points of Information, the following are accepted conventions in the World Debate community:

a) Speakers are encouraged to accept 2 Points of Information during a speech. Accepting more than 2 points is not encouraged. Accepting one or no Points of Information is frowned upon.

b) Speakers should acknowledge Points of Information and incorporate them into their speech. Ignoring questions or statements brought up in a Point of Information is frowned upon.

c) Speakers are discouraged from making Points of Information that last more than 15 seconds.

d) Speakers should not rise more than once every 20 seconds during unprotected time to offer Points of Information.

F) During the round, members of the team may not communicate with their coach, members of the team who are not debating, nor with any member of the audience.

6) Judging

A) During the round, the judge will flow the arguments of the debate.

B) Judges should judge of the quality of the arguments presented. Clash is also an important.

C) For Worlds Debate, a team is asked to adopt a specific viewpoint on the topic and to remain consistent to that viewpoint. This viewpoint should be expressed in the First Substantive Speech. The team's viewpoint may be expressed through a thesis statement which is repeated by each of the speakers during the round. Judges should consider how well the team works together and how well each of the speakers remains consistent with the viewpoint presented in the First Speech.

D) Judges should consider the quality of a team's Points of Information and a team's response to Points of Information. A speaker refusing to take any Points of Information should be graded down.

E) Judges will judge each Substantive Speech on a scale of 40-80.

i) 40% of the points (16-32 points) will be based on style. Speakers should communicate clearly using effective rate, pitch, tone hand gesture, facial expressions, etc. The use of notes should not be penalized unless it hinders delivery; however, speakers should not read their speeches. Notes should be used only for reference.

ii) 40 % of the score (16-32 points) will be based on content. This portion should be focused on the argumentation used by the speaker, divorced from style. Weak arguments should be marked accordingly, even if the opposing team does not expose a weak argument. Judges should not be influenced by their own personal beliefs or specialized knowledge when making this decision.

iii) 20% of the score (8-16 points) will be based on strategy. Strategy consists of whether or not the debater understands the importance of the issues of the debate and the structure/timing of the speech. Debaters should identify the most substantive issues and allocate their time to covering issues based on their relative importance. Strategy may also consider answers to Points of Information and choosing when/how to address them. Strategy is not content: a speaker who answers critical issues with weak responses should get poor marks on content, not necessarily on strategy.

F) Judges will judge the reply speech on a scale of 20-40 using the same criteria and above, only using 8-16 points for style, 8-16 points for content, and 4-8 points for strategy.

G) Judges should remember that unless noted, Worlds Debate has an international scope. Teams that focus specifically on one area (i.e., the US) should be penalized.

H) Judges should add up the scored from the four speeches. The winning team must receive more points than the losing team.