

Speech & Debate Judge Guidelines

Ballots

Tournaments use either paper ballots or a balloting website called Tabroom. It is best to go ahead and set up an account on tabroom.com.

Judge Check-In

Try to bring a tablet or laptop to the tournament in case they use Tabroom for ballots, as well as a notebook to jot down notes. When you arrive, look for a judge check-in area. After you've checked in you can head to the judge's lounge. You should plan to bring work/reading etc. as you may have a lot of down time.

Judging

When a round is announced, go to the check in area and see if you've been assigned to judge that round. You will be given the names of the participants, and the room number of the event. Go directly to the room to which you've been assigned.

If you are using Tabroom, log in to your account. You should see a list of ballots. Click "Start Round" to let the tournament know that the round you are judging has begun. Once everyone is present you may begin the round. (In individual events, sometimes students participate in more than one event, in which case they might be late to your round. It is fine to go ahead and start without those students.)

During the round you will need to listen carefully, and at the end of the round you will rank the students and award speaker points. Make sure you fill the ballot completely and provide feedback. A combination of praise and constructive criticism is extremely helpful.

Rank by quality of presentation, one being the best performer.
Assign speaker points (see the following pages for speaker point guidelines).

After filling out your ballot, return to the judge's lounge and wait for the next round. If you are using paper ballots, please turn them in at the judge's table.

There are many on-line guidelines for judging speech and debate. An excellent one is the National Speech & Debate Association's:
<https://www.speechanddebate.org/judge-training/>

Sources: Georgia Forensic Coaches Association and the National Speech and Debate Association.

INTERPRETATION/SPEECH EVENTS

SPEAKER POINTS:

For Individual Events, speaker points are awarded on a 50-point scale:

50-47: Exceptional

46-44: Very good

43-40: Good

Below 40: Student gave little effort

Program of Oral Interpretation

Time limit: 10 minutes

Selection from published works of prose or poetry that have a common theme connecting the pieces. Works must be presented from a small binder, but a memorized introduction and transitions are required.

Dramatic Interpretation

Time limit: 10 minutes

Presentation cut from literature that the student has memorized and acts out, portraying all characters. There should be an original introduction and transitions. There should be clear distinctions between different characters through posture, voice, and demeanor.

Duo Interpretation

Time limit: 10 minutes

Duo Interpretation is similar to Dramatic Interpretation, but presented by two students. The students may not make direct eye contact or physical contact, except in the introduction.

Extemporaneous Speaking

Time limit: 7 minutes

Speeches are prepared 30 minutes before the performance. Topics are current events. Student may use a single note card with less than 50 words on it.

Original Oratory

Time limit: 10 minutes

Original orations prepared by the competitor. The speech must be truthful. No more than 150 quoted words may be used.

Impromptu Speaking

Time limit: 7 minutes

Students select three topics from an envelope, and return two. They then have up to two minutes to prepare a speech and five minutes to deliver it. Speech should include a clear introduction, a few main points, transitions, and a conclusion. They may be funny or informative.

All Individual Events have a 30-second grace period. Please do not interrupt a performance even if the time is up but note the time on the ballot.

Some things to consider while judging Program or Oral Interpretation, Dramatic Interpretation, and Duo Interpretation:

- Dramatic structure: introduction, rise, climax, fall/resolution, and denouement/conclusion
- Cutting (the selection of text)
- Blocking – movements to convey space, emotion, and action. Blocking should enhance, not distract.
- Characterization – reveal personality through delivery, vocal and facial expressions, and intensity.
- Could I easily identify characters and what was happening?
- Was the plot easy to follow? Enjoyable? Polished?
- Does the performance move the audience?
- How is the pacing?

Some things to consider while judging Extemporaneous Speaking, Original Oratory, and Impromptu Speaking:

- Sources should be cited in Extemp. and Original Oratory
- Structure (introduction, body, and conclusion)
- Is the argument sound?
- Are there smooth transitions?
- Delivery – voice, movement, eye contact, volume

DEBATE EVENTS

SPEAKER POINTS:

For debate events, speaker points are awarded on a 30-point scale:

30-29: Exceptional

28-27: Very good

26-25: Good

Below 25: Student made little effort

Lincoln Douglas Debate

- LD debate is based on values and a criterion for how to judge that value. The purpose of each debater's presentation is to convince the judge that his or her value and value criterion is more important than his or her opponent's, and then to show how they achieve that value (through their value criterion) better than their opponent.
- Affirmative vs. Negative. The affirmative supports the resolution, and the negative is trying to convince you that the resolution is untrue.
- Cases. Each debater presents his or her case to you. This is where they lay out their arguments for their side. They should include analysis and justifications following a format: Introduction; Value and Criterion; and Contentions.
- Attack and Defense. Each debater must attack his or her opponent's case on each argument made, and defend any arguments made against his or her respective case.
- Delivery. Debaters must have excellent communication skills. Pay attention to gestures, eye contact, vocal variety, clarity, and rate of speech.
- Decide who wins. Consider all of the above factors and decide who did the better debating. The decision is completely based on arguments made in the round. Avoid basing your decision on prior knowledge. Speaking ability is not a factor in deciding who wins. After preliminary rounds, please tell competitors who wins.
- Write down why you made your decision. List specific arguments or aspects of a performance that influenced your decision.
- Award speaker points. The best speaker in the round gets the most points even if he or she lost the round based on arguments. Most speeches are not

memorized or prepared in advanced. You may award a low point win where the winner is not the best speaker, just be sure to indicate on the ballot Low Point Win (or LPW).

Timing:

Affirmative: 6 minutes

Cross Examination by Negative: 3 minutes

Negative: 7 minutes

Cross Examination by Affirmative: 3 minutes

Affirmative: 4 minutes

Negative: 6 minutes

Affirmative: 3 minutes

During the round, each debater gets 4 minutes of “prep time” to use at their discretion.

Public Forum Debate

- Public Forum Debate involves current events, and no specialized language is required to understand the event. Teams flip a coin to determine sides; one team flips the coin and the other team calls it. Whoever wins the toss gets to choose either 1. The side of the topic they want to defend or 2. The speaking position they wish to have. When the winners choose their favorite option, the other team makes their choice. Fill out the ballots with teams on the appropriate sides and individuals named in their speaker positions.
- Pro vs. Con. Pro supports the resolution, and the Con is trying to convince the judge that the resolution is untrue. The two sides should have a direct clash of ideas. Both sides must answer the simple question: Why are you right?
- Cases. Each debater (speaker 1 and speaker 2) presents his or her case to you. This is where they lay out their arguments for their side. They should include analysis and justifications. Cases should have an introduction, includes opening analysis, including resolution and definitions, and contentions, which are arguments based on sound logic and reasoning.
- Attack and Defense. Each team must attack their opponent's case on each argument made and defend any arguments made against their case.
- Delivery Debaters must have excellent communication skills. Pay attention to gestures, eye contact, vocal variety, clarity, and rate of speech.
- Decide who wins. Consider all of the above factors and decide who did the better debating. The decision is completely based on arguments made in the round. Speaking ability is not a factor in deciding who wins. Please disclose who wins to competitors in preliminary rounds.
- Write down why you made your decision. List specific arguments or aspects of a performance that influenced your decision.
- Award speaker points. The best speaker in the round gets the most points even if he or she lost the round based on arguments. Most speeches are not memorized or prepared in advanced. You may award a low point win where the winner is not the best speaker, just be sure to indicate on the ballot Low Point Win or LPW.

Timing:

Speaker 1 (Team A, 1st Speaker): 4 minutes

Speaker 2 (Team B, 1st Speaker): 4 minutes

Crossfire (between speakers 1 and 2): 3 minutes

Speaker 3 (Team A, 2nd Speaker): 4 minutes

Speaker 4 (Team B, 2nd Speaker): 4 minutes

Crossfire (between speakers 3 and 4): 3 minutes

Speaker 1 Summary: 2 minutes

Speaker 2 Summary: 2 minutes

Grand Crossfire (all speakers): 3 minutes

Speaker 3 Final Focus: 2 minutes

Speaker 4 Final Focus: 2 minutes

During the round, each team gets 2 minutes of “prep time” to use at their discretion.

Big Question Debate

Big Questions is a new debate format in which two opposing contestants debate a topic concerning the intersection of science, philosophy, and religion. Students are assigned a side of the topic before each round and present cases, engage in rebuttal and refutation, and participate in a question period.

Timing:

Affirmative Construction: 5 minutes

Negative Construction: 5 minutes

Question Segment: 3 minutes

Affirmative Rebuttal: 4 minutes

Negative Rebuttal: 4 minutes

Question Segment: 3 minutes

Affirmative Consolidation: 3 minutes

Negative Consolidation: 3 minutes

Affirmative Rationale: 2 minutes

Negative Rationale: 2 minutes

Both sides receive 5 minutes of “prep time” to be used at their discretion.