



Select Page



How To Judge World Schools Debate

Basic Understanding

World Schools Debate is a unique and dynamic form of debate, unlike any other practiced in the United States. World Schools Debate is a dynamic format combining “prepared” topics with “impromptu” topics, encouraging debaters to focus on specific issues rather than debate theory or procedural arguments. This highly interactive style of debate allows debaters to engage each other, even during speeches. This challenging format requires good teamwork and in-depth quality argumentation.

Getting Started

The judge will fill in the sides and speaker information in the appropriate spaces on the ballot. In order to follow along and evaluate arguments, it is highly recommended that the judge take notes throughout the round. The debate proceeds as follows:

Speech	Time	Responsibility of Debater
1st Proposition	8 min	Introduce motion, define key terms, set burdens, establish mechanism or model if needed, offer substantive arguments
1st Opposition	8 min	Deal with proposed framework by proposition, clash with proposition arguments, offer own substantive arguments
2nd Proposition	8 min	Clash, offer new substantive arguments, defend 1st speaker's points
2nd Opposition	8 min	Clash, offer new substantive arguments, defend 1st speaker's points
3rd Proposition	8 min	Clash and Summarize Key Issues
3rd Opposition	8 min	Clash and Summarize Key Issues
Opposition Reply	4 min	Crystallize the round
Proposition Reply	4 min	Crystallize the round

Evaluating the Round

Motions for Worlds Schools Debate are based upon the legislative model. Every motion then begins with the words, “This House”. The debaters are acting as a legislative chamber and debating about what the government would or should do. Motions are debated in a general sense, and are not about extreme or isolated examples. Additionally the debaters ought to imagine that the house is a worldwide governing body that governs all or most of

the countries worldwide. Another way of looking at it is that the house represents what each country's government and/or people would or should do.

The motions debated in World Schools Debate are either motions or propositions of value or policy. A proposition of value will ask debaters to qualify if the topic of the motion is; good or bad, or has done more harm than good, or is better than some other alternative. A policy motion will ask the debaters to create an actual policy that will improve or solve a certain economic, political or social situation given in the motion to be debated. The Proposition team will bring forth a reasonable policy that will solve the problem that is given or being discussed in the motion. The Opposition team can choose to engage with the efficacy of the Proposition team's "model" or "mechanism" that they've given to solve the problem or the Opposition team can offer a solution of their own which they will argue actually solves the problem(s) better than the Proposition team's mechanism or model.

Finally, the Proposition and Opposition teams should engage with the debate on a principled level and a pragmatic level. The pragmatic level deals with how if we propose or oppose the motion what practical implications will that have in the real world. This is where the use of real world examples plays heavily into the debate. However, in addition to that, the debaters should challenge the assumptions and values of the policies and scenarios that are being discussed in the motion on a principled level.

Filling Out the Ballot

At the end of the debate, the judge will indicate on the ballot which team won the round and assign speaker points. The first three speeches are scored on a scale of 60-80 with the reply speech being scored on a 30-40 point scale. The total number of points for each team is then tallied, and the winning team must have more points than the losing team. Ties and low point wins are not permitted. Please follow the directions on the National Speech & Debate Association ballot for instructions on scoring. Judges will not on the ballot why they voted for one team over the other. The ballot can also provide constructive feedback to both teams.

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Norms in World Schools Debate

The goal of this document is to share commonly accepted international norms in World Schools Debate and utilize these norms as the foundation for the event in the United States.

1. The WS judging rubric: allocates 40% for content (“the matter”), 40% for style (“how the matter is presented”) and 20% for strategy (“how the matter is utilized”). The team with the higher total points wins the rounds. There are no tied team points, nor low point wins based on team points.

2. Allocation of speaker points: the norm is for constructive speeches to receive between 65 and 75 points with 70 points being the average you expect at the tournament. Generally, points will fall in the 66-74 range. Reply speeches should receive between 30 and 40 points with the general range falling between 33-37 points.

3. Roles and burdens of teams: the Proposition must prove that the motion is true as a general principle and/or in the majority of circumstances. The Opposition must cast more than just a reasonable doubt on the Proposition case. Even when the motion is expressed as an absolute, the Opposition must show it is false in at least a significant minority of cases. In other words: both teams have an equal burden of proof in WS style debating.

4. Communication style: speeches are persuasive in nature and delivered at conversational speed. There should be no "spreading" in this format. Students are encouraged to use note-cards or bullet points for delivery rather than reading directly from text. Eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures are all part of persuasive delivery. If you think of Oratory or Extemp speed and style, you will have a sense of what you are looking for in a WS speech. This does NOT mean that signposting arguments or noting where the speaker is attacking opponent arguments is precluded; it DOES mean that the average person in the back of the room should be able to keep up with what is being advocated and argued. World Schools is very flexible in allowing competitors to be who they are in round (whether that means being sassy, having strong rhetoric, or using humor) if the discourse is courteous.

5. Communication on the bench: students are allowed and even expected to communicate with each other during other speeches as there is no allotted prep time. This is not seen as disrespectful unless the whispers become too loud and distract the speaker. Speakers on the bench may move to sit together while the other member of their team goes to center of the room to speak.

6. Use of devices: computers and/or other electronic devices should NOT be used at any point in the delivery of speeches for either prepared or impromptu debates. Cell phones may be used for timing, but should be placed in airplane mode to avoid any perception of outside communication. Devices may be used to research prepared motions in advance of a round, but should not be used during the round itself. Impromptu motion preparation may only utilize a published English language dictionary or a published bilingual dictionary and a published single-volume encyclopedia or almanac per team. No digital resources are permitted.

Norms in World Schools Debate

7. Argument construction and use of evidence: there should be a focus on proving the motion and clashing “big ideas.” Arguments in the WS format are derived from logic, rather than through a focus on carded evidence (as in other US formats). Students are not expected to cite their evidence (name, publication, date, etc.) and should not be penalized in any way for not doing so. In general, arguments are supported by warrants (analysis and logic) and examples (used from across the globe). Students are expected to be able to provide examples from outside the United States to support their arguments unless the motion is country-specific. There are no “cards” that are read. Evidence cannot be “called for” or looked at during or after the round. Supporting material is integrated into the speeches, like Extemp or Oratory, but without the need for specific source notes. As in all forms of debate, the example should not BE the point, rather, it is an illustration OF the point. In other words, in judging the quality of an argument, the question of whether the logic makes sense comes before the evaluation of supporting material. New content is expected to be presented in both for constructive speeches (delivered by the 1st and 2nd speakers). The 3rd speaker is allowed to have new warrants and to make extensions but is generally not offering new substantive arguments (claims). Replies should not have any new content (unless the Prop Reply is replying to new material in the Opp 3) as they should be crystallizing the debate. Debates aren’t won solely based on what’s on the “flow”—often in American debates people think if an argument is conceded it is automatically true, but a lot of judges in the WS format won’t vote on arguments they think are poorly explained/justified or wildly implausible even if the other team doesn’t explicitly respond to them.

8. Refutation: WS Debate is not intended to be delivered line-by-line. This means that refuting every single example/link is not necessary: it is more about the bigger picture. Arguments and lines of analysis may be discarded in the round without impacting the decision as long as the principles behind the arguments and the core points are extended.

9. Models: while there are not plans in WS debate, side Proposition can offer a model (an illustration) of what the Prop world would look like. It does not have to be specific advocacy and is not needed for every motion. Side Opposition could offer a counter-model if a model was presented but these are not common and are unnecessary in most cases.

10. POIs: the norm for Points of Information is that a speaker will take two. Taking less is seen as not engaging with the other team. Taking more can be viewed as strategically weak as it cedes too much time to the other team. POIs may be questions OR statements and should be limited to 15 seconds in length. They should NOT be offered in two parts nor are follow up questions (as might appear in direct questioning in Congress) generally accepted. Other team members should avoid interrupting the speaker with more POIs while that individual is attempting to answer. POIs may be offered at approximately 20 second intervals. Interrupting more frequently is viewed as “barracking” (harassing) the speaker. POIs only occur in the first three speeches on each side; there are no POIs in the reply speeches. Additionally, the first and last minute of each eight-minute speech is considered protected time where POIs cannot be asked.

Norms in World Schools Debate

11. Definitions & Definitional challenges:

WHAT IS A GOOD DEFINITION:

- 1) Definitions should be a) reasonable, b) obvious (understandable, expected and accepted by an average voter / intelligent person), c) fair (allow "normal" / quality debate)
- 2) Time and Place setting are not allowed - definitions and Interpretations should be as general or as specific as the motion.
- 3) "Squirreling" is not allowed and is considered strategically bad.

WHAT CAN OPPOSITION DO IF THEY DISAGREE WITH THE DEFINITION

- 1) accept it
- 2) broaden it
- 3) challenge it
- 4) run an "even if" case

DEFINITIONAL CHALLENGES must be

- 1) Explicit (done by the 1st Speaker of Opposition)
- 2) Explained (arguments for the re-interpretation are offered)
- 3) Relevant (debater should explain how the judge must see the debate under the new terms)

JUDGING DEFINITIONAL CHALLENGES:

- 1) The judge needs to holistically compare both definitions and decide how the debate should be understood
- 2) There are no automatic losses regardless of who wins the definitional challenge

12. The judge as chair: the judge serves as the Chair of the round and therefore should call the various speakers to the center of the room to deliver the speech. The Proposition team can also be called the Government/Side Proposition while the Opposition team is opposed to the Government and is also called Side Opposition. Conventionally, the speakers/audience members use tapping the table to indicate support. The judge taps the table once at the 1 minute mark, once at the seven-minute mark to indicate protected time has concluded, and twice at the 8 minute mark. The judge should tap the table repeatedly at the 8:15 minute mark to indicate that the speaker should stop. There is no prep time and there is no "off-time road map." After the round is over, the convention is for the Judge/Chair to ask the debaters to "cross the House" and shake hands, then step outside for a few minutes. The judge then completes the ballot, double-checking the math (NO tied team points, NO low-point wins), and calls the team in to give a brief oral decision. Remembering that there is a different motion every round, comments should indicate why one side was preferred over the other while still offering suggestions that will help the debaters improve in later rounds.