



Oregon School Activities Association

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OSAA Speech Handbook - General Debate Rules

12. General Debate Rules

- 12.1. **Application.** These rules apply to all debate forms: Oregon Style Cross-Examination Debate, Public Forum Debate, Parliamentary Debate and Lincoln-Douglas Debate.
- 12.2. **Conflicts.** Debaters may enter only one form of debate.
- 12.3. **Scheduling.** Oregon Style Cross-Examination Debate and Lincoln-Douglas Debate shall run concurrently, if possible.
- 12.4. **Posting time.** Debate pairing shall not be posted more than 30 minutes before each round.
- 12.5. **Eliminations.** At the district tournament, every team is assured of two debates, but shall be eliminated from further competition after losing two debates. At the Speech State Championships, every team is assured of four debates, but shall be eliminated from further competition after losing one debate past the fourth round.
- 12.6. **"Scouting."** Contestants and coaches are discouraged from any form of scouting. In general, all students and coaches are allowed to hear their own debaters as well as any special Finals in Debate. However, debaters remaining in competition may not listen to debates in which they are not participants.
- 12.7. **Ballots.** Judges shall use Online or Oregon High School Speech League debate ballots. Samples are available in the Appendix of this Speech Handbook. Competing schools shall each receive a copy of the tear-apart ballot if used.
- 12.8. **Evidence Review by Judges.** Judges shall limit their requests for evidence to checks for accuracy and authenticity.
- 12.9. **Evidence Source Citations.** Debaters must cite, in the round, complete source citations including author, qualifications, publication, date and page number for each source used. Evidence not completely cited shall be treated as nonexistent by judges. Subsequent references to the same source in the same round may be less complete if the full source citation is included on the evidence and is available upon request.
- 12.10. **Critiques.** Judges may not provide oral critiques. All critiques including specific comments about the round and general comments about debate strategies and philosophies shall be written on the ballot. A description of the judge's paradigm by the judge prior to the round shall not be considered an oral critique.
- 12.11. **Disclosure.** Except on the ballot, judges shall not disclose the outcome of a round with the participants in the round. Further, judges shall not discuss the performance of students they have judged with those students at any time during the tournament.
- 12.12. **Guidelines for Electronic Device Use.**
 - 12.12.1. **Computers or other electronic devices may not be used to receive information from any source (coaches or assistant coaches included) inside or outside of the room in which the competition occurs. Internet access, use of email, instant messaging, or other means of receiving information from sources inside or outside the competition room are prohibited. (This does not prohibit non-electronic communication between debate partners during prep time.)**
 - 12.12.2. **Penalty.** Contestants found to have violated provision 12.12.1 will forfeit the round of competition. Contestants found to have violated provision 12.12.4 will be disqualified from the tournament and will forfeit all rounds. The tournament director shall make the final decision concerning disqualification.
 - 12.12.3. **Availability of Evidence.** Contestants electing to use computers have the responsibility to promptly provide a copy of any evidence read in a speech for inspection by the judge or opponent. Printers may be used. Evidence may be printed in the round or produced electronically but must be provided in a format readable by the opposing team and the judge.
 - 12.12.4. Contestants electing to use computers are responsible for providing their own computers, batteries, extension cords, and all other necessary accessories. Tournament hosts will not be responsible for providing computers, printers, software, paper, or extension cords for contestants.
 - 12.12.5. Because public speaking decorum remains an important element of debate, all debaters are expected to stand at the front of the room facing the judge while speaking.
 - 12.12.6. Contestants choosing to use computers and related equipment accept the risk of equipment failure. Judges and/or contest directors will give no special consideration or accommodation, including no additional speech time or prep time, should equipment failure occur.
 - 12.12.7. By choosing to use computers in the round, debaters are consenting to give tournament officials the right to search their files. Debaters who do not wish to consent should not use computers in the round.

13.1. Oregon Style Cross-Examination Debate

13.1.1. Team size

- (a) Teams may compete as two, three or four-person teams. On a two-person team, both speakers must be prepared to debate both sides of the resolution; on a three-person team, one speaker shall debate both affirmative and negative, one shall debate only affirmative, and one shall debate only negative; and on a four-person team, two speakers may debate on affirmative and two on negative, or they may interchange at their discretion so long as only two speakers participate in any one debate. The third and / or fourth members of the team shall sit apart from the participants and shall not communicate in any way with the speakers during the round.
- (b) Under the two, three or four-person arrangement, each ROUND shall involve only one debate, either affirmative or negative, for each team.

13.1.2. Length and order of speeches

Eight Minutes	First Affirmative Constructive
Three Minutes	Cross-Examination* by a Negative Speaker
Eight Minutes	First Negative Constructive
Three Minutes	Cross-Examination* by an Affirmative Speaker
Eight Minutes	Second Affirmative Constructive
Three Minutes	Cross-Examination* by the other Negative Speaker
Eight Minutes	Second Negative Constructive
Three Minutes	Cross-Examination* by the other Affirmative Speaker
Five Minutes	First Negative Rebuttal
Five Minutes	First Affirmative Rebuttal
Five Minutes	Second Negative Rebuttal
Five Minutes	Second Affirmative Rebuttal

*NOTE: "Tag team" cross-examination is not allowed. Cross-examination time may not be yielded to another team member. Each member of each team is responsible for asking all of the questions of one opponent and answering all of the questions of one opponent.

13.1.3. Rebuttals

- (a) Speakers may change speaking order in rebuttals at the option of the coach and the team. Opening constructive speakers may speak last in rebuttal.
- (b) No new arguments shall be allowed in rebuttal speeches.

13.1.4. Preparation time. Each team shall have a maximum of *eight* minutes preparation time to be used at the discretion of the team.

13.1.5. Topic. See OSAA website, <http://www.osaa.org/activities/spe>.

13.1.6. Electronic Devices/Computers. Electronic devices may be used following the *guidelines outlined in 12.12*.

13.1.7. Other Rules. See General Debate Rules.

13.4. Value Lincoln-Douglas Debate.

13.4.1. Team. In this debate form, there is only one speaker to a team. A speaker in this contest must be prepared to debate both sides of the resolution.

13.4.2. Other events. A Value Lincoln-Douglas Debater may participate in up to two other Individual Events but may not enter another Debate event.

13.4.3. Length and order of speeches.

Six Minutes	Affirmative Constructive Speech
Three Minutes	Negative Questions Affirmative
Seven Minutes	Negative Constructive Speech
Three Minutes	Affirmative Questions Negative
Four Minutes	Affirmative Rebuttal
Six Minutes	Negative Rebuttal
Three Minutes	Affirmative Rebuttal

13.4.4. Preparation Time. Each Debater shall be allowed a maximum of four minutes preparation time to be used at their discretion.

13.4.5. Number of District Entries. Each school may enter a maximum of three Value Lincoln-Douglas teams in the District Tournament. In the absence of competing schools other than one, it shall be necessary to declare a Speech State Championships Qualifier by default. Each Value Lincoln-Douglas entry counts toward the maximum allowable quantity of individual event entries per school at the District Tournament.

13.4.6. Value Debate Topics.

(a) September 1 - October 31 - The September / October NSDA topic (published in September *on the NSDA website*) shall be used.

(b) November 1 - December 31 - The November / December NSDA topic (published in October *on the NSDA website*) shall be used.

(c) January 1 - February 28 (29) - The January / February NSDA topic (published in December *on the NSDA website*) shall be used.

(d) March 1 - April 30 - The March / April *NSDA* topic (published in February *on the NSDA website*) shall be used.

13.4.7. Other Rules. See General Debate Rules.

13.3. Parliamentary Debate.

- 13.3.1. Team Size.** In this debate form, there are two speakers to a team. The affirmative team is called the Proposition. The negative team is called the Opposition.
- 13.3.2. Length and Order of Speeches.**
- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 7 minutes | 1st Proposition constructive |
| 8 minutes | 1st Opposition constructive |
| 8 minutes | 2nd Proposition constructive |
| 8 minutes | 2nd Opposition constructive |
| 4 minutes | Opposition rebuttal (given by 1st Opposition speaker) |
| 5 minutes | Proposition rebuttal (given by 1st Proposition speaker) |
- 13.3.3. Resolutions.**
- (a) There shall be three resolutions per round.
 - (b) One resolution shall be a policy resolution, one resolution shall be a value resolution and the third resolution may be either a value or a policy resolution.
 - (c) The Affirmative team must affirm the resolution.
- 13.3.4. Topic Draw and Preparation Room Procedures.**
- (a) Topics shall be drawn, and preparation shall occur in the Parliamentary Debate Preparation Room *when possible*.
 - (b) After examining the three-posted topics, teammates should discuss and prioritize the choices.
 - (c) When a team's code number is called, the team may send up one representative topic proctor.
 - (d) The proctor shall ask the Proposition to strike first, then the Opposition. The remaining topic shall be debated.
 - (e) The Proposition *shall deliver the topics* to the judge(s) in the competition room.
 - (f) Teams are to prepare in the Prep Room on the selected topic. *Competitors may work with their partners, but should be reminded to keep their voices down.*
 - (g) The proctor shall dismiss both teams in a match to go to the competition room at the end of the 15-minute preparation period.
- 13.3.5. Materials allowed in the Parliamentary Debate Preparation Room and in the round.**
- (a) Paper
 - (b) Dictionary. Allowed in Preparation Room ONLY.
 - (c) Pens or Pencils
 - (d) *Electronic Devices may used in the Preparation room ONLY in alignment to the rules outlined in 12.12. Electronic devices may be used to access the Internet, find definitions, statistics, or other background information only.*
 - (e) *Pre-written arguments, handbooks, briefs, or outlines are prohibited from the prep room, whether accessed electronically or present in hard copy form.*
 - (f) *No other items are to be used in the round or during preparation. Other people may not be used as a resource.*
- 13.3.6. Questions and Answers.**
- (a) In this debate form, there is no formal cross-examination period for the speakers.
 - (b) Instead, the speakers have the option to ask questions during the opponents' constructive speeches.
 - (c) When a question is desired, the questioner will stand and raise a hand to be acknowledged by the opponent who has two options:
 - (1) Say "No Thank You" and continue.
 - (2) Say "Proceed" and answer the question.
 - (d) Remember that the stopwatch will not stop for a question. Speakers must present their constructive speeches and answer questions in the allowed time. Questions cannot be asked during the first and last minute of the opponents' constructive speeches. There shall be no questions during the rebuttals.
- 13.3.7. Judge Participation.**
- (a) The Judge in a Parliamentary Debate is responsible for announcing each speaker and the amount of time for each speech. Example: "I will now call the second Opposition forward for an eight-minute speech," etc.
 - (b) The Judge is also responsible for letting the speakers know when to ask questions during the constructive by "rapping on the desk" when the speaker is one minute into the constructive and "rapping" again when one minute is left to speak.
 - (c) The Judge shall disregard any arguments made over the time limits. The Judge shall disregard new arguments in rebuttals with the exception of the Proposition's response to new arguments made in the 2nd Opposition constructive. New examples, analysis, analogies, etc., which support previously introduced arguments are permitted in rebuttal speeches.
 - (d) The Judge shall penalize misrepresentations of opponent's arguments, personal attacks on opponents and rudeness by reducing speaker points and factoring such infractions into the decision.
- 13.3.8. Heckling.** No heckling is allowed other than supportive knocking, patting or applause.
- 13.3.9. Points of Order and Points of Personal Privilege** are not allowed.
- 13.3.10. Other Rules.** See [General Debate Rules](#).

13.2. Public Forum Debate (from “NSDA District Tournament Manual”)

13.2.1. Team Size. In this debate form, there are two speakers to a team.

13.2.2. Topic. The NSDA April Public Forum Topic will be used at the Speech State Championships. The topic is released on March 1, and is posted on the NSDA website: <https://www.speechanddebate.org/>

13.2.3. Sides/Burdens. A team represents either the “pro” or the “con” side of the resolution. Public Forum Debate focuses on advocacy of a position derived from the issues presented in the resolution, not a prescribed set of burdens.

13.2.4. Side Draw Procedure. Prior to every round and in the presence of the judge(s), a coin is tossed by one team and called by the other team. The team that wins the flip may choose one of two options: EITHER the SIDE of the topic they wish to defend (pro or con) OR the SPEAKING POSITION they wish to have (begin the debate or end the debate). The remaining option (SIDE OR SPEAKING POSITION) is the choice of the team that loses the flip. Once speaking positions and sides have been determined, the debate may begin.

13.2.5. Speaking Procedure. Each speaker shall have four minutes for constructive argument, alternating between pro and con. (Please keep in mind that the debate may begin with a con speech.) Following the first two constructive speeches, the two debaters who have just given speeches will stand and participate in a three-minute “crossfire.” In “crossfire,” both debaters “hold the floor,” however, the first question must be asked by the speaker who spoke first. After that question, either debater may question and/or answer at will. At the end of the first “crossfire,” the four-minute constructive arguments are continued by the students yet to speak. At the conclusion of the last two constructive arguments, another three-minute “crossfire” takes place between the two debaters who just spoke using the crossfire procedure discussed above. Following the four constructive speeches and two “crossfire” segments, the 1st speakers for each team will each give a two-minute summary continuing established alternation. The summary speeches should include the arguments his or her team is winning and refutation of arguments the team is losing. At the conclusion of the summary speeches, all four debaters will remain seated and participate in a three-minute “Grand Crossfire” in which all four debaters are allowed to cross-examine one another. The first question must be asked by the speaker who gave the first summary speech. At the conclusion of the “Grand Crossfire,” the second speakers will each give a two-minute “Final Focus” speech. The “Final Focus” is a persuasive final restatement of why a team has won the debate.

13.2.6. Time Limits.

4 minutes	First Speaker - Team A
4 minutes	First Speaker - Team B
3 minutes	Crossfire
4 minutes	Second Speaker - Team A
4 minutes	Second Speaker - Team B
3 minutes	Crossfire
3 minutes	Summary - First Speaker - Team A
3 minutes	Summary - First Speaker - Team B
3 minutes	Grand Crossfire
2 minutes	Final Focus - Second Speaker - Team A
2 minutes	Final Focus - Second Speaker - Team B
Prep Time (per team) = 3 minutes	

13.2.7. Plans/Counterplans. In Public Forum Debate, a formalized, comprehensive proposal for implementation is considered a plan or counterplan. Neither the pro nor the con side is permitted to offer a plan or counterplan; rather, they should offer reasoning to support a position of advocacy. Debaters may offer generalized, practical solutions.

13.2.8. Prompting. Oral prompting, except time signals, either by the speaker’s colleague or by any other person while the debater has the floor, is discouraged though not prohibited and may be penalized by some judges. Debaters may, however, refer to their notes and materials and may consult with their teammates while they do not have the floor and during the Grand Crossfire.

13.2.9. Reading Case. A team may decide, when asked by the opponent team for a copy of their case, whether or not to provide it; if the team refuses, they shall not be penalized in any way.

13.2.10. Other Rules. [See General Debate Rules.](#)