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**GiveYouthAVoice.org Returns This Winter.**

The League has partnered with *Causecast* to upgrade our custom online donations system to allow speech and debate teams to collect funds for upcoming events! The new and improved platform serves as an easy and convenient way to reach out to new and potential supporters to meet your team’s financial needs. If you haven't received your email from info@causecast.com and want to participate, you must be an active League member. Email *matt.delzer@nationalforensicleague.org* with your email address and we’ll provide you with access to the fundraising portal.  
Visit *[www.nationalforensicleague.org/GiveYouthAVoice](http://www.nationalforensicleague.org/GiveYouthAVoice)* for more details!

**Raise Money For Your Team!**
From the Editor

Dear National Forensic League,

This issue of Rostrum explores the vital connections between the power of speech and debate and its ability to achieve key outcomes of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS).

Skills in public speaking and debating are as critical as reading and writing, and perhaps even more so in the 21st century, where the Internet has become more than just static text-based websites and emails. Audio and video communication has plunged literacy in critical listening and effective speaking back to the forefront. To thrive as a nation in the new global knowledge economy, we must foster students who are proficient in all of these life skills.

The League is working tirelessly to bring you and your team additional resources, both at the high school and the middle level, to strengthen your speech and debate curricula both in and afterschool, and enlighten school boards and administrators alike about the importance of our activity.

If you have innovative ideas that you would like to share, I’d love to hear from you at director@nationalforensicleague.org.

Sincerely,

J. Scott Wunn
Executive Director

Powering speech.
Launching leaders.

Rostrum
A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE
125 Watson Street | PO Box 38 | Ripon, WI 54971-0038 | Phone (920) 748-6206 | Fax (920) 748-9478

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SUBSCRIPTION PRICES
Individuals: $10 for one year | $15 for two years
Member Schools: $5 for each additional subscription

Rostrum is published monthly (except June-August) by the National Forensic League, 125 Watson Street, PO Box 38, Ripon, WI 54971-0038. Periodical postage paid at Ripon, WI 54971. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the above address.

Rostrum provides a forum for the forensic community. The opinions expressed by contributors are their own and not necessarily the opinions of the League, its officers, or its members. The National Forensic League does not guarantee advertised products and services unless sold directly by the League.

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2012-2013 Topics

JANUARY 2013
Public Forum Debate
Resolved: On balance, the Supreme Court decision in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission harms the election process.

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2013
Lincoln-Douglas Debate
Resolved: Rehabilitation ought to be valued above retribution in the United States criminal justice system.

2012-13
Policy Debate
Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its transportation infrastructure investment in the United States.

Topic Release Information

Lincoln-Douglas Topic Release Dates
August 15  September-October Topic
October 1  November-December Topic
December 1 January-February Topic
February 1  March-April Topic
May 1  National Tournament Topic

Public Forum Topic Release Dates
August 15  September Topic
September 1  October Topic
October 1  November Topic
November 1  December Topic
December 1 January Topic
January 1  February Topic
February 1  March Topic
March 1  April Topic
May 1  National Tournament Topic

2013-14 Policy Debate Topic Voting
• Topic synopsis printed in the October Rostrum
• Final vote to occur online in December
• Topic for 2013-14 released in the February Rostrum

Other topics are available by visiting us online at www.nationalforensicleague.org » Current Topics.

Questions? Email us at info@nationalforensicleague.org.

Submit 2013-2014 Online Publishing Sources

Scan the QR code or visit: goo.gl/HMOqP to access the online submission form.

The League allows limited use of literature from digital publications that originate from APPROVED online publishing sources and meet the Literary Digital Publications Rubric.

Proposals for online publishing sources for interpretation events must be received by March 1, 2013, for consideration in the 2013-14 academic year.
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The efficient movement of commercial goods is an essential element of the success of the American economy. President George Washington, recognizing that westward expansion beyond the Appalachian Mountains was necessary to guarantee future economic prosperity—and public defense—of the young republic, became the United States’ first major advocate for national public investments for the construction of a system of barge canals to connect coastal markets and residents into the new frontier. Washington’s successors—James Monroe, Abraham Lincoln, and Dwight Eisenhower, most notably—would have the foresight in their own time and place to recognize the importance of a robust national freight transportation network and the public investment it requires.

A Perfect Storm
While serving in Europe as Supreme Allied Commander during World War II, then General Dwight Eisenhower witnessed first-hand a German autobahn able to feed its war machine by efficiently moving large volumes of troops and munitions to multiple fronts. Eight years later, President Eisenhower would lead the United States in developing an interstate highway system that could simultaneously enhance American interstate commerce while also defending it from foreign enemies. What resulted was the development of an Interstate Highway System that revolutionized the American economy in a way unseen since President Lincoln ordered construction of the transcontinental railroad a century before.

These two major events—Lincoln’s national railroad and Eisenhower’s interstate system—were not mutually exclusive. The growth of the interstate highway network was a deliberate policy shift away from a nation once heavily dependent on rail. In 1980, the Staggers Act deregulated freight railroads in the United States, resulting in a leaner, more efficient, and highly profitable privately owned railroad network—but one that achieved such efficiency by abandoning large segments of its once extensive network.

In 1991, Congress passed the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), thus completing President Eisenhower’s vision of the interstate highway network and declared the “age of the interstate” over. The United States, supported by the most fully developed and efficient transportation infrastructure in the world, could turn its investment priorities elsewhere as it embarked upon
a decade of unprecedented economic growth and domestic security.

In 1995, Congress ratified the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), tearing down trade barriers between the United States, Canada, and Mexico and unleashing economic growth on the continent. With such growth came a growth in trucks moving goods across the continent, and with the growth in trucks (and a declination of rail), increased congestion and highway degradation.

The Current State of Play
Despite a weak domestic economic recovery, the volume of freight moving to, from, and throughout the United States is expected to double in volume by the year 2035. And the time for rail to rise again may be near.

The United States remains a major consumer-based import market, thus making containerized goods arriving into U.S. ports by ship and distributed throughout the nation by truck and rail, and for the most part a west-to-east flow of goods. Over land, however, these goods face a congested and aging highway network as well as an under capacity rail service that delays their timely arrival to vast consumer markets that expect the electronics they ordered online to arrive at their doorstep 48 hours later.

In 2015, Panama will complete the widening of the Canal, thus allowing larger ships yielding much higher container volumes more direct access to the East and Gulf Coast ports that serve these densely populated consumer markets. However, the highways and rail connections that serve these ports are every bit as congested and underinvested and ill-prepared to move higher volumes of freight.

The import side of the equation is only one part of an emerging problem. As once third world economies thrust toward first world industrialization, they continue to demand energy, agricultural, and manufactured U.S. exports needing to move from places where the national freight transportation network has been long under invested and is thus incapable of meeting demand. Rural regions of Pennsylvania now yield high levels of natural gas in the Marcellus shale deposits, while boom towns emerge on a North Dakota frontier that sits atop long untapped reserves of crude oil. The United States has made a policy goal of doubling U.S. exports in five years. The United States will need a freight transportation network prepared to handle these exports if this goal will be met.

Where do we go from here?
It is evident that investment in freight transportation infrastructure requires the United States to reexamine its national transportation policy from a new lens, one that forces the nation to examine its transportation assets both as a critical tool for economic growth and competitiveness as well as a contiguous system of waterways, railroads, and highways that, to operate at optimal efficiency, must not let political jurisdictions impede what should ultimately be the free flow of interstate commerce.

However, the Federal government of the United States is only one player in the complex elements of the national freight transportation system, having actual jurisdiction only over the navigable channels and the locks and dams on the coastal and inland waterways. State departments of transportation own, operate, construct, and maintain the interstate and national highway networks. Freight railroads are primarily owned and operated by private corporations and their shareholders, and in many areas lease access to their infrastructure to state and local governments that provide passenger and commuter rail services.

One solution already in practice is a ground up approach, wherein states have reorganized their own departments to better educate, plan, and develop their own transportation assets across all modes. This has involved direct engagement with the private sector freight transportation users and providers, as well as the freight railroads themselves as a way to better plan future transportation demand and physical infrastructure investments. The limited resources state government can provide especially in a weak economy, however, often limit this.

AASHTO, the trade association collectively representing the state departments of transportation, has called for the creation of a Federal freight transportation program that would utilize both gasoline tax revenues for highway freight transportation investments, as well as a series of new revenue sources derived from other freight network users that could in turn be programmed to non-highway transportation investments.

In 2012, Congress enacted MAP-21, a two-year bill that for the first time directs the Federal government to develop a national freight transportation policy, and, once doing so, engage the public and private infrastructure providers to prioritize investments that will enhance freight transportation efficiency at the national level.

While the Federal government did not provide any additional revenues to fully realize such investments, the framework has been set to take the next step toward a national freight transportation policy and investment strategy.

Chris Smith is the Intermodal Program and Policy Manager at the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. For more information, visit NFL.transportation.org
We are pleased to partner with the National Forensic League in providing resources and support on this year’s Policy Debate topic:

“The United States federal government should substantially increase its transportation infrastructure investment in the United States”

Visit our information resource page at NFL.transportation.org for:

- Transportation Finance Information
- News Reports
- Congressional Testimony and Reports
- Freight and Commerce
- Information on the Highway Trust Fund
- Infrastructure Report Cards
- State DOT information
- Climate Change and the Environment

...and more!
The march to Birmingham begins!

FFI Alums continued to pound the pavement this past November as they marched through Chicago en route to Birmingham. Some of our students’ outstanding achievements include:

- Congressional debaters continued their dominance owning 8 of the top 10 places, including a 1-2-3 sweep at the 2012 Glenbrooks Invitational!
- Champion in Oral Interpretation at the 2012 Glenbrooks Invitational!
- Second Place in Original Oratory at the 2012 Glenbrooks Invitational!
- FFI students continue to earn TOC bids in Congressional Debate and Public Forum Debate every month!

See you in Birmingham!

Don Crabtree, Curriculum Director

www.ffi4n6.com
We all want every school kid to succeed. In fact, the sentiment was right there in the name of the 2001 legislation that aimed to raise standards and set measurable outcomes for students—No Child Left Behind (NCLB). But well intentioned as it was, NCLB has been criticized for an array of shortcomings, including ushering in an era of burdensome, assessment-driven teaching and mandating a “one-size-fits-all” approach to education. The Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS) aims to remedy these problems while maintaining standards-based education by focusing on specific skills students need for success in higher education and future careers.

Forty-five states and three territories have adopted the CCSS English Language Arts and Mathematics guidelines. Educators and lawmakers are bringing curricula in those states into closer alignment as they work to figure out how to teach students to succeed in the real world. If that is the goal—and in a world where today’s kids will grow up to compete in a global economy, it certainly ought to be—maybe it’s time to let students put down their textbooks and develop knowledge and skills by actively participating in dynamic activities that are, well, real.

For more than 85 years, the National Forensic League has been ensuring that young people develop and exercise their critical thinking and communication skills through participation in speech and debate. In 2011, the League helped schools provide ample, real-world learning opportunities that met the CCSS for English Language Arts for more than 120,000 students. When students take part in speech and debate activities, they acquire skills that go far beyond writing essays and studying for tests, because every step of the way, they engage with information, other people, and important issues facing our world.

Forensic competition events require students to conduct research, analyze information, construct arguments, familiarize themselves with current events and historical and social contexts, exercise expanded vocabularies, write and revise their writing, identify literary themes, use technology, and much more—all in the service of becoming effective, persuasive, and yes, entertaining communicators. Because of the complex synthesis of information and exchange of ideas that is essential to these events, speech and debate lead
each participating student directly toward mastery of the CCSS for English Language Arts.

When debate, oratorical and extemporaneous speaking, and literary interpretive performance are combined, forensics addresses every 12th grade CCSS for Literacy in Reading and Informational Text, Speaking and Listening, History/Social Studies, and Writing. According to our nation’s governors and top business leaders, that means a high school graduate who has been part of a rigorous speech and debate program is likely to be well equipped for college and the workplace.

When students participate in speech and debate, they must present credible information and make compelling arguments to diverse audiences. But unlike the student who completes and hands in a paper, a forensic student never stops researching, revising, and bolstering his or her case. Forensics demands that participants seek out, read, analyze, and present information on a wide variety of topics with a high degree of sophistication and sensitivity to historical, social, and cultural contexts.

In addition, the essence of forensics is speech, and students must learn to choose their words wisely or risk being misunderstood. A debater who experiences a slip of the tongue may very well deeply regret it by the end of the round. When kids learn new words relevant to the subjects at hand, or argue about semantics, their working vocabularies are enriched in ways traditional teaching methods would be hard-pressed to match. Students who turn to figurative language to convey their points engage with words on an even higher level, and their reading comprehension and writing abilities soar because of it.

Students who participate in speech and debate are among our most civically engaged young people. They read about policy and the law so they will be prepared to speak on matters of domestic and foreign public policy, and the best among them put many adults to shame—a news article that might satisfy one of us could come under careful scrutiny by a debater for credibility and bias. And when a student is ready to make an assertion based on a piece of evidence he or she has found, that student has thought through potential counter-arguments from an opponent.

Today, speech and debate exists at the intersection of old-school outlining and note-taking and cutting-edge technology. Whatever methods students use to organize their thoughts, their goal is to produce coherent ideas that can be shared orally. These ideas are not static; student presenters must interact with judges and each other and evaluate how well they conveyed their ideas—and whether their ideas hold water.

Finally, literary interpretive performance contestants truly tackle English literature as they consider a text’s themes, characters, settings, and authorial intent before “cutting” the text into a performative piece of a desired length. The performer must decide which passages are most meaningful with respect to the text’s overall message, as well as which are most poignant, humorous, or both. The performer has an opportunity to reflect on the text during a brief original introduction.

While you won’t find kids in a forensic classroom filling in bubbles with No. 2 pencils, standards are clearly being met—and exceeded. Moreover, speech and debate is not constrained by classroom walls: students keep working, competing, and learning after school, on weekends, and often during the summer.

An adult who spends a day judging a forensic tournament would probably walk out of the hosting school astounded by the quality of teaching and learning that should be within every student’s reach. And in the end, the League’s greatest aspiration is to help shape the minds of young people who go on to blow away expectations and excel on their chosen paths. The CCSS were created to set benchmarks to ensure that every kid grows up to be a successful adult, and the League couldn’t be prouder to be in the business of leading students toward those benchmarks and far beyond.
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Answering the Call for College and Career Readiness

compiled by Chris Riffer and Adam J. Jacobi

Speech and debate coaches understand the rigor, depth, and breadth of the work our students do—from seeking out poignant literary selections and distilling them to convey a particular message through performance, to the countless hours of researching and culling evidence citations to prepare for debate or original speeches. We inherently know that the experiences gained in this activity prepare students for college and raises their test scores.

Recently, Chris Riffer of Blue Valley High School in Kansas shared his extensive work within his school district to align skills cultivated in speech and debate with ACT skill areas. As the League works to show connections with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), we have also indicated which CCSS align with the ACT skill area standards. The specific CCSS items cited in this table correspond to the list of standards found at www.corestandards.org/the-standards, and also are featured at www.nationalforensicleague.org/commoncore. For purposes of simplicity, we only cited the standards met by the 12th grade level, since those represent the highest level of skill mastery, and are inherently reliant upon lower grade level skill mastery. Additional alignment of speech and debate activities with the CCSS, with particular attention to Speaking and Listening Standards not addressed by the ACT, can be found on the League’s web page on the CCSS.

The League is currently working with educators in analyzing and aligning these various standards to social studies, mathematics, and science. We invite you to join us in this critical effort! Interested coaches should email adam.jacobi@nationalforensicleague.org.

The February 2013 issue of Rostrum will further explore the CCSS, and how the League’s array of online instructional resources helps to meet these various standards. This, along with our web page focusing on the CCSS and college and career readiness, will be a formidable tool for educators making the argument for the necessity of speech and debate instruction within their schools, and for the value of resources offered by the League.

Have insights to share about how speech and debate meets the Common Core in your area? We want to hear from you! Email adam.jacobi@nationalforensicleague.org.

Key Shifts

The figure at right outlines how previous English Language Arts/Literacy standards have changed with the adoption of the CCSS.
## LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

### Topic Development in Terms of Purpose and Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Skill Area</th>
<th>Speech and Debate Activities</th>
<th>CCSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Identify the basic purpose or role of a specified phrase or sentence | • Analyzing evidence for debate or original speeches  
• Developing interpretive performance of literature  
• Writing/editing original speeches | L.12.3 |
| Delete a clause or sentence because it is obviously irrelevant to the essay; Delete material primarily because it disturbs the flow and development of the paragraph | • Cutting/annotating evidence for debate, extemporaneous or original speeches  
• Selecting and cutting literary material for interpretive performance  
• Editing original speeches | W.12.5 |
| Identify the central idea or main topic of a straightforward piece of writing | • Cutting/annotating evidence for debate, extemporaneous, or original speeches  
• Selecting and cutting literary material for interpretive performance | RI.12.2 |
| Determine relevancy when presented with a variety of sentence-level details | • Cutting/annotating evidence for debate, extemporaneous, or original speeches  
• Selecting and cutting literary material for interpretive performance | RI.12.3 |
| Identify the focus of a simple essay, applying that knowledge to add a sentence that sharpens that focus or to determine if an essay has met a specified goal | • Cutting/annotating evidence for debate, extemporaneous, or original speeches | RI.12.1  
RI.12.2 |
| Add a sentence to accomplish a fairly straightforward purpose such as illustrating a given statement | • Writing original speeches  
• Developing a speech in debate | W.12.1c |
| Apply an awareness of the focus and purpose of a fairly involved essay to determine the rhetorical effect and suitability of an existing phrase or sentence, or to determine the need to delete plausible but irrelevant material | • Cutting/annotating evidence for debate, extemporaneous, or original speeches  
• Cutting scripts for interpretation  
• Editing and writing original speeches | RI.12.6  
RI.12.9  
W.12.1 |
| Add a sentence to accomplish a subtle rhetorical purpose such as to emphasize, to add supporting detail, or to express meaning through connotation | • Writing and editing original speeches  
• Preparing an extemporaneous speech from a series of articles  
• Applying rebuttal skills to evidence in debate | W.12.2a  
W.12.2d |
| Determine whether a complex essay has accomplished a specific purpose | • Evaluating evidence in debate  
• Evaluating original speeches  
• Developing extemporaneous speeches | RI.12.2 |
| Add a phrase or sentence to accomplish a complex purpose, often expressed in terms of the main focus of the essay | • Cutting/annotating evidence for debate, extemporaneous, or original speeches  
• Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature  
• Preparing extemporaneous and original speeches | W.12.3e  
W.12.4 |
| Use conjunctive adverbs or phrases to show time relationships in simple narrative essays (e.g., then, this time) | • Writing original speeches  
• Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature  
• Writing debate cases  
• Preparing extemporaneous speeches | W.12.2c |
## LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

### Organization, Unity, and Clarity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Skill Area</th>
<th>Speech and Debate Activities</th>
<th>CCSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use conjunctive adverbs or phrases to express straightforward logical relationships (e.g., first, afterward, in response)</td>
<td>• Writing original speeches&lt;br&gt;• Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature&lt;br&gt;• Writing debate cases&lt;br&gt;• Preparing extemporaneous speeches</td>
<td>W.12.2c W.12.3c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide the most logical place to add a sentence in an essay</td>
<td></td>
<td>W.12.3c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add a sentence that introduces a simple paragraph</td>
<td></td>
<td>W.12.2a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine the need for conjunctive adverbs or phrases to create subtle logical connections between sentences (e.g., therefore, however, in addition)</td>
<td></td>
<td>W.12.2c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rearrange the sentences in a fairly uncomplicated paragraph for the sake of logic</td>
<td></td>
<td>W.12.3c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add a sentence to introduce or conclude the essay or to provide a transition between paragraphs when the essay is fairly straightforward</td>
<td></td>
<td>W.12.2f W.12.3c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make sophisticated distinctions concerning the logical use of conjunctive adverbs or phrases, particularly when signaling a shift between paragraphs</td>
<td></td>
<td>W.12.2c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rearrange sentences to improve the logic and coherence of a complex paragraph</td>
<td></td>
<td>W.12.3c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add a sentence to introduce or conclude a fairly complex paragraph</td>
<td></td>
<td>W.12.2a W.12.2f 12.3e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider the need for introductory sentences or transitions, basing decisions on a thorough understanding of both the logic and rhetorical effect of the paragraph and essay</td>
<td></td>
<td>W.12.2c W.12.3 W.12.3c</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Word Choice in Terms of Style, Clarity, and Economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Skill Area</th>
<th>Speech and Debate Activities</th>
<th>CCSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revise sentences to correct awkward and confusing arrangements of sentence elements</td>
<td>• Writing original speeches&lt;br&gt;• Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature&lt;br&gt;• Writing debate cases&lt;br&gt;• Preparing extemporaneous speeches</td>
<td>W.12.4 W.12.5 L.12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise vague nouns and pronouns that create obvious logic problems</td>
<td></td>
<td>W.12.1c L.12.3a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delete obviously synonymous and wordy material in a sentence; Delete redundant material when information is repeated in different parts of speech (e.g., “alarmingly startled”)</td>
<td></td>
<td>W.12.2b W.12.2d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

#### Word Choice in Terms of Style, Clarity, and Economy (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Skill Area</th>
<th>Speech and Debate Activities</th>
<th>CCSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revise expressions that deviate from the style of the essay</td>
<td>• Writing original speeches&lt;br&gt;• Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature&lt;br&gt;• Writing debate cases&lt;br&gt;• Preparing extemporaneous speeches</td>
<td>W.12.3&lt;br&gt;W.12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the word or phrase most consistent with the style and tone of a fairly straightforward essay</td>
<td>• Preparing debate rebuttals&lt;br&gt;• Writing original speeches&lt;br&gt;• Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature&lt;br&gt;• Writing debate cases&lt;br&gt;• Preparing extemporaneous speeches</td>
<td>W.12.1c&lt;br&gt;W.12.1d&lt;br&gt;W.12.2d&lt;br&gt;L.12.3a&lt;br&gt;L.12.5b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine the clearest and most logical conjunction to link causes</td>
<td>• Preparing debate rebuttals&lt;br&gt;• Writing original speeches&lt;br&gt;• Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature&lt;br&gt;• Writing debate cases&lt;br&gt;• Preparing extemporaneous speeches</td>
<td>W.12.2c&lt;br&gt;W.12.3c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise a phrase that is redundant in terms of meaning and logic of the entire sentence</td>
<td>• Preparing debate rebuttals&lt;br&gt;• Writing original speeches&lt;br&gt;• Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature&lt;br&gt;• Writing debate cases&lt;br&gt;• Preparing extemporaneous speeches&lt;br&gt;• Tagging debate evidence</td>
<td>W.12.2b&lt;br&gt;W.12.2d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and correct ambiguous pronoun references</td>
<td>• Preparing debate rebuttals&lt;br&gt;• Writing original speeches&lt;br&gt;• Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature&lt;br&gt;• Writing debate cases&lt;br&gt;• Preparing extemporaneous speeches&lt;br&gt;• Tagging debate evidence</td>
<td>L.12.1b&lt;br&gt;L.12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the word or phrase most appropriate in terms of the content of the sentence and the tone of the essay</td>
<td>• Preparing debate rebuttals&lt;br&gt;• Writing original speeches&lt;br&gt;• Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature&lt;br&gt;• Writing debate cases&lt;br&gt;• Preparing extemporaneous speeches&lt;br&gt;• Tagging debate evidence</td>
<td>W.12.1c&lt;br&gt;W.12.1d&lt;br&gt;W.12.2d&lt;br&gt;L.12.3a&lt;br&gt;L.12.5b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct redundant material that involves sophisticated vocabulary and sounds acceptable as conversational English (e.g., “an aesthetic viewpoint” versus “the outlook of an aesthetic viewpoint”)</td>
<td>• Preparing debate rebuttals&lt;br&gt;• Writing original speeches&lt;br&gt;• Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature&lt;br&gt;• Writing debate cases&lt;br&gt;• Preparing extemporaneous speeches&lt;br&gt;• Tagging debate evidence</td>
<td>W.12.2b&lt;br&gt;W.12.2d&lt;br&gt;L.12.5&lt;br&gt;L.12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct vague and wordy or clumsy and confusing writing containing sophisticated language</td>
<td>• Preparing debate rebuttals&lt;br&gt;• Writing original speeches&lt;br&gt;• Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature&lt;br&gt;• Writing debate cases&lt;br&gt;• Preparing extemporaneous speeches</td>
<td>L.12.1&lt;br&gt;L.12.1a&lt;br&gt;L.12.4c&lt;br&gt;L.12.4d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delete redundant material that involves subtle concepts or that is redundant in terms of the paragraph as a whole</td>
<td>• Preparing debate rebuttals&lt;br&gt;• Writing original speeches&lt;br&gt;• Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature&lt;br&gt;• Writing debate cases&lt;br&gt;• Preparing extemporaneous speeches&lt;br&gt;• Tagging debate evidence</td>
<td>W.12.2b&lt;br&gt;W.12.2d&lt;br&gt;L.12.5&lt;br&gt;L.12.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the 2012 Summer Leadership Conference in Las Vegas, Board member Pam McComas and staff member Adam J. Jacobi presented how speech and debate activities meet the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). As educators, we need to not only be aware of this new accountability measure, but embrace it and champion it within our schools, for it becomes a powerful advocacy tool that speaks to the necessity of our discipline.

Discussion at the conference sparked interest from coach-educators, who have responded with meaningful perspectives, some of which are captured in the following pages. A working group of coach-teachers and education experts from both secondary school administration and higher education are fostering discussions on the online education platform Edmodo to investigate the Common Core, as well as how we teach speech communication at the high school level with possible implications for advanced college credit. Teachers interested in contributing to the discussion should send an email to adam.jacobi@nationalforensicleague.org for instructions on accessing the Edmodo group.

This fall, McComas and Jacobi also spoke about the Common Core at state speech and debate teachers’ conferences in Idaho and North Dakota, respectively, and the League is submitting proposals to conferences for various national education organizations to spread the word about how our discipline and activity are vital to meeting the CCSS.

Jacobi also shared this information at the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) conference for state directors of speech and debate activities. The state directors expressed collective enthusiasm to work with the League to advance the argument for speech and debate education in their respective states.
**LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION**

### Sentence Structure and Formation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Skill Area</th>
<th>Speech and Debate Activities</th>
<th>CCSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revise shifts in verb tense between simple clauses in a sentence or between</td>
<td>• Writing original speeches</td>
<td>W.12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simple adjoining sentences</td>
<td>• Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature</td>
<td>L.12.4b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use conjunctions or punctuation to join simple clauses; Determine the need for</td>
<td>• Writing debate cases</td>
<td>W.12.1c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>punctuation and conjunctions to avoid awkward-sounding sentence fragments and</td>
<td></td>
<td>L.12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fused sentences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide the appropriate verb tense and voice by considering the meaning of the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entire sentence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize and correct marked disturbances of sentence flow and structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g., participial phrase fragments, missing or incorrect relative pronouns,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dangling or misplaced modifiers)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise to avoid faulty placement of phrases and faulty placement of phrases and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faulty coordination and subordination of clauses in sentences with subtle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structural problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain consistent verb tense and pronoun person on the basis of the preceding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clause or sentence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use sentence-combining techniques, effectively avoiding problematic comma splices,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>run-on sentences, and sentence fragments, especially in sentences containing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compound subjects or verbs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain consistent and logical use of verb tense and pronoun person on the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basis of information in the paragraph or essay as a whole</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work comfortably with long sentences and complex clausal relationships within</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sentences, avoiding weak conjunctions between independent clauses and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maintaining parallel structure between clauses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conventions of Usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Skill Area</th>
<th>Speech and Debate Activities</th>
<th>CCSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solve such basic grammatical problems as how to form the past and past</td>
<td>• Writing original speeches</td>
<td>L.12.1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participle of irregular but commonly used verbs and how to form comparative</td>
<td>• Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature</td>
<td>L.12.1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and superlative adjectives</td>
<td>• Writing debate cases</td>
<td>L.12.1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve such grammatical problems as whether to use an adverb or adjective form,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how to ensure straightforward subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement, and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use in simple contexts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize and use the appropriate word in frequently confused pairs such as</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there and their, past and passed, and led and lead</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“In my school district, we are relatively safe in English Language Arts, as our standards have shifted, but our basic curricular maps and assessments are still valid. Other colleagues, particularly in Social Studies and Math, are finding the ‘Standards based’ grade-reporting to be impossible. I did use some of Pam McComas’ “argumentation vs. persuasion” information to impress my principal during evaluation time, so the Summer Leadership Conference has had long-lasting effects.”

– Arizona coach Kevin Berlat of Phoenix Central High School

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**Spark Involvement**
## LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

### Conventions of Usage (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Skill Area</th>
<th>Speech and Debate Activities</th>
<th>CCSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Use idiomatically appropriate prepositions, especially in combination with verbs (e.g., long for, appeal to) | • Writing original speeches  
• Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature  
• Writing debate cases | L.12.4b |
| Ensure that a verb agrees with its subject when there is some text between the two | | |
| Ensure that a pronoun agrees with its antecedent when the two occur in separate clauses or sentences | | L.12.4b |
| Identify the correct past and past participle forms of irregular and infrequently used verbs and form present-perfect verbs by using have rather than of | | L.12.4b |
| Correctly use the reflexive pronouns, the possessive pronouns is and your, and the relative pronouns who and whom | | L.12.4b |
| Ensure that a verb agrees with its subject in unusual situations (e.g., when the subject-verb order is inverted or when the subject is an indefinite pronoun) | | L.12.4b |
| Provide idiomatically and contextually appropriate prepositions following verbs in situations involving sophisticated language or ideas | | L.12.4b |
| Ensure that a verb agrees with its subject when a phrase or clause between the two suggests a different number for the verb | | L.12.4b |

### Conventions of Punctuation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Skill Area</th>
<th>Speech and Debate Activities</th>
<th>CCSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Not emphasized in the spoken medium, other than understanding how to pause and react orally to punctuation in written texts.</td>
<td>L.12.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## READING

### Main Ideas and Author’s Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Skill Area</th>
<th>Speech and Debate Activities</th>
<th>CCSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Recognize a clear intent of an author or narrator in uncomplicated literary narratives. | • Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature  
• Selecting and cutting literary material for interpretive performance  
• Cutting/annotating evidence for debate, extemporaneous, or original speeches | RI.12.6 |
| Identify a clear main idea or purpose of straightforward paragraphs in uncomplicated literary narratives. | | RI.12.2 |
| Infer the main idea or purpose of straightforward paragraphs in uncomplicated narratives. | | RI.12.2 |
**Main Ideas and Author’s Approach (continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Skill Area</th>
<th>Speech and Debate Activities</th>
<th>CCSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Understand the overall approach taken by an author or narrator (pt of view, kinds of evidence used) in uncomplicated passages. | • Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature  
• Selecting and cutting literary material for interpretive performance  
• Cutting/annotating evidence for debate, extemporaneous, or original speeches | RI.12.3  
RI.12.6 |
| Infer the main idea or purpose of more challenging passages of their paragraphs |                                                                                             | RI.12.2  |
| Summarize events and ideas in virtually any passage                          |                                                                                             | RI.12.1  
RI.12.3  
RI.12.6 |
| Understand the overall approach taken by an author of narrator (pt of view, kinds of evidence used) in virtually any passage |                                                                                             | RI.12.3  
RI.12.6 |
| Identify clear main ideas or purposes of complex passages or their paragraphs |                                                                                             | RI.12.2  |

**Supporting Details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Skill Area</th>
<th>Speech and Debate Activities</th>
<th>CCSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Locate basic facts (names, dates, events) clearly stated in a passage          | • Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature  
• Selecting and cutting literary material for interpretive performance  
• Cutting/annotating evidence for debate, extemporaneous, or original speeches | RI.12.1  
RI.12.3  
RI.12.2  
RI.12.4  
RI.12.5 |
| Locate simple details at the sentence and paragraph level in uncomplicated passages |                                                                                             | RI.12.2  |
| Recognize a clear function of a part of an uncomplicated passage               |                                                                                             | RI.12.2  
RI.12.4  
RI.12.5 |
| Locate important details in uncomplicated passages                            |                                                                                             | RI.12.1  
RI.12.2  
RI.12.3  
RI.12.4  
RI.12.5 |
| Make simple inferences about how details are used passages.                   |                                                                                             | RI.12.2  |
| Locate important details in uncomplicated passages                            |                                                                                             | RI.12.2  |
| Locate and interpret minor or subtly stated details in uncomplicated passages |                                                                                             | RI.12.2  |
| Discern which details, though they may appear in different sections throughout a passage, support important points in more challenging passages |                                                                                             | RI.12.2  
RI.12.7  
RI.12.10 |
| Locate and interpret minor or subtly stated details in more challenging passages |                                                                                             | RI.12.2  
RI.12.7  
RI.12.10 |
| Use details from different sections of some complex informational passages to support a specific point or argument |                                                                                             | RI.12.2  
RI.12.7  
RI.12.10 |
| Locate and interpret details in complex passages                              |                                                                                             | RI.12.2  
RI.12.7  
RI.12.10 |
| Understand the function of a part of a passage when the function is subtle or complex |                                                                                             | RI.12.5  
RI.12.10 |

“**I teach in a private school, but I see the benefits of using the Common Core State Standards to show how we stack up against other schools, public and private. These are necessary skills for our children to be successful beyond high school. My [goal] is to share this information with the administrators in my school and make sure my colleagues and I are meeting these standards to the greatest extent possible.”**

— Pennsylvania coach  
Tony Figliola of Holy Ghost Prep
# Reading

## Sequential, Comparative, and Cause-Effect Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Skill Area</th>
<th>Speech and Debate Activities</th>
<th>CCSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Determine when (first, last, before, after) or if an event occurred in uncomplicated passages. | • Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature  
• Selecting and cutting literary material for interpretive performance  
• Cutting/annotating evidence for debate, extemporaneous, or original speeches | RI.12.2  
RI.12.3  
RI.12.5  |
| Recognize clear cause-effect relationships described within a single sentence in a passage |                                                                                                 | RI.12.3  |
| Identify relationships between main characters in uncomplicated literary narratives. | • Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature | RI.12.3  |
| Recognize clear cause-effect relationships within a single paragraph in uncomplicated literary narratives | • Selecting and cutting literary material for interpretive performance  
• Selecting and cutting literary material for interpretive performance  
• Cutting/annotating evidence for debate, extemporaneous, or original speeches | RI.12.3  
RI.12.5  |
| Order simple sequences of events in uncomplicated literary narratives |                                                                                                 | RI.12.3  |
| Identify clear relationships between people, ideas, and so on in uncomplicated passages | • Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature  
• Selecting and cutting literary material for interpretive performance  
• Cutting/annotating evidence for debate, extemporaneous, or original speeches | RI.12.3  
RI.12.10 |
| Identify clear cause-effect relationships in uncomplicated passages |                                                                                                 | RI.12.3  |
| Order sequences of events in uncomplicated literary narratives |                                                                                                 | RI.12.3  
RI.12.5  |
| Understand relationships between people, ideas, and so on in uncomplicated passages |                                                                                                 | RI.12.3  
RI.12.10 |
| Identify clear relationships between characters, ideas, and so on in more challenging literary narratives |                                                                                                 | RI.12.3  
RI.12.10 |
| Understand implied or subtly stated cause-effect relationships in uncomplicated passages |                                                                                                 | RI.12.3  |
| Identify clear cause-effect relationships in more challenging passages |                                                                                                 | RI.12.3  
RI.12.10 |
| Order sequences of events in more challenging passages |                                                                                                 | RI.12.3  
RI.12.5  |
| Understand the dynamics between people, ideas, and so on in more challenging passages |                                                                                                 | RI.12.3  
RI.12.10 |
| Understand implied or subtly stated cause-effect relationships in more challenging passages |                                                                                                 | RI.12.3  
RI.12.10 |
| Order sequences of events in complex passages |                                                                                                 | RI.12.3  
RI.12.10 |
| Understand the subtleties in relationships between people, ideas, and so on in virtually any passage |                                                                                                 | RI.12.3  |
| Understand implied, subtle, or complex cause-effect relationships in virtually any passage |                                                                                                 | RI.12.3  |
## Reading

### Meaning of Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Skill Area</th>
<th>Speech and Debate Activities</th>
<th>CCSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Understand the implication of a familiar word or phrase and of simple descriptive language. | • Reviewing literature for interpretive performance  
• Analyzing subtext for interpretive performance  
• Cutting/annotating evidence for debate, extemporaneous, or original speeches | RI.12.4  
L.12.3 |
| Use context to understand basic figurative language | | |
| Use context to determine the appropriate meaning of some figurative and nofigurative words, phrases, and statements in uncomplicated passages | | |
| Use context to determine the appropriate meaning of virtually any word, phrase, or statement in uncomplicated passages | | |
| Use context to determine the appropriate meaning of some figurative and nofigurative words, phrases, and statements in more challenging passages. | | |
| Determine the appropriate meaning of words, phrases, or statements from figurative or somewhat technical contexts. | | |
| Determine, even when the language is richly figurative and the vocabulary is difficult, the appropriate meaning of context-dependent words, phrases, or statements in virtually any passage | | |

**RI.12.4**  
**L.12.3**  
**RI.12.4**  
**L.12.4a**  
**L.12.5**  
**RI.12.4**  
**L.12.3**  
**L.12.4a**  
**L.12.5**  
**L.12.4a**  
**RI.12.4**  
**RI.12.6**  
**RI.12.4**  
**RI.12.6**
### Generalizations and Conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT Skill Area</th>
<th>Speech and Debate Activities</th>
<th>CCSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Draw simple generalizations and conclusions about the main characters in uncomplicated literary narratives | • Reviewing literature for interpretive performance  
• Selecting and cutting literary material for interpretive performance  
• Writing introductions for interpretive performance of literature  
• Cutting/annotating evidence for debate, extemporaneous, or original speeches | RI.12.1  
RI.12.2  
RI.12.3 |
| Draw simple generalizations and conclusions about people, ideas, and so on in uncomplicated passages | | RI.12.1  
RI.12.2  
RI.12.3 |
| Draw generalizations and conclusions about people, ideas, and so on in uncomplicated passages | | RI.12.1  
RI.12.2  
RI.12.3 |
| Draw simple generalizations and conclusions using details that support the main points of more challenging passages | | RI.12.1  
RI.12.2  
RI.12.3 |
| Draw subtle generalizations and conclusions about characters, ideas, and so on in uncomplicated literary narratives | | RI.12.1  
RI.12.2  
RI.12.3 |
| Draw generalizations and conclusions about people ideas, and so on in more challenging passages. | | RI.12.1  
RI.12.2  
RI.12.3 |
| Use information from one or more sections of a more challenging passage to draw generalizations and conclusions about people, ideas, and so on | | RI.12.1  
RI.12.2  
RI.12.3 |
| Draw complex or subtle generalizations and conclusions about people, ideas, and so on, often by synthesizing information from different portions of the passage | | RI.12.1  
RI.12.2  
RI.12.3 |
| Understand and generalize about portions of a complex literary narrative | | RI.12.1  
RI.12.2  
RI.12.3 |

“Two years ago, when Kentucky first adopted the Common Core, fellow Kentucky speech coach Michael Robinson of Murray High School and I co-taught an ‘Approaches to Teaching the Basic Speech Class’ workshop at our state’s first communication teachers’ professional development conference. As part of our preparation, we went through the Common Core to see how what we were already doing matched up, and we were both happy to discover that, in very different approaches, we had all the standards for Speaking and Listening already covered. This cemented to me the validity of the standards themselves, as practicing educators were already on the same page from their own training and experiences. Therefore, the standards can serve as a good starting place for new teachers as well as a way to remind experienced teachers what is expected and what students need to know how to do and understand. I know I’ve certainly used the standards since then to help me readjust what my basic course looks like—to include more listening and group work as I tend to focus on public speaking and speechwriting.”

– Kentucky coach Steve Meadows of Danville High School

View a video primer on the Common Core State Standards. Visit us online at www.nationalforensicleague.org/commoncore. There, you also will find additional resources, which we will be updating and adding to over time.
9th Annual
GEORGE MASON INSTITUTE OF FORENSICS

Regular Session: July 7th – 21st
Extension: July 21st – 24th

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Middle Level Engagement: Speech & Debate and the Common Core

by Adam J. Jacobi

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are ubiquitous in public education, including the middle level grades. This makes this educational reform movement a particularly powerful ally for middle school speech and debate coaches, who work with pre-adolescents at a decisive developmental stage in the learning process. As a companion to the League’s other advocacy tools in this issue of Rostrum, I offer some perspective on how the CCSS will transform the middle school classroom.

At the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) conference in November 2012, I attended a session entitled, “Managing and Engaging Students in the Common Core Classroom,” led by Bryan Harris, director of professional development for the Casa Grande School District in Arizona. Harris highlighted some of the core paradigm shifts, namely that content is less important than skill development. This essentially means it is better to delve deeper in exploration of content, cultivating a variety of skills, so students understand an issue more completely. They do this through a variety of investigative skill sets, which allows teachers to heighten the rigor as a particular concept is covered. Harris said this was particularly meaningful for students in middle level grades, because they often need more in-depth experience in their learning.

Harris shared graphic organizers he created via Wordle.net to illustrate how
skills are taught in English Language Arts and mathematics. The larger a word, the more frequently it appears, indicating some degree of its prominence. Inspired by this, I created a similar image that takes verbs (or deduces action from more passive wording) in the core standards’ language to show what competencies students must have (see above).

The session included table talk with teaching colleagues and opportunities to reflect on how we would apply some of Harris’ concepts to our own classroom practices. The bottom line is that educators must approach teaching from the mindset that the core of learning happens through development of skill through action and application, using discrete content knowledge as a tool and medium for building skills, but allowing mastery of skills to be the focal point in assessment.

This paradigm is particularly relevant in the middle level classroom, because students must be engaged to an even higher degree than their high school counterparts. Consider even the physical development of 10- to 15-year-olds: their bodies are growing rapidly during this time, and they inherently need more opportunities for movement, according to the AMLE’s presentation, “Characteristics of Young Adolescents.” The presentation also argues that these kids yearn to be challenged, with “opportunities to bridge from concrete to abstract,” as well as opportunities to practically apply what they have learned.

This is why speech and debate activities, in the classroom as well as extra curricular, complement the engagement middle level teachers must provide, as well as help meet the Common Core State Standards, particularly in the English Language Arts. The experiential learning offered by expression of viewpoints and performance of literature allows students to explore their world through a variety of informational and literary texts to thoroughly understand an issue, and address it through myriad skill sets. Most importantly, the nature of debates and presentations as performance assessments provides teachers a direct link to measuring mastery of a variety of skills.

References
“Fundamentals for Student Success in the Middle Grades.” AMLE: http://goo.gl/J3XPI
“Managing and Engaging Students in the Common Core Classroom.” Brian Harris: http://goo.gl/ByOmi

Adam J. Jacobi coordinates League middle school programming, international curriculum development, advocacy of Common Core State Standards, and Congressional Debate inquiries. When he coached, he earned two diamonds, the Distinguished Service Award, and has taught courses in speech communication and International Baccalaureate Theatre.
The Academic All American award recognizes students who have earned the degree of Superior Distinction (750 points); earned a GPA of 3.7 on a 4.0 scale (or its equivalent); received an ACT score of 27 or higher, or SAT combined score of 2000 or higher; completed at least 5 semesters of high school; and demonstrated outstanding character and leadership.

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- Michael Schwenke
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THE LEADER IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DEBATE & LEADERSHIP INSTRUCTION

2013 SUMMER PROGRAMS

MIDDLE SCHOOL DEBATE
Three sessions featuring instruction in the MSPDP format, the largest and fastest growing debate model for students 5th-8th grade students – Third supersession includes championship tournament  
July 8-13 & July 13-18 & July 29-August 5

HIGH SCHOOL DEBATE
One session featuring instruction in the HSPDP/CHSSA debate formats  
July 22-29

INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DEBATE & AUDITION FOR US INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM
Training for US students interested in participating in international debating – WSDC format and audition  
June 22-29

LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
Resume building, interviewing, roundtable discussion, public speaking, team building, project management, and leadership skill development – Audition for High School Civic Leadership Program  
July 29-August 5

CLAREMONT SUMMER

INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FORMS
CLAREMONTSUMMER.ORG
Sponsored by the Claremont Colleges Debate Union

National Middle School and High School Debate Programs
The Middle School and High School Public Debate Programs (MSPDP and HSPDP) constitute the fastest growing educational debate outreach network, with class and contest programming in more than 40 states and 20 countries. More than 80,000 teachers and students participate annually. The MS/HSPDP proprietary competitive debate formats were developed to maximize student educational outcomes, accelerating standards-based learning and promoting sophisticated public speaking, critical thinking, research, argumentation, and refutation skills. The models offer appropriate training for elite class and contest debating, including MS/HSPDP league competition, international debate tournaments, and NFL debate events. There is also training specific to the California High School Speech Association (CHSSA) parliamentary debate format, an impromptu argumentation model developed at the Claremont Colleges Debate Union.

International High School Debate – WSDC
The World Schools Debating Championship (WSDC) is a global affair – as many as 60 countries participate in the international high school championship. The WSDC format is quite similar to the MS/HSPDP design and the summer workshop provides rigorous training for students interested in learning the format and auditioning for USWSDC teams. Although only one team per country is eligible to attend the world championship tournament, the USWSDC program offers opportunities for regional championship debating (e.g., Pan American Debating Championship, Eurasian Schools Debating Championship), as well as participation in international exchanges for tournaments, workshops, and public debates. The Claremont Colleges Debate Union is the official US representative for the World Schools Debating Council – the Debate Union coordinates US international debate programming, selecting and training students for events. In 2012-13, USWSDC students will participate in events in South Africa, United Kingdom, Slovenia, Canada, Chile, Romania, China, Thailand, Peru, Turkey, Czech Republic, and more.

Leadership Communication
The summer workshop offers instruction in professional communication for leadership, using the curricular materials, methods, and individual and group presentation exercises developed for businesses, non-profit organizations, and higher education faculty and students. The program includes training in extemporaneous speaking, roundtable discussion and negotiation, multimedia presentation, project management, and social professional networking. Students prepare projects for evaluation by field professionals, including university faculty, lawyers, financial analysts, and non-profit organization staff. Students are eligible to audition for the High School Civic Leadership Program, a Debate Union initiative.

The Claremont Difference
Format and program certification required for faculty and judges • Staff includes authors of 15 debate textbooks, WSDC national coaches from USA and Korea, founders of MS/HS Public Debate Program and CHSSA formats, communication consultants with clients in a half dozen countries, coaches of a score of national debate champions • Exclusive small group instruction with elective options for high school students (student-directed learning) • 4-1 student-faculty ratio • Textbooks provided for all programs

PROGRAM DIRECTOR
John Meany
Director of Forensics
Claremont McKenna College
Claremont Colleges Debate Union
john.meany@cmc.edu
Congratulations to students from Peninsula High School, Harvard-Westlake School, and The Barstow School, qualifiers for the U.S. national team for the 2013 World Schools Debating Championship in Antalya, Turkey.

Additional congratulations are extended to members of the U.S. World Schools Debating Championship Program (USWSDC) for their team and individual awards at major regional international events this year, including The Pan American Debating Championship – Santiago, Chile, Eurasian Schools Debating Championship – Istanbul, Turkey and Heart of Europe Debating Championship, Olomouc, Czech Republic.

The USWSDC is the international high school debate program for participation in the World Schools Debating Championship. The WSDC hosts a global debate competition involving nearly 60 countries.

U.S. high school students have participated at recent world championships in Greece, Qatar, Scotland, and South Africa, as well as regional championships and international debate exchanges in Korea, the United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Turkey, New Zealand, and Chile. Upcoming events include the 2013 WSDC in Turkey and tournaments and exchanges in China, Slovenia, Peru, Bermuda, Korea, Thailand, Mexico, Romania, Canada, and Tanzania.

The Claremont Colleges Debate Union, centered at Claremont McKenna College, is the official U.S. representative for the World Schools Debating Council. John Meany, Director of Forensics at Claremont McKenna College, administers the USWSDC. The Claremont Colleges Debate Union sponsors one of the largest and fastest growing international debate networks for secondary schools. Many tens of thousands of teachers and students participate in the Debate Union’s educational debate outreach programs each year. Debate outreach programming includes the Middle School and High School Public Debate Program and the USWSDC.

U.S. high school students are encouraged to audition for the international debate squad. There are opportunities for relatively inexperienced students in the USWSDC development program; more experienced students are integrated in rigorous preparation for international competitions.

For more information, please review format links and resources at uswsdc.org.
Apply now for the National Forensic League Spark Scholarship. We are giving out two $1,000 scholarships to current seniors who meet the following requirements:

- Graduating in spring of 2013
- Attending a post-secondary institution in the fall of 2013
- National Forensic League member with at least 25 points

Spark Scholarship Applications must be submitted by February 15, 2013. Get more information and download the application at http://goo.gl/O27QP.

Welcome New Schools!

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A Conversation with Margaret Riley

with her son, John Riley

“The word ‘retirement’ is only a state of mind, not a requirement.”

Former speaker and coach John Murphy wrote a thoughtful tribute to you in honor of your 100th birthday, which appeared in the December issue of Rostrum. Is there anything you would like to say to him in response?

Margaret Riley: Thank you. I always admired John Murphy, Brother Cavet, and so many others who never hid their faith, but set a very high standard for others to follow and led by example.

John Riley: Kind words from a wonderful lady who is proud to have made the acquaintance of John and so many others like him who were dedicated and honest, and who always acted in the best interest of forensics as a whole, rather than in their own self-interest.

How did you first become involved in speech and debate? Did you have a “favorite” event?

Margaret Riley: Initially, I coached individuals in a variety of inter-city school speech contests as well as American Legion events. After the passing of my husband in 1968, I started the forensic program at Holy Names, continuing to coach students several afternoons a week until 1995. My first love was Dramatic Interpretation, where I was always recruiting students from the drama club for this as well as other events.

Did you have any forensic mentors? If so, who were they, and what did you learn from them?

Margaret Riley: My early mentors were not my fellow coaches so much, but rather the Sisters at Holy Names, whom I always felt led and taught more by example, preferring to say less, but always in a thoughtful manner.

John, tell us a little about your own career path. Did you participate in speech or debate?

John Riley: No, to my mother’s disappointment, who always wanted to coach a boy. Fortunately, her two daughters, as well as my son who lived nearby and my two daughters, did fully participate and earned a fair measure of success.

I ended up in the family practice—that is, I practice architecture. Both my mother’s brother, now deceased, and his son (now my business partner) are architects. My speaking skills are not as well honed as they should be, and would have been, if I had been more receptive to joining forensics. That said, my mother’s influence is enormous, and it’s rare that I have a...
conversational any length with her when she doesn’t at some point see fit to offer some constructive advice on my speech—be it speed, enunciation, or inflection—and I’m better for it.

Tell us about some of your favorite memories from coaching.
MR: My favorite memories tend to be minor but always humorous incidents centering around forgotten or ad-libbed lines in speech events, lost suitcases (or stolen in NY), and the inevitable transportation mix-ups. I remember fondly the girls’ enthusiasm in getting their post event critiques and, in one case, spreading them out over the floor of the train station at 2 a.m. in Chicago while waiting for a delayed train.

JR: She laughs about the annual “joke birthday dinner” the girls would throw for her. When traveling on a Saturday night, it always was a challenge to get all the patrons in the restaurant to join in—this despite the fact that her birthday was often months in the past.

MR: Aside from the occasional winning trophies my students and sometimes the school received, I most enjoyed the tournaments which gave me the opportunity to chat with the other coaches, especially those who had been former competitors whom I judged or whom my students had competed against in earlier days.

JR: I can recall the angst of her preparing for a tournament and the great relief when it was over. It was only after I was “drafted” as a judge for her tournaments that I came to appreciate how much she was respected and truly liked by her peers. When she ran a tournament, you could see she was sometimes frustrating to work with and at times earned the ire of her peers, but she stood her ground and refused to take shortcuts when it came to the absolute fair treatment of all students. All admired her for it.

As a two-diamond coach, do you have any advice for new coaches joining the League?
MR: Recruit not only the talented, but those reticent to step forward. Your greatest success stories will be from those students who are shy and lack self-assurance but through your patient mentoring will rise up to be more than they ever envisioned themselves to be. Seek them out, for they won’t come to you, but the effort will be gratifying both for you and them.

In 2002, you were inducted into the National Forensic League Hall of Fame. How did it feel to be honored by your peers?
MR: Honored, of course, and as many in the position would feel, not at all deserved—and perhaps more a product of my longevity and stubbornness than of actual achievement. However, I am glad to show that if one keeps her wits about her, age is just a number—and the word “retirement” is only a state of mind, not a requirement.

What have you been up to since retirement? Are you still active in forensics at Academy of the Holy Names?
MR: I worked as long as I was physically capable, but I’ve been completely out of Holy Names, other than as an Associate in the Order, for approximately seven years. I’ve been able to stay in my own home with the help of an aid and have both friends and family close by. I’ve been very fortunate to still have my eyesight enabling me to read and keep mentally active.

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Are there any final thoughts that you would like to share?
MR: Only how gifted I have been to have known so many, seen so much, and been able to enjoy so many experiences.

JR: As important as forensics was in my mother’s life, as well as the Holy Names Drama Club, she will most want to be remembered as being a woman of faith and deep religious conviction.
Apply for the Coach Scholarship Program!

✓ Learn new coaching techniques.
✓ Connect with other coaches.
✓ Enhance your team.

The Coach Scholarship Program partners with speech and debate institutes throughout the country to provide tuition waivers that include:
- Coverage of tuition, plus lodging and meals
- Coverage of tuition only
- Discount off tuition rates

The application process begins in February. Find out more by visiting http://goo.gl/LX9wM.

NEW IN 2013: Online summer institute hosted by the National Forensic League! A select number of scholarships will also be available for the online institute—more information coming soon!

What do past participants think of the program?

“By participating over the summer, I was able to gain a wealth of knowledge in a very short amount of time that has helped me tremendously in planning for and improving my class instruction.”

“The collaboration and sharing of information between instructors, students, and coaches was amazing.”

“Take the opportunity to grow your education. You can always learn more in the world of debate and forensics, and the League provides a unique opportunity to make this dream become reality.”

Thanks to our outstanding 2012 summer institutes!

- Dartmouth Coaches Workshop
- Florida Forensic Institute/ National Coaches Institute
- Gustavus Adolphus Summer Speech Institute
- Harvard Debate Council Summer Workshops
- Liberty Debate Institute
- Mean Green Workshops
- Nebraska Debate Institute
- Ohio Forensics Summer Speech Camp
- The Perfect Performance Workshop
- Southwest Speech and Debate Institute
- Sun Country Forensics Institute
- Texas Debate Collective
- Whitman National Debate Institute
Beehive Forensics Institute
July 7-21, 2013

EVENTS
Public Forum
Policy Debate
Lincoln Douglas Debate
Extemporaneous Speaking
Forensics Pedagogy (Coaches Only)
Congress (One Week Only)
Interp-HI, DI, DUO (One Week Only)

TUITION
One or Two week options
Resident or Commuter
July 7-14 or 7-21
Tuition as low as $200
Discounts for early registration/Utah students

BENEFITS
College Credit
Social Events
Salt Lake Bees Baseball Game
Gateway Mall
Frisbee Golf Tournament
Personalized Instruction
A focus on critiqued practice
Customizable Curriculum

STAFF

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PHILOSOPHY
Instruction aims to emphasize the research skills, speaking techniques, and extensive practice critical to competitors at all levels of competition.

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How did you become involved in speech and debate? Like most high school students, I was invited to join the debate team by a coach who recognized my potential. But, I became involved because it was fun to compete, and I realized the thrill of being successful and developing my confidence as a speaker.

Did you have a forensic mentor? If so, who was it, and what did he/she teach you? My mentor was Rhoda Hansen. She taught me attention to detail, particularly in the management of tournaments and preparation for competition.

Why did you decide to become a speech and debate coach? It was a natural extension of my own high school and collegiate involvement. At first, I probably wanted to coach because it enabled me to live vicariously through the students I coached—their success became my success. I always enjoyed the thrill of competition. However, it didn’t take long for me to realize that coaching was more about empowering students—at whatever level—to reach their goals and become more self-confident. Watching a student come to realize their potential is what kept me coaching.

Tell us a little about your school and forensic program and the features that make them unique. The high school program that I affiliated with was at Shanley High School in Fargo; and its forensic program is well-established in the state of North Dakota and surrounding region. Shanley views its program as a “gem” in its crown of activities and has provided the funding to guarantee that its students are able to compete among the region’s best. Shanley is a private school with a wide range of students and abilities. The school is very competitive with its athletic programs, music, and fine arts. Its students are academically strong, often producing finalists in the National Merit Scholars program.

What challenges do you face as a coach? Shanley has an all-inclusive forensic team. That is, it fields student congress, all forms of debate teams, and individual events with one head coach. A challenge for me when I actively was coaching at Shanley involved preparing and managing a relatively large group of students in all of these events. Fortunately, I competed in student congress, Policy Debate, and many individual events, so I was better prepared than most. I also competed in collegiate forensics as a member of Pi Kappa Delta so I was familiar with different coaching styles and approaches to directing forensic programs. Probably the biggest challenge was finding ways to get students who were already in many other school activities to keep their involvement in forensics as the top priority.

What is the most fulfilling part of your job? I always try to be the kind of coach my students need, no matter what their ability or circumstance. From the novice to national champion, every student needs different kinds of support and direction. Being able to give students what they need from me as a coach is most fulfilling.

In what ways has the National Forensic League helped you as a coach? The League has
provided me with resources and professional contacts that have helped me to grow in my ability to coach and educate students. The National Forensic League gives coaches legitimacy with school administrators because students who compete in forensics can actually qualify for a national tournament. The other activities, particularly athletics, usually stop at the state level.

How has coaching changed you? 
Coaching for me is a vocation. It is how I live my life. Now, I spend more time coaching coaches and helping them to develop the skills and confidence needed to be successful with their own teams. Coaching has become mentoring for me. I try to model the behavior I encourage in my students and with my coaching peers.

Why is forensics important? 
Forensics empowers students and gives them an opportunity to demonstrate their capacity for expressing themselves.

How does participation in speech and debate change your students? 
Forensics is epistemic. By that, I mean that students learn something by participating in forensics that they cannot learn any other way. Those who have competed have an understanding that only comes by actually engaging in the activity. Good, bad, or in-between, forensics teaches students how to speak effectively in particular situations, how to deal with unfairness and bias, how to overcome fear, how to become more disciplined.

How do your students benefit from membership in the League? 
I want my students to walk away knowing that they used their talents to the best of their abilities, that they did their best to represent themselves and their school. I want students to feel that they earned their successes, learned from their losses, and accomplished their goals.

Tell us about your favorite memories of the activity or an accomplishment of which you are most proud.
I was fortunate to coach my daughter and son—each National Point Leaders (1999 and 2003) and four-time National Tournament qualifiers—so many of my favorite memories involve them. However, my fondest memories involve my students when they were just starting out in middle school. They would march fearlessly into rounds of debate against well-prepared teams and come out excited about the experience. They would rush up to me and give me the play-by-play of arguments and be so thrilled that they had the evidence or the argument with the potential to win the debate. They won more than they lost, so I guess I can be proud of that.

Robert S. Littlefield is a professor of communication at North Dakota State University in Fargo, ND. His involvement in forensics began in 1967 when he joined the National Forensic League, continued through college years as a member of Pi Kappa Delta (PKD), and eventually led to his service as national president of PKD from 1991-1993. From 1995-2003, he was the director of forensics at Shanley High School (winning the National Forensic League District Trophy for eight straight years), and coached 66 entries to the National Tournament in all of the main events.
Tell us a little about the Kentucky district and what makes it unique.
The Kentucky district covers the full Commonwealth of Kentucky—from Paducah to Pikeville—and it takes nearly seven hours to drive the length of our state. We are unique in that we have teams from around the state who meet regularly for competition, and it’s not unusual for most of the teams to have driven more than two hours that morning to get to the tournament—very different from urban districts in other states.

We get along very well. I called the Kentucky coaches the Jedi Council once, and that name and attitude of sages working together for the common good has stuck and reflects well what we try to do—to put aside pettiness and to make our students the best communicators they can be using the tools of League competitions. Kentucky is the friendliest state, and it shows in our collective of coaches.

What challenges do you face as a district? We have many challenges as a district/state, the foremost of which is Kentucky’s poverty rate—one of the greatest in the U.S. Many of our schools simply can’t afford to run the buses for teams to travel or to feed their students as so many of our students cannot afford meals out. Those of us who do field teams do so with strong support from our schools plus the help of many community angels who meet the needs of those students who can’t afford fees or even competition clothes without some help.

Beyond the geographic hurdles mentioned earlier, we also face a lack of funding. Our schools have faced numerous budget cuts over the past few years, and speech and debate programs have been seen as “extras” easily cut—if they were even funded at all. My own very active team receives only coaching stipends for the regular season. We raise all entry fees, bus and driver fees, hotel fees, and fees for materials ourselves. This is the general practice; very few schools receive any budget from their school boards. We are lucky that our board is very supportive of us for Nationals (many are not), but it would be great to have the financial freedom to travel more out of state, and I wish that all Kentucky schools had these opportunities.

What are some best practices you would like to share with other district leaders? We try to support our new coaches by pairing them
with mentors so they have someone to call with questions as they come up. We also have been active in providing information to coaches seeking stipend increases (or in some cases, stipends at all) by providing information about coach salaries and expectations in other schools. The SPEAK conference is probably our biggest outreach program.

Give us some background on SPEAK and how it has evolved since its inception. SPEAK (the Speech Professional Education Alliance of Kentucky) began in 2008. Our state tournament was the week before Districts, and the numbers were way down at state. So I gave all head coaches Round 1 off at Districts, and we had a meeting during that round to talk about what to do to try to revitalize speech and debate in Kentucky. From this meeting, we decided that the rotating door of coaches was our biggest problem—schools were losing coaches rapidly, and many could not find replacements. We decided to meet again and start to plan a course of action to support Kentucky’s speech and debate teachers and coaches.

Our meeting the following year focused our plan, and with a grant from the National Forensic League, we were able to bring in David McKenzie of Plymouth High School to get us fired up and also talk about the Indiana state speech teachers’ conference—an annual event I was able to attend as an observer and participant—to use as a model for our own conference.

After a few setbacks, we were able to find a co-sponsor through the University of Kentucky’s new division of Instructional Communication. They hosted our first conference in 2011, and the two Kentucky speech leagues along with the CFL Diocese co-sponsored the conference with Kentucky NFL and the University of Kentucky. We were lucky enough to nab Scott Wunn as our keynote speaker, and we had a great conference with around 80 attendees.

In 2012, we hosted our next conference (SPEAK 2, the Sequel!), and it was a fantastic event featuring New Jersey Ridge High School’s David Yastremski as the keynote speaker, along with some great workshops and similar attendance. We can now call SPEAK an annual event, and I hope it will continue helping Kentucky’s teachers and coaches learn and network.

How does League membership impact students? coaches? League membership is like playing basketball in a gym. Yeah, you can play outside in the driveway, but the gym makes it feel like it’s real, like people think it matters, like you aren’t just playing for yourself but for others. It’s a way to become part of something larger than yourself and just giving speeches for class. You represent your school, and people are watching you be your best self. It matters. The League raises the ethos of student speakers as well as the expectations.

For coaches, membership is essential if you want to stay in teaching speech/debate long term. No other group can give you more support (years’ worth of seminars and workshops for one school membership fee) plus a community of like souls who are willing to help and eager to share. Plus, Districts and Nationals are fun! They’re exhausting, but they’re fun.

This issue of Rostrum focuses on the Common Core. Why is speech and debate so critical in meeting those state standards? Speech and debate training is really the only way to thoroughly address the speaking and listening standards. You don’t address the math standards as a happy coincidence by teaching physics. You address them by teaching math and then also use them in physics. It’s the same for the speaking and listening standards—they deserve and require direct instruction.

What advice would you give to a new coach joining the League? Get a mentor if you don’t have one. Ask your district chair for someone to serve as your go-to person for questions. Take your kids to Districts, even if you don’t think they’ll make it to Nationals. You’ll all learn more at your first Districts than you suspect is possible.

However you have to do it, get yourself to Nationals for the full week. The seminars there are excellent and helpful for new coaches, but you should also judge some rounds and definitely go to as many finals as you can. The DVDs and online videos are excellent for classroom resources, but your mind is much more engaged and analytical for the live performances, and you will learn, learn, learn as you watch. Plus, you get to hear Scott’s charge to the seniors, which is my favorite moment in forensics each year. It really charges ME for the next year—and you’ll need it, too.

“The Kentucky district is truly a community of coaches. We all want to see each other’s students succeed. Every coach, new and veteran, knows that if he or she needs anything, there are coaches willing to help.” – Jeff Mangum
“Cross-examination is a lost art.” This is a common refrain among judges and coaches—you will read it in judge philosophies and hear it bemoaned in coaches’ lounges. Like most common refrains, it doubtless contains some truth, but also something false: debate probably never had any more of a “golden age” than anything else in our world. There have always been debaters who excelled at cross-examination (CX), and used it to their advantage, and there have also been debaters who wasted it. In this article, I’d like to set forth some general tips for making cross-examination more effective.

One of the most common frustrations with CX, from a judging perspective, is that debaters seem to be proceeding at random, asking whatever question occurs to them first, no matter how irrelevant: “Your second piece of inherency evidence, saying we don’t have solar-powered satellites now, is this from a qualified source?” Another common frustration is that debaters use the cross-examination time to ask procedural and logistical questions, rather than substantive ones: “Did you read all the underlining on this piece of evidence?” or “Can you give me another copy of your viewing document?” Some give up on cross-examination completely, frequently asking the judge, “How much time is left?” or asking obviously pointless questions just to take up time: “So how’s your tournament going so far?” A memorable Dana Carvey SNL skit from 1988 parodied George H.W. Bush’s own CX failures—they were all along these lines.

All of the preceding misguided uses of cross-examination stem, I believe, from one fundamental problem: the debater asking them has failed to make a plan. You would never give a speech with no idea what you were about to say; likewise, you should not begin cross-examination in a similar fashion. The fundamental purpose of CX is to help the cross-examiner’s team win the debate. This may seem obvious, but based on hundreds of cross-examinations I’ve seen, the point needs to be made. When you are planning your cross-examination, make plans to ask questions that will help you win the debate.

General Tips
Before giving some guidelines about each individual cross-examination period, here are some overall ideas that will apply to all of them.

Ethos matters. Aristotle realized long ago that the credibility of a speaker may be the most effective means of persuasion that a speaker possesses—and CX is one of the main times you can showcase this credibility. If your opponent stands up for his/her speech, stand next to...
“Cross-examination provides you with your only opportunity to confront your opponents directly; take advantage of this opportunity.”

him/her during cross-examination. If your opponent is seated, it’s okay to sit down, but in any event, stop staring at your laptop for three minutes. Make eye contact with the judge, display a real sense of concern and seriousness during the CX. If you think judges “don’t listen to CX,” a lot of the time, that’s because you don’t demand their attention. Most of the time, they’ll listen if you seem like someone who deserves to be listened to.

Ask strategic, not informational or logistical questions. Ask questions which, if they are answered in certain ways, will help you win the debate. Do not ask open-ended informational questions such as: “Can you describe your first advantage?” This just provides the other team with an opportunity to filibuster. Also, do not ask purely logistical questions like: “How much of the Smith 7 evidence did you read?” You can ask about those sorts of things during prep time.

Ask about arguments, not evidence. A huge amount of CX time is wasted with questions such as: “Where in your Royal 10 evidence does it say that recessions always cause global armed conflict?” Your question implicitly grants something you don’t want to grant—that if the evidence does say that, it is true. You are at that point letting them get away with a fairly transparent instance of the appeal-to-authority fallacy. A much better question along the same lines would be: “How is it possible true that recessions cause global armed conflict? There have been ten since World War II, haven’t there?” If they want to talk about the Royal 10 evidence now, to answer your question, they can, but note you’ve focused the issue now on whether the argument is true, not just whether the claim is made by the evidence.

Do not nitpick. It’s easy to get distracted by irrelevant details, especially when you are right about them. So, suppose a given piece of evidence read by the other team is underlined in a way that doesn’t form a complete sentence. There is no need to ask them about this, even if you are right. Will it decrease their credibility? A little bit, perhaps. Will it win you the debate? Not a chance. Always try to ask about things that at least have the potential to help you make significant portions of your team’s last rebuttal stronger.

Follow up effectively. This is a tough balancing act. One the one hand, avoid merely asking single questions, and then moving on to other questions. After your opponent answers your first question, think about how you can follow up, so you can seize more ground. Keep doing this until you’ve almost gotten them to where you want them. But—and this is also tough—at that point, when you’re almost there, stop. When your next question is, “So doesn’t that mean you lose the debate?” (or something equivalent) don’t ask it. The judge probably knows where you’re going, your opponent will most likely just say “no,” you’ll just keep re-asking things, and it will be awkward for everyone. You may also just be giving them opportunities to backtrack, getting out of the trap you’ve put them in, or re-thinking a stance they shouldn’t have taken.

Use your arguments (and your partner’s) later. After you’ve gotten to almost where you want to get, save that argument: don’t advance it in the CX, but in your next speech (or, most of the time, your partner’s). This means listening to your partner while they are CX’ing.
your opponent. I know much of the
time you are prepping, but at least keep
an ear open. Nothing is more frustrating
to a judge than the 1A getting the IN to
make a devastating concession about a
counterclaim, say, and then not hearing
the 2A mention it in the 2AC. That argument
will now just disappear; it might have won
you debate if you had just remembered to
make it.

Speech by Speech

In what follows, I have laid out what I see
as the best way to achieve the purpose of
winning debates in each of the four cross-
examination periods in Policy Debate.

The 1AC CX. When questioning the
1A, contest the claim(s) being made in the
1AC which, in order to win, you will most
need to disprove. This is most likely not,
“What is the source qualification for your
second piece of inherency evidence?”
So what might that claim be? Suppose
you’re A-strategy for the debate involves
winning a disadvantage, and winning that
it outweighs the case. The key claim you
will need to disprove here is most likely
about the magnitude of the affirmative
impacts (to prove the DA impact is
bigger), or maybe the timeframe within
which the affirmative will solve (to prove
the DA will happen before the case is
solved for), or maybe it is a question of
impact access (you want to prove your
DA accesses an impact better than their
affirmative). If your A-strat involves a
counterplan, perhaps it is contesting their
“federal government key” claim(s). If it’s a
kritik you intend to win on, it is probably
something involving the epistemological
or ontological presuppositions of their
impact or solvency claims. Once you have
determined what the claim(s) are, focus
in on them for the entirety of the three
minutes. If, by the end of the 1AC CX, you
have brought any of these questions into
serious doubt in the judge’s mind, you
have succeeded.

The 1NC CX. When questioning the
IN, highlight the biggest problem you
will need to establish with each off-
case position. This can be fun, especially
considering the large number of extremely
contrived and illogical positions often
presented in the INC. Find one good
question about each off-case argument—
one question about the CP, one about the
DA, one about T, etc. Do what you can to
establish the negative’s inability to answer
each one, and move on to the next one.
You need to be efficient here, especially
if the INC strategy was wide-ranging, as it
often is.

The 2AC CX. When questioning the 2A,
re-establish your case arguments (if there
are any) by asking about their 2AC answers
to them, and/or ask about what you think
is the most important answer on each off-
case position. The 2AC will often under-
cover case arguments, just using tagline
or author-name extension to respond
to the INC. Ask questions that make the
inadequacy of this strategy clear. On
the off-case positions, more judgment is
needed: specifically, try to determine what
argument against your most important
off-case position they’ve made that they
think is the most important one. Then,
try to cause problems for this argument
with your questions. For example—you’ve
presented a politics disadvantage. They
have made a link-turn argument that you
think they’ll want to go for: you need to
go after this link-turn argument. Of course
you may be wrong about what they want
to go for, and your questions might even
make them change their mind, but that’s
one of the things that makes debate fun.
Exception to the “no logistical questions”
rule—asking about voting issues or
‘reasons to reject the team”—spend a few
seconds (but only that) to make sure you
haven’t missed any arguments that would
result in you losing the debate if you
don’t answer them. Make it your habit,
at the start of the 2AC, to confirm all of
the voting issue-level arguments the 2A
advanced.

The 2NC CX. When questioning the
2N, re-establish your best argument
against the position which the negative
team seems to think they will win the
debate. The 2As CX of the 2N is a very
important moment, coming right in the
middle of the debate. It is the only face-
to-face verbal confrontation between
the last two rebuttalists. Most debaters,
though, waste this opportunity (even
more than they waste the other CX
opportunities). If you are the 2A, refocus
your energies and ask yourself this tough
question: “Okay, I’ve now heard the 2NC.
Based on that, and what I think the INR
is about to talk about, how does the
negative see themselves winning this
debate?” After you’ve asked that, ask
another, also tough question: “Given my
guess about how they think they’re going
to win, what questions do I need to ask to
make that harder for them?” This probably
means working to re-establish the truth
of your strongest argument against their
most likely path to victory. For example—
they seem like they are going to try to win
the debate on a kritik; you think your best
argument here is a permutation. Spend the
2NC CX asking them skeptical questions
about their answers to your permutation.
If you can win that those answers aren’t
good, you can win the permutation much
more easily in the 2AR.

Conclusion

Cross-examination is not a “lost art”—it’s
just a neglected one, and probably always
has been. Cross-examination provides you
with your only opportunity to confront
your opponents directly; take advantage
of this opportunity. Work to ask more
persuasively worded, strategically relevant,
argumentatively significant, truth-focused,
and logically related questions of your
opponents, and then use them in your
speeches. Your debating is bound to
improve.

Joshua Brown was the Debate Coach
at Homewood-Flossmoor High School
from 1999-2012. He is a member of
Homewood-Flossmoor’s English and
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