



## NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION Topic Rubric Questions

### EMPOWERING VOICES FOR TOMORROW.

In 2021, the NSDA published its Topic Rubric Questions to guide intentional, ongoing evaluation of the issues students debate and discuss. Our goal remains the same: to empower students to use their voices responsibly, courageously, and with humility in pursuit of a better world. As new challenges and opportunities arise, we must revisit and refine our approach.

By regularly assessing the topics we introduce, we ensure students engage with meaningful, relevant issues that help them manage conflict, envision solutions, and create positive change in their schools, communities, and beyond.

### Topic Rubric Questions

**Language:** Does the topic use current and precise language while avoiding cultural idioms or figurative expressions (e.g., “a dime a dozen”) that may disadvantage students unfamiliar with them?

**Relevance:** Does the topic encourage students to critically analyze timely topics?

**Openness:** Does the topic challenge students to think critically through diverse experiences, viewpoints, perspectives, and ideologies?

**Constructive Dialogue:** Does the topic avoid relying on research or arguments that stigmatize, discriminate, or exclude?