

# CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE PRACTICE DRILLS

DEVELOPED BY BRITTANY STANCHIK

## CIRCLE REFUTATION

**Person(s) needed:** At least 4 (one designated person- if not a coach- will need to 'pick' on who responds)

**Helps:** Quick prep. and refutation

**Directions:**

- Pick a general topic (ex. minimum wage)
- One individual will lay down a 'general argument' (other individuals will flow)
- Designated person/ coach will pick another individual in the circle to respond to that argument (giving them anywhere from 5 seconds- 1 minute).
- Designated person/coach will then pick another individual in the group to respond to the original argument OR the response just made.
- Repeat the process until answers have diminished.
- Repeat the drill with a variety of topics.

## IMPACT LADDER

**Person(s) needed:** 1

**Helps:** Impact analysis (stretches it out)

**Directions:**

- Pick one complete argument (with claim, data, and warrant)
- Set a time for 5 minutes
- Write out as many impacts as possible (fill the 5 minutes)
- After time has elapsed, match 'similar' impacts based on link chains- in other words, does one of the impacts you wrote down only make sense if another impact you have written down is explained first?
- Continue to match impacts until you can't anymore.
- Give the impacts you've combined (they should now be longer than 1-2 sentences because you merged them/ probably had to add some sentences in there to complete the linking of impacts) in speech form.
- Now you have detailed impacts!

## ISPY FLUENCY BREAKS

**Person(s) needed:** 1 (maybe 1 to edit)

**Helps:** Fluency

**Directions:**

- Take a previous OR new speech.
- Using a recorder (your phone is just fine, you're only listening to type your speech- not focusing on anything physical in terms of presentation), record your entire 3-minute speech.
- Open up a word document. Play the 3-minute speech- you need to type EVERY SINGLE WORD. There should be some sort of formatting tool (like a dash or an underline, whatever you want) to indicate fluency breaks or unnecessarily long pauses.
- After the entire speech is typed out, analyze what you have written.
- Notice the fluency breaks- where do they happen the most? Are there awkward pauses for no reason? Are there any commonalities of when the fluency breaks/ flubs happen? Finding the exact sources of fluency breaks can help to eliminate them.

## MIRROR(S)

**Person(s) needed:** 2-3 (one should monitor; it's helpful if you have another eye to compare)

**Helps:** Hand gestures, posture, pace, facial expressions, walking, body movement

**Directions:**

- Two individuals will stand facing each other (put about 4 feet between yourselves).
- One individual (A) will start giving their speech (notepad in hand)
- The other individual, with notepad in hand (B)- across from the person speaking (A)- will pick an aspect from above (under "helps") to focus on.
- Based on that attribute, individual B will "mirror" (physically do the same thing) as individual A.
- This will continue until the completion of a speech.
- Speakers will switch sides (individual B will now give his/her speech and individual A will mirror).

## PEN DRILLS

**Person(s) needed:** 1

**Helps:** Enunciation

**Directions:**

- Put a pen, horizontally, in your mouth as far back as you can (your mouth will initially stretch a bit).
- Start speaking/ give a speech/ read anything out loud.
- Take pen out and speak normally- your mouth will have adapted to the stretch and you can now enunciate better

## PERFECT POINT

**Person(s) needed:** 1 (1 to observe)

**Helps:** Fluency, clarity, organization

**Direction:**

- Take a previous speech and pick 1 point.
- Map out any necessary 'corrections' (in terms of writing, you should be able to easily read your points off of the notepad)
- When ready, begin the point- the goal is to have zero: Fluency breaks, lengthy pauses, repetition of wording, flubs. The goal is also to have: A clear claim, warrant, 1 piece of evidence, 2 impacts, and 1 piece of refutation. If any of these standards are not met, the point is not perfect and therefore requires editing the point and starting all over.

## PERFECT SPEECH

**Person(s) needed:** 1 (1 maybe to edit)

**Helps:** Rhetoric, structure, strategy, organization, refutation

**Directions:**

- Either take a previous topic OR choose a new one. You will be typing out this speech on the computer.
- Prepare your speech like you normally would (either preparing an outline on lined paper first or typing out your outline in a word document).
- Open a word document. You are going to type out your entire speech- as if you were going to memorize it. Type out everything. EVERYTHING.
- Once the speech is completely typed out, go back to read over the speech. You need to add different elements (impacts, specific wording, transitions, more evidence, more advanced rhetoric) THEN eliminate certain elements (clunky wording, unnecessary segues, words that don't need to be there- you can condense phrasing and evidence as well). Your goal is to make the speech "perfect" by your standards. Think of what makes "perfect speeches".
- Without reading off the fully written speech, you will give the speech as closely to perfection as possible. Remember the aspects/attributes that you added in to make the speech "perfect". Implement those in future speeches.

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

**Person(s) needed:** 1 (1 to monitor)

**Helps:** Facial expressions, inflection, levels (emphasis in pausing)

**Directions:**

- Choosing one emotion (or being told a specific emotion by the person monitoring), you will deliver the pledge of allegiance- entirely in that one emotion. For example, if the emotion is “sad”, then the PoA is going to be delivered in a solemn, drawn out, low tone kind of voice.
- Pick at least 5 different emotions to try this with. The goal is to exaggerate them so you know the spectrum of “1-100”.
- Once you’ve become ‘comfortable’ with presenting the PoA in one emotion, start changing the emotion every few words (or have the person monitoring yell out different emotions; you would have to change your tone/expression based on what they yell at you).
- After completing this, immediately give a speech (either new or previous); the levels will have carried over. Notice the differences in tone from before to now.

## PREP AND EXTEMP

**Person(s) needed:** 2 (1 to speak, 1 to monitor)

**Helps:** Quick prep., writing less, notepad dependency, explaining argumentation

**Directions:**

- Take a previous speech outline (prepped speech)
- Take a blank piece of paper.
- Have the person monitoring set a timer for 5 minutes. The writer will have 5 minutes to transfer over everything that they can from the previous flow.
- After the 5 minutes is up, the speaker will immediately give their speech.
- After the speech, the speaker will repeat the process- using the flow from the 5-minute prep. period. This time, the speaker will have 3 minutes.
- After the timer has elapsed, the speaker will immediately give the speech again.
- After the speech, the speaker will repeat the process- using the flow from the 3-minute prep. period. This time, the speaker will have 1 minute.
- After the time has elapsed, the speaker will give the speech again.

## RECORD AND WATCH

**Person(s) needed:** 1

**Helps:** Facial expressions, [eliminate] speech patterns, inflection, pausing, emphasis

**Directions:**

- Choose a previous speech (for familiarity). You will be giving one point of your speech.
- Open up a video recording system on your laptop (or phone). Set it up so it's in line with your face.
- Give the one point from your speech that you've chosen.
- Next, pick an aspect from the "helps" section above (facial expressions, tone, inflection, pauses, emphasis) to focus on.
- You will now re-give the same point BUT do so by exaggerating one of the aspects from the "helps" section. Really exaggerate it- it should be uncomfortable.
- After this is completed, go back and watch the first recording. Then, watch the second recording. Compare the two based on the attribute you were choosing to focus on. Your goal is to find a balance between the two videos.
- Repeat this with as many attributes from the "help" section as desired.

## REPORTING FROM... IMPACTS

**Person(s) needed:** 1

**Helps:** Humanizing impacts

**Directions:**

- Pick one point from a speech (previous or new).
- Write out at least 3 "blunt" impacts (i.e. "increase in unemployment" or "lives lost").
- Taking your impacts, you're going to write them as if you were reporting them live to a news station (local, like "Fox 10", or national, like "CNN"); the focus here should be to get as detailed as possible- focus on describing what's "around you" (as if you were there). So, for example, if the impact is "job loss", your impact should sound something along the lines of: "Hard working Americans have spent countless hours standing in line at the unemployment office, pounding the pavement for work".
- Do this to all 3 impacts. The humanization should not go past two sentences

## REFUTATION PAIRS

**Person(s) needed:** 2 (maybe 1 for monitoring)

**Helps:** Quick prep., Refutation (analysis, follow through, quantity/ quality of responses)

**Directions:**

- Two individuals will pick a topic to speak one (previous or new).
- Individual A will give ONLY the body of his/her speech (just the two points). Individual B should be flowing the arguments.
- After individual A is done speaking, Individual B will have 4 minutes to write out as many responses as possible to the arguments- evidence is allowed (but should already be on hand, you're not allowed to use the internet). Try to have at least 5 responses to each point.
- Individual B will then stand up and deliver their responses (there is no structure here- speakers just need to signpost, or say what part of the speech he/she is attacking, as they "go down the flow").
- Individual A should be flowing these responses.
- Individual A will then have 4 minutes to write out as many responses to Individual B's arguments as possible.
- Individual A will stand up and deliver the results.
- The process will repeat itself for as long as desired. The goal is to focus on writing the most number of responses as possible (to think quickly on your feet/ realize the choices you have before you) BUT figure out if you were to apply those in an actual speech, which would be the highest quality?

## RELAXED START STOPS

**Person(s) needed:** 2 (1 to speak, 1 to monitor)

**Helps:** Fluency, inflection, hand gestures, posture, levels (pauses and emphasis), eye contact, volume- anything else you want to focus on.

**Directions:**

- The individual will choose a speech.
- The individual will then choose 1 or more aspects from the "helps" section to focus on. [Let the person monitoring know so he/she knows what to stop you on.]
- The individual will start giving the speech- the person monitoring will look out for/ listen for the attributes that the speaker desired. The person monitoring, at any point in time, can stop the speaker, explain what they did wrong/ need to do better, then have them continue- but the person monitoring should be listening to ensure the speaker is implementing the changes just discussed. The speaker does not have to start all over once they make a mistake, they simply need to implement/exaggerate the changes discussed by the monitor.
- This process (starting, stopping, discussing, and starting again) can repeat as many times as necessary. The entire process (of giving the speech(s)) can also repeat as many times as desired.

## START STOPS

**Person(s) needed:** 2 (1 to speak, 1 to monitor)

**Helps:** Fluency/ break bad habits (speech pattern/ hand gestures)

**Directions:**

- Individual will choose a speech.
- Individual will begin his/her speech. The person monitoring the individual will stop him/her whenever he/she hits a fluency break/ fluency flub.
- Whenever a break happens, the individual will begin the speech (from the intro) all over again.
- The goal is to get through the entire speech without a break. The constant reaction to “stopping” and “starting” when a break happens helps create a smoother flow of speaking.

## WORDING ROLLERCOASTER

**Person(s) needed:** 2 (1 to speak, 1 to listen/ monitor)

**Helps:** Levels (pausing and emphasis)

**Directions:**

- Choose a speech (new or old).
- Choose one point (the shorter, the better).
- Using some sort of key (i.e. underlining for pauses, circles for emphasis) to label your point- the number of pauses and emphasis should be obnoxious.
- Give the point to the person monitoring- over exaggerating the pauses and emphasis.
- After completing this process 3 times, revert to the ‘standard’ way of giving the point; take note in how the pauses and emphasis have carried over.

## STORY TIME

**Person(s) needed:** 2 (1 to speak, 1 to monitor)

**Helps:** Inflection, levels (pausing and emphasis), facial expressions

**Directions:**

- Speaker will choose a child’s book (either on hand) or google “children’s stories”. The content of the story doesn’t matter- just make sure it’s clearly meant for children under the age of 8.
- The speaker will briefly look over the book (to get a handle on the story, to limit fluency breaks).
- The speaker will read the story out loud (to the person monitoring) as if he/she were reading to a kindergarten class- that means, in order to garner the attention of the kids, your inflection and facial expressions should be extremely exaggerated.
- After reading a few pages (to get in the habit of the tone and levels), immediately switch to a speech- listen for the inflection, it should carry over.
- \*In order to get a better handling on breakdown of emotions, you can label different sentences and words with various emotions (like “surprise”) THEN write the attributes of what creates that emotion (i.e. “big eyes”, “high pitch”, etc.