

WSDC DEBATE FORMAT

ADJUDICATING DEBATES

Judges' Briefing

The Role of the Judge

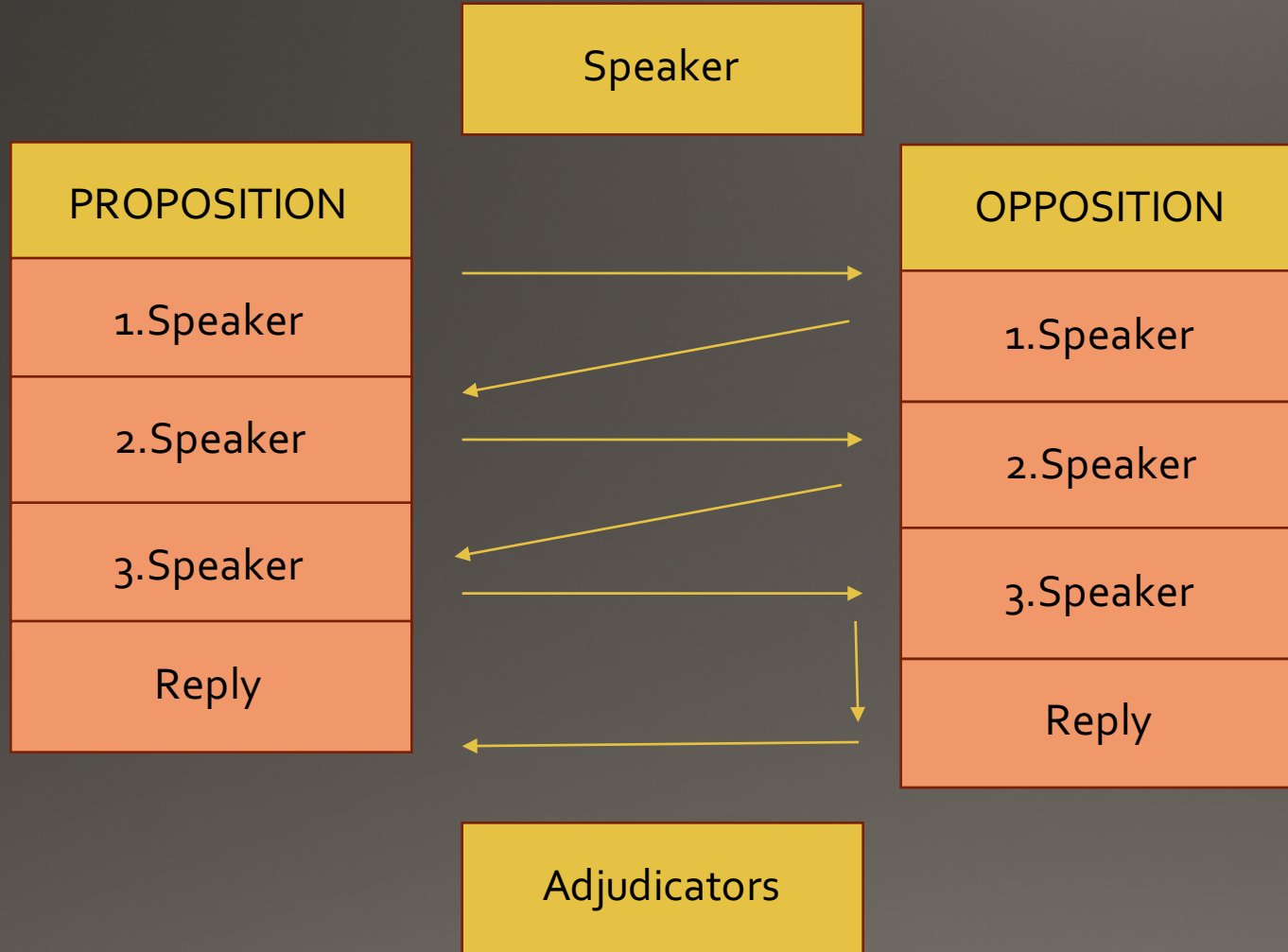
- Decide who wins the debate
 - Comparative analysis of the teams
- Assign scores to individual speakers
 - Evaluating style, strategy & content of each speaker and filling in the score sheet accordingly
- Provide “Reason for decision”
 - Adjudication speech – act like an adjudicator
- Provide feedback to teams and individual speakers
 - Act like a coach

WSDC adjudicator is an unbiased, critical/active listener who decides which team won a debate and individually evaluates speakers, with an excellent understanding of WSDC rules

WSDC debate format: Basic Rules

- **General format:**
 - 2 teams in each debate: Propostion & Opposition
 - Up to 5 members can be in a team (but only 3 member can speak in each round)
- **Speeches:**
 - 8 minutes main substantive speeches per team from 3 different speakers
 - 4 minute reply speech delivered by the first or second speaker from each side, with the Opposition reply going first, followed by Proposition reply
- **Points of Information (POIs)**
 - After the first minute and before the last minute of each main substantive speech, the opposing team can offer Points of Information to the speaker on the floor.
 - Each speaker is advised to take and offer 1-2 Points of Information per speech.
 - POIs in the reply speeches are not allowed.
- **Communication** with the coach or audience during preparation for impromptu round and actual debates is not allowed (coach can show time)
- The teams are required to **genuinely and fairly define and discuss the motion**

WSDC debate format: Debate Layout



WSDC: Roles of the Speakers

- **1st Proposition Speaker**

Explain the Proposition's understanding of the motion & keywords in the motion / Define the motion / Frame the motion

Establish reasonable setup (policy, yardstick, clarifications – if any) / Introduce the plan/policy if the team chooses to tackle the motion with one

Bring Constructive material:

- Outline team's case / Introduce all Arguments / Introduce case division
- Present / Develop constructive Arguments

- **1st Opposition Speaker**

Challenge definition if necessary (definitional challenges need to be explicit)

Establish setup for the team & Case division

Bring Rebuttal & Attack plan if necessary

Bring Constructive material:

- Outline team's case / Introduce all Arguments
- Present / Develop constructive Arguments

(Opposition is allowed not to bring any distinctive constructive material, but strategically it is advisable to bring it to defend the opposition side)

WSDC: Roles of the Speakers

- 2nd Proposition Speaker

Deal with challenges of the definition if necessary

Rebuttal (bring rebuttal to the first opposition speaker)

Extend and further develop the constructive case of proposition

- Rebuild arguments presented in first proposition speech
- Present new constructive arguments

- 2nd Opposition Speaker

Rebuttal (bring rebuttal to the second proposition speaker)

Extend and further develop the constructive case of opposition

- Rebuild arguments presented in the first opposition speech
- Present new constructive arguments

Both speakers need to continue with their team's case as outlined by their first speakers.

WSDC: Roles of the Speakers

3rd Proposition / Opposition speaker:

- Refutation, Rebuttal & Responding to the other team's case– main objective of the 3rd speech:
 - Identify and discuss the biggest questions and clashes in the debate
 - Rebut the most crucial points
 - Contribute original refutation
- Summary / Conclusion of the constructive case
- New constructive material? Allowed under some conditions, but not strategically advised. Do not bring new unannounced ideas in the debate in the 3rd speech.
- New refutations or new examples / analysis that are connected to previously made arguments are not considered as new material.

Reply Speeches

- Bring a holistic and final overview of the debate
- Offer biased summary of the debate: favourably compare and analyse both teams' argumentative cases
- Explain why they think their team won & why their team's case stands
- Reply speakers are not allowed to bring any new material
- This speech is comparative overview of the clash points, not constructive part of the debate
- Reply speakers can respond to new material brought by third speakers if necessary.

WSDC: Definitions and Definitional Challenges

DEFINITIONS:

- Should be REASONABLE, OBVIOUS & FAIR – allows normal debate
- “SQUIRRELING” is not allowed and is considered strategically bad
- TIME and PLACE setting is not allowed (there are exceptions)
- Should be as general or as specific as the motion
- What can the Opposition teams do if they disagree with the definition?
 - Accept it
 - Challenge it
 - Broaden it
 - Run “even if” case

DEFINITIONAL CHALLENGES:

- 1st Opposition speaker may challenge the definition if they feel that it is unfair.
- Definitional challenges must be:
 - Explicit (done in the 1st speech)
 - Explained (reasons are provided)
 - relevant for development of the the debate

Regardless of who wins a definitional challenge, there are no automatic losses. Judging must always be comparative and holistic.

WSDC: Roles & Burden of the Teams

- PROPOSITION

- Has to define the motion and keep the debate tracked to what the motion proposes
- Has to describe the status quo
- Has to present solution to a problem (cannot defend the status quo)

- OPPOSITION

- The Opposition needs to present their own constructive case to refute the motion. However, the format also allows to set the Opposition case purely on rebuttal (this is strategically very risky and is considered as a poor decision)
- The Opposition can make different strategical choices: accept the issue given by Proposition, Challenge the definition, Broaden the definition or Present an “even if” case.

BURDENS: The Proposition must prove that the motion is true as a general principle and/or in the majority of circumstances. The Opposition must cast more than a reasonable doubt on the Proposition's case. When a motion is expressed as an absolute, the Opposition must show it is false in a significant minority of cases. In other words, *both teams have an equal burden of proof* in World Schools style debating.

Judging Principles

Be **impartial**: avoid judging teams you have personal bonds with (schools/nations of affiliation, teams you have coached, students you have some connections with etc.) These are called **clashes**.

Be **observant**: take notes, pay attention, don't play with your phone, you should be able to summarize everything debaters brought to the table

Avoid any **personal biases**: before the debate starts, a judge has no idea who is going to win the debate. Their own opinion on a motion, no matter how strong it is, is put aside during the debate.

Avoid your **expert knowledge**

Do not step in / read into the debate: judges should be lazy in the sense that they do not construct ideas, conclusions or arguments that haven't been explained.

Know the **rules of the format**

Be **constructive**: a judge needs to create an encouraging and motivational atmosphere for debaters and should keep in mind that this is an educational activity.

The judge is an **average intelligent person/voter** with basic knowledge on current affairs

There are **no automatic losses**, it is always a **comparison** between the two competing teams

Common mistakes & Cardinal sins

- Over-prioritising later speeches.
- Over-emphasising Content, Style or Strategy of the speakers: evaluation should be holistic
- Compensating for motions viewed as unfair
- Accelerating rebuttal mark
- “Check-list” judging
- Having expectations / Preconceived ideas about the motion
- Not being confident & accountable

Judging Criteria: Style

The way in which the matter was presented - **persuasiveness and communicativeness**. Category of style deals with HOW the content was delivered (it is the "PUBLIC SPEAKING" part of the debate)

Keep in mind:

- Judges are not evaluating debaters' command of English language or personal quirks. Accents or variations in pronunciation styles should not be grounds for deducting scores
- Judges should keep in mind there are plenty of good styles. There is no superior style, but what always helps the speaker to be more persuasive is the following:
 - **VARIATIONS**
 - **ENGAGEMENT WITH AUDIENCE**
 - **STYLE & CONTENT ARE SYNCHRONIZED**
 - **NO PERSONAL ATTACKS**
- Style includes:
 - **Clarity, Choice of Vocabulary, Voice modulation**
 - **Body Language & Gestures**
 - **Eye Contact & Engagement with the audience**
 - **Likeability & Personal attacks used in speech**

Judging Criteria: Content

The matter that was presented – the quality and quantity of the analysis. Category of content deals with WHAT was presented (it is the “essay-like” element of the debate).

Keep in mind:

- Content covers both, a speaker’s own arguments and the rebuttal of the opposition’s arguments
- For evaluation of the content, it is irrelevant whether or not or to which extent the judge agrees with the argument. Adjudicators should not impose their advanced expert knowledge in the debate and should judge the debate only on the matters that were presented.
- The judge should independently assess the strength of the material presented, regardless of whether (and how well) it’s rebutted
- Judges should keep in mind that language and rhetoric don’t compensate for substance. Substance should be evaluated as it would have been written down
- CONTENT INCLUDES
 - **Arguments** (Development, Validity, Soundness, Importance, Relevance of the arguments)
 - **Examples** (Applicability, Credibility, Impact)
 - **Analysis** (Are all assumptions explained?; are all the logical links explained / is it logical?; is there any logical fallacy?)
 - **Rebuttal** (relevance, structure, misinterpretations)

Judging Criteria: Strategy

The way in which teams work together in accordance with the debate rules. The category of strategy deals with WHY the content was presented. Judges should evaluate the strategy of the whole team as well as of the individual speaker.

Strategy includes:

- **Understanding of debate issues** (interpretation of the motion, relevancy of the content, squirreling, dealing with definitions)
- **Strategical decisions about arguments & responses** (did speakers prioritise central issues and spend time on them accordingly, did they progress the case with their speech)
- **Time management** (prioritisation & time allocation – deviding time well between different segments of the speech, keeping the speech to the time limit)
- **Speech structure** (was the speech easy to follow and clearly marked, introduction & conclusion)
- **Team & Case Dynamics** (were arguments and speakers consistent, did speakers fulfil their role in the debate, did they reinforce team members' arguments and progress the case)
- **Engagement** (did speakers engage & respond to the points from the opposite team)

JUDGING POIs: Responses to the POIs should be credited under the relevant categories. Speakers must give and take 1-2 POIs per speech. You only use POI column on marking sheet (+/- 2 points) if the POIs of the speaker were outstandingly different from the speech.

The Marking standard

Judges should judge a debate and evaluate individual speakers on all of:

- **STYLE:** 24 to 32 points out of 40 (**average = 28**) – 40 %
- **CONTENT:** 24 to 32 points out of 40 (**average = 28**) – 40 %
- **STRATEGY:** 12 to 16 points out of 20 (**average = 28**) – 20 %

TOTAL: 60 to 80 points out of 100 (average = 70) – 100 %

Half – points are allowed / Low-point wins & Ties are not allowed / Points for reply speeches are halved.

Final margins between teams and what do they mean:

- 0,5 – 2 points: very close debate
- 3 – 5 points: close but rather clear debate
- 5 – 10 points: one team clearly better, but not dominating
- 10 – 20 points: winning team dominating the debate
- 20 + points: there was a very significant skill difference between the teams

The Marking standard

SUBSTANTIVE SPEECHES

Standard	Overall (/100)	Style (/40)	Content (/40)	Strategy (/20)
<i>Flawless</i>	80	32	32	16
<i>Excellent</i>	76-79	31	31	15-16
<i>Extremely Good</i>	74-75	30	30	15
<i>Good</i>	71-73	29	29	14-15
<i>Average</i>	70	28	28	14
<i>Satisfactory</i>	67-69	27	27	13-14
<i>Weak</i>	65-66	26	26	13
<i>Pass</i>	61-64	25	25	12-13
<i>Improvement Needed</i>	60	24	24	12

The Marking standard

REPLY SPEECHES

Standard	Overall (/50)	Style (/20)	Content (/20)	Strategy (/10)
<i>Flawless</i>	40	16	16	8
<i>Good to Excellent</i>	36-39	15	15	7.5
<i>Average</i>	35	14	14	7
<i>Pass to Satisfactory</i>	31-34	13	13	6.5
<i>Improvement Needed</i>	30	12	12	6

The Marking standard

- 60 Lowest speaker score possible. The speaker was not present / did nothing
- 61-62 Tried (not very hard, say 1-2 minutes speech), expressed speech through an interpretive dance
- 63-64 Said close to nothing, very little relevance, zero rebuttals, probably spoke for 2-3 minutes
- 65-66 Incredibly weak speech, no structure, little relevance, didn't understand WSDC rules, fundamentally weak argument, glaring problems in style, structure, content
- 67-68 attempts to engage and refute. May have partial analysis but none of it is particularly strong, may have significant style issues, some good ideas but generally outweighed by weaknesses in the speech.
- 70-- Adequately fulfils their speaker role. Some weaknesses but balanced out by the stronger points of the speech. **This is the average score in the mark range at the tournament**
- 71-72 Slightly above average. Speaker role fulfilled, some persuasive arguments, has a clear grasp of strategy, good, strong style with some flaws which are overcome by the strengths
- 73-- A really solid speech. Good case development, good rebuttals. May still have some loose ends, some arguments or rebuttals could have been better fleshed out to be made more compelling/persuasive.
- 74-75 Very good speech: a dynamic, strategic, and engaging speaker. Good content and compelling style.
- 76-77 Really high quality speech. You would expect this speaker to be in the break rounds. Excellent strategic calls with regard to issues in the debate. Logic is rigorous, clear and well explained alongside detailed and rich content.
- 78-79 Crystal clear conclusions can be drawn. All elements are pulled together seamlessly. Consistently brilliant from start to finish. Likely to be the best speaker at the tournament. One of the best speeches you've ever heard, or will ever hear.
- 80 --- Life changing. We have never seen one. Probably not human.

The Marking standard

Note on HOLISTIC JUDGING

The judge should evaluate each speech and the whole debate holistically. Marking criteria just helps judges to standardise their evaluation and feedback.

- **Individual speeches:** Content, Style and Strategy are the criteria used to review the performance of each team and assess scores for each speaker. However, judges should understand that these categories are all connected, since it is only the combination of the three areas that determines how persuasive a speech is. Rather than rigidly seeing them as discrete elements when determining speaker scores and deciding which team won, these areas should only help a judge evaluate and understand what the team and speakers did in the debate overall.
- **Debate / decision about the winners:** The team with the higher total score must win the debate. This should match your initial impression of who was better in the debate. However, if this diverges, you must revise scores to reflect your final impression of who won. Adjust your individual speaker scores to your final decision about the winners of the debate.

Adjudication: Decision & Feedback

Judicial discussion:

- Each judge fills in the ballot individually prior to any discussion
- The Chair judge will lead the discussion
- The discussion should be short and concise
- Aim to summarise main areas of feedback to teams
- Not an opportunity to convince other judges to change their mind (ballots are already locked in)

Decision:

- All rounds are open (if the CA team does not change that for a specific round)
- The chair judge gives a reason for the decision to the teams after the debate
- The reason for decision speech should include a short feedback for both teams

Feedback:

- The debaters will receive short constructive feedback from the chair and additional comments from wing and shadow judges after the debate.
- The debaters need to be encouraged to approach all the judges in the adjudication panel for individual feedback after the decision is announced.

Oral Adjudications

During the Oral Adjudication, judges should explain what happened in the debate and how did they weigh that as judges. They need to explain explicitly who and why did win the debate. Judges should only discuss the matters brought into the debate by the speakers.

Few tips for the adjudication speech:

- Avoid summarising the content of the debate – explicitly announce the decision
- Explain main reasons for the verdict to an audience which may be unfamiliar with competitive debating
- Highlight areas of consensus and dissent among the judges
- Refrain from singling out individual speakers
- Keep it short – do not spend longer than 5-7 minutes giving your decision
- Address the key issues and explain why these were the key issues
- Tell the team how did you weigh their contributions to the key issues and how did that lead to the decision about the winner
- It is up to the judges to decide whether they want to announce the winner at the beginning or the end of the speech.
- You should announce if the decision was a split

Feedback

There are 3 types of feedback. Judges should use all of them:

- General (what both teams did good or bad, common mistakes and advises for improvement, overall quality of the debate)
- Team (team strategy & case)
- Individual (individual speakers)

You are in the position of a coach when you are giving feedback: use all knowledge you have, give advice for improvements, remind them of other possible arguments...

Be constructive & encouraging: the point of feedback is education & motivation. Use the “sandwich criticism” between compliments. For each critique suggest possible improvement.

Be structured: prepare 3-5 points you want to address. Use concrete examples from the debate. Avoid empty phrases (“bad structure”, “more analysis” etc.)

Target & Prioritise your feedback: Know your audience - a beginner who is still working on structuring speeches and signposting needs a clear tip on how to structure speeches, not your detailed explanation of a possible complex economic argument.

Be tactful and **diplomatic** but honest. Bear in mind that emotions of the debaters may be running high.

Avoid entering arguments with coaches or debaters. Stay confident. Report such incidents to the CA team.