**The goal of this document is to share commonly accepted international norms in World Schools Debate and utilize these norms as the foundation for the event in the United States**. **It has been updated for Online Events.**

**For Online Events the following changes should be made:**

**1. Online presence:** If possible, each of the three debaters in the round and the judge should use separate devices and should be seen on-screen for the entirety of the round. Non-participating team members may observe, but their cameras should be off during the round. It is not required that non-participating team members attend the round.

**2. Communication During Round:** Participating team members may communicate with teammates digitally or by speaking quietly if they are in-person. Non-participating team members may NOT participate in any way, digitally or otherwise, and risk disqualification should it be determined that they were involved during the round. Participants may NOT receive any outside assistance during the round.

**3. Online POIs:** Prior to each constructive speech, the speaker should indicate how they want POIs delivered by the other team. The speaker might prefer visual (like the raised hand icon, a card held up to the camera, or a physical hand waved in front of the camera). On the other hand, the speaker might prefer a verbal POI (the other team unmutes their mic and says "Point," "Point of Information,” etc.) Debaters should do their best to respect the wishes of the speaker. Judges should not consider one method as preferable to the other.

**4. Elimination Rounds**: In elimination rounds, all competitors will meet in the General Announcements room for roll call before the round begins. Sides will be assigned by Tabroom for quadruple octas and triple octas. The triple octas sides will be released on Tuesday night so students can prepare for their side Wednesday morning. Every round after triples will be determined by coin flip in the general announcements room. Finalists will perform their coin flip after the semifinal round.

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**Norms for in-person events and online events:**

**1. The WS judging rubric:** allocates 40% for content (“the matter”), 40% for style (“how the matter is presented”) and

20% for strategy (“how the matter is utilized”). The team with the higher total points wins the rounds. There are no tied team points, nor low point wins based on team points. Judges should use a holistic, comparative focus in determining the winning team.

**2. Allocation of speaker points:** the norm is for constructive speeches to receive between 65 and 75 points with 70 points being the average you expect at the tournament. Generally, points will fall in the 66-74 range. Reply speeches should receive between 33 and 37 points.

**3. Roles and burdens of teams: t**he 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 just a reasonable doubt on the Proposition case. Even when the motion is expressed as an absolute, the Opposition must show it is false in (at least) a significant minority of cases. In other words: both teams have an equal burden of proof in WS style debating.

**4. Communication style:** Speeches are persuasive in nature and delivered at conversational speed. There should be no "spreading" in this format. Students are encouraged to use notecards or bullet points for delivery rather than reading directly from text. Eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures are all part of persuasive delivery. If you think of Oratory or Extemp speed and style, you will have a sense of what you are looking for in a WS speech. This does NOT mean that signposting arguments or noting where the speaker is attacking opponent arguments is precluded; it DOES mean that the average person in the back of the room should be able to keep up with what is being advocated and argued. World Schools is very flexible in allowing competitors to be who they are in round (whether that means being sassy, having strong rhetoric, or using humor) if the discourse is courteous.

**5. Communication on the bench:** Students are allowed and even expected to communicate with each other during other speeches as there is no allotted prep time. This is not seen as disrespectful unless the communication becomes distracting. If in-person, speakers on the bench may move to sit together while the other member of their team goes to the center of the room to speak.

**6. Argument construction and use of evidence:** There should be a focus on proving the motion and clashing “big ideas.” Arguments in the WS format are derived from logic, rather than through a focus on carded evidence (as in other Ameri- can formats). Students are not expected to cite their evidence (name, publication, date, etc.), and should not be penalized in any way for not doing so. In general, arguments are supported by warrants (analysis and logic) and examples (used from across the globe). Students are expected to be able to provide examples from outside the United States to support their arguments unless the motion is country-specific. There are no “cards” that are read. Evidence cannot be “called for” or looked at during or after the round. Supporting material is integrated into the speeches, similar to Extemp or Oratory, but without the need for specific source notes. As in all forms of debate, the example should not BE the point, rather, it is an illustration OF the point. In other words, in judging the quality of an argument, the question of whether the logic makes sense comes before the evaluation of supporting material. New content (substantive arguments) should be presented prior to the third speeches, either as a split (in the first and second speeches), or just in the first speech. New arguments should NOT be presented in third speeches, although new warrants and examples for existing claims may be presented.). Replies should not have any new content (unless the Prop Reply is replying to new material in the Opp 3) as they should be crystallizing the debate. Debates aren’t won solely based on what’s on the “flow”—often in American debates people think if an argument is conceded it is automatically true, but a lot of judges in the WS format won’t vote on arguments they think are poorly explained/justified or wildly implausible even if the other team doesn’t explicitly respond to them.

**7. Refutation:** WS Debate is not intended to be delivered line-by-line. This means that refuting every single example/link is not necessary: it is more about the bigger picture. Arguments and lines of analysis may be discarded in the round with- out impacting the decision if the principles behind the arguments and the core points are extended.

**8. Models:** While there are not plans in WS debate, Side Proposition can offer a model (an illustration) of what the Prop world would look like. It does not have to be specific advocacy and is not needed for every motion. Side Opposition could offer a counter-model if a model was presented but these are not common and are unnecessary in most cases.

**9. Definitions & Definitional challenges:**

WHAT IS A GOOD DEFINITION:

1) Definitions should be 1) reasonable, 2) obvious (understandable, expected and accepted by an average voter / intelli-

gent person), 3) fair (allow “normal” / quality debate)

2) Time and Place setting are not allowed - definitions and Interpretations should be as general or as specific as the mo- tion.

3) “Squirreling” is not allowed and is considered strategically bad.

WHAT CAN OPPOSITION DO IF THEY DISAGREE WITH THE DEFINITION

1) accept it

2) broaden it

3) challenge it

4) run "even if" case

DEFINITIONAL CHALLENGES must be

1) Explicit (done by the 1st Speaker of Opposition)

2) Explained (arguments for the re-interpretation are offered)

3) Relevant (debater should explain how the judge must see the debate under the new terms)

JUDGING DEFINITIONAL CHALLENGES:

1) The judge needs to holistically compare both definitions and decide how the debate should be understood

2) There are no automatic losses regardless of who wins the definitional challenge

**10. POIs:** The norm for Points of Information is that a speaker will take two. Taking less is seen as not engaging with the other team. Taking more can be viewed as strategically weak as it cedes too much time to the other team. POIs may be questions OR statements and should be limited to 15 seconds in length. They should NOT be offered in two parts nor are follow up questions (as might appear in direct questioning in Congress) generally accepted. Other team members should avoid interrupting the speaker with more POIs while that individual is attempting to answer. POIs may be offered at approximately 20 second intervals. Interrupting more frequently is viewed as "barracking" (harassing) the speaker. POIs only occur in the first three speeches on each side; there are no POIs in the reply speeches. Additionally, the first and last minute of each eight minute speech is considered protected time where POIs cannot be asked.

**11. The judge as chair:** The judge serves as the Chair of the round and therefore should call the various speakers to the center of the room to deliver the speech. The Proposition team can also be called the Government/Side Proposition while the Opposition team is opposed to the Government and is also called Side Opposition. Conventionally, the speakers/audience members use tapping the table to indicate support. The judge taps the table once at the 1 minute mark, once at the seven-minute mark to indicate protected time has concluded, and twice at the 8 minute mark. The judge should tap the table repeatedly at the 8:15 minute mark to indicate that the speaker should stop. There is no prep time and there is no “off-time road map.” After the round is over, the judge will submit their ballot, announce the winner, and share brief comments. Remembering that there is a different motion every round, comments should indicate why one side was preferred over the other while still offering suggestions that will help the debaters improve in later rounds.