

DEBATE GUIDE: RESOURCE 16

Debate Judging Instructions

Tips for Teachers: When preparing outside judges, make sure you spend time guiding them on what to look for and what to avoid. These instructions can be adapted depending on the event, but are designed to give you an idea on what to prepare.

Overview of Judging:

First of all, thank you for judging! Your service is incredibly important to helping students learn this important skill. If you have never judged before, do not worry – your opinion and advice is incredibly useful to the students and as long as you can justify your decisions, there is no “correct” or “right” choice. We hope this guidance sheet will help you feel more confident about your decisions.

Golden Rules for Judging:

- Do not include your own knowledge, opinions, or biases in your decision. The best thing you can do as a judge is be open-minded.
- Rely only on the arguments presented in the debate. If the students didn't say it, you cannot use it in your decision.
- The winning team is the one who persuades you that their arguments are the ones that matter most in the round. You should be able to identify which argument(s) were the ones that made the difference.
- Make sure to account for what they say and how they respond in addition to presentation skills like gestures, eye contact, volume, etc. Persuasion will result from a combination of their speech content and their speech delivery.
- Remember that the students are assigned their side and their task is to find a perspective that they can support. If they are less familiar with that side or the topic, they may feel nervous, so look encouraging!

Steps for the Round:

- Step 1:** Ask the competitors who is pro and who is con, and write down the code number of each team on the ballot.
- Step 2:** Start the round and set your timer for the appropriate time (first speech is 3 minutes). When there is one minute left, hold up a “1”, and when there are 10 seconds left, hold up your hands and count down from 10.
- Step 3:** Take notes on the most compelling arguments on each side.
- Step 4:** When the round is finished, circle the appropriate points on the ballots and write down the winner. **DO NOT TELL THE STUDENTS YOUR DECISION!**
- Step 5:** Turn in your ballot to the tournament leads (you can keep your notes).

Judge Ballot

ROUND (circle one) 1 2 3

Government Team Code (Pro):

Opposition Team Code (Con):

Point Scale (take both team members into account):

Emerging (12-13 pts): getting started, good effort

Developing (14-15 pts): some shining moments, but inconsistent

Meets (16-18 pts): solid skill base throughout the debate

Exceeds (19-20 pts): memorable and impressive performance

Criteria	Element	Pro Team Pts	Con Team Pts
CONTENT	Clarity (out of 20)		
	Reasoning (out of 20)		
	Use of Facts/Examples (out of 20)		
	Quality Questions Bonus (out of 5)		
DELIVERY	Voice (volume, modulation, diction, tone) (out of 20)		
	Physicality (gestures, eye contact, facials) (out of 20)		
TOTAL SCORE			
WINNER (check one)			
COMMENTS:			

Judge Signature _____

