

Competition Events – At A Glance

An Introduction to World Schools Debate



Event Description

World Schools Debate is a unique and dynamic form of debate, unlike any other practiced in the United States. World Schools Debate features a dynamic format combining the concepts of “prepared” topics with “impromptu” topics, encouraging debaters to focus on specified issues rather than debate theory or procedural arguments. This highly interactive style of debate allows debaters to engage each other, even during speeches. This challenging format requires good teamwork and in-depth quality argumentation.

Traits of Successful World Schools Debaters

When considering what event you should choose, or which direction to point a student when selecting an event, below are some general traits of successful World Schools Debate students to keep in mind:

- Knowledgeable about current events
- Engaging speaker
- Team player
- Analytical
- Creative
- Astute thinker

Considerations for Doing World Schools Debate

Students will need a strong background in both domestic and international affairs to succeed in the World Schools format. While it seems that debate-oriented students would find the most success, the extemporaneous format and focus on persuasiveness and delivery opens up the possibility of success to a wide variety of students. Demonstrated proficiency in research, a desire to learn and discuss global topics, and a drive to hone delivery skills are all vital components of an effective World Schools debater.

Sample Resolutions

- *This House would abolish patents on life-saving medicines.*
- *This House believes that strict limits should be placed on campaign contributions.*
- *This House would support expansion of space travel.*
- *This House prefers direct democracy to representative republics.*
- *This House regrets President Obama’s executive actions on immigration.*
- *This House would institute mandatory military or civil service for all citizens.*
- *This House believes in the right to be forgotten online.*
- *This house would negotiate with terrorists.*
- *This house would apologize for colonialism.*
- *This house would lower the voting age to 16.*

Format

SPEECH	TIME LIMIT
Proposition Team Speaker 1	8 minutes
Opposition Team Speaker 1	8 minutes
Proposition Team Speaker 2	8 minutes
Opposition Team Speaker 2	8 minutes
Proposition Team Speaker 3	8 minutes
Opposition Team Speaker 3	8 minutes
Opposition Rebuttal	4 minutes
Proposition Rebuttal	4 minutes

Note: The rebuttal can be given by either speaker 1 or 2 of a team.

Learn More! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a National Speech & Debate Association member by using our resources to help you advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information. 

Find Your Voice

Speech and debate has taught me more life skills than any other class. The ability to communicate and influence people is by far the most effective tool anybody can ever use in their life."

— **Victor Monson, Association Alum**

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Basic Understandings

World Schools Debate is a three-on-three format. While a given team may consist of five members, only three students from a team participate in a given debate. Resolutions come in two types: prepared motions and impromptu motions. Teams will be assigned one of two sides in each round- either the government team proposing the motion or the opposition team advocating the rejection of the motion. Debaters present their position on a topic, refute their opponents, and respond to questions throughout the course of the debate.



Research

For the prepared debates, students should conduct research and bring it with them to the round. Just like any other debate, students should think about the quality of the evidence they find in books, peer-reviewed journals, newspaper articles, think tanks, and other resources. Some common questions we ask about the quality of research focus on recency, verifiability, authoritativeness, and credibility. Is the information being utilized as timely as possible? Can it be verified by other people or outside sources? Is the researcher being used an expert on the subject? Does the source have a good track record for getting the information right and drawing unbiased conclusions?

Impromptu motions are more difficult to research for because, well, there is limited time to prepare for the round. In impromptu rounds, students must rely only on their own knowledge base as they cannot have prepared research files with them during their preparation time. Debaters are limited to a dictionary and an almanac for preparation of impromptu motions. To this end, it helps to keep up with world events by reading periodicals such as *The Economist* on a regular basis. Further, since

impromptu motions can be philosophical in nature, debaters should also study and become familiar with common philosophical texts.

Structural Components

Each debate is comprised of 8 speeches. Each member of each team delivers one speech, with the exception of the first or second speaker for both teams who also deliver the reply speeches at the end of the debate. Speeches alternate between sides, with the exception of the Opposition block at the end of the debate, where two Opposition speakers will speak back-to-back.

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Proposition Team Speaker 1	8 minutes
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Unlike traditional American styles of debate, there is no preparation time. Additionally, there is no designated questioning or cross-examination speeches.

Instead, a speaker may be interrupted by a member of the other team during their speech when a point of information is raised. A point of information (or POI) is a question or argument raised by the competing team, and a debater may pose one by standing or raising their hand. It is up to the speaker whether or not to acknowledge the POI at that very moment, ask the questioner to wait until later (typically at the end of a contention or main point), or to reject the POI outright. While debaters may be penalized for rejecting or postponing too many POIs by judges, it is up to the speaker to manage their time and decide when (or if) POIs will be taken.

The first and last minute of each speech are considered protected time, where POIs may not be raised. In addition, the entirety of the rebuttal, commonly referred to as the reply speech, is also protected time.



Organizing

Casing: The first speaker on each team will generally present the constructive speech on behalf of their team. The components of the case are not too dissimilar to more traditional debate cases. First, the debater should clarify the terms of the debate using definitions. Next, the debater may choose to frame the debate by discussing a framework, or a general philosophical approach, that may guide the debate and establish the burdens for each team. Next, the debater should offer a series of contentions, or arguments, that directly link back to their position or thesis. Contentions should have clearly presented claims, adequate backing, and discernable impacts that can be weighed later on in the round. Unlike American styles of debate, not all contentions need to be presented in the first speech. Debaters may choose to offer new contentions in the second speech, known as the split.

Refutations: Once constructive arguments have been presented, debaters engage in refuting each other's arguments. Students may refute cases by denying the validity of the argument, which is most common.

Additional strategies include, but are not limited to, claiming the reverse of the argument, showing the opponent's positions do not carry as much weight as their own team's arguments, or taking out the link of the opponent's argument.

Summarizing: The final speech for each team, known as the reply, is an opportunity to summarize and crystalize the major issues presented in the debate. This is not the time for new argumentation. It is an opportunity to weigh arguments, focus on the positions that the team is winning, and summarize the central issues for the judges.

Flowing: It is important for debaters to learn how to keep track of arguments in the round. Typically debaters "flow" the debate round - making note of the arguments that are presented and refuted in the round. This note-taking approach requires students to abbreviate terms, phrases, and ideas so that they can get as much of the debate written down as possible. Here are some tips:

- Two sheets of paper. One page will be for anything said about the proposition, the other for anything said about the opposition. Each speech in the round will receive its own column on these pages.
- At least one pen, but we recommend two, in different colors, one for each side.
- If your opponent is speaking, you should be writing (initially, do not try and determine what is or isn't important - just get as much down as possible)
- Label the top of each column on the proposition flow with the names of the speeches, in chronological order from left to right.
- Label the top of each column on the opposition flow with the names of the speeches, in chronological order from left to right.

Standing it Up/Practicing

Each National Speech & Debate Association District may assemble a Worlds team for Nationals. Selection criteria for students may be determined by the District; however, all students must be members of the National Speech & Debate Association. Prior to the National Tournament, the District team should communicate with each other

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regarding preparation and research. Depending on the size of the District, some teams may find using online video conferencing tools like Skype or Google Hangouts to be invaluable. It would be worthwhile to organize practice debates against teams from other districts or impromptu debates with qualifiers from your home district.

Start with a dialogue so that everyone knows the strongest content areas and presentation styles of their teammates. Who knows a lot about history? Politics? How about economics? What are your debate styles like? Casual and laid back? Intense? Line-by-line analysis?

Run a few resolutions by the group and have a discussion. What positions and arguments would you support? How would you engage opposing viewpoints? What examples might support your analysis? There is no substitute for having a great conversation with your team members.

Run one complete round (may include abbreviated speech times) so that everyone gets a feel for the format. Ask questions of each other. Additional rounds might include stop and go where a coach or observer stops you when there's a missed opportunity for a strong argument or confusion about what you are saying. During these rounds, you may re-give speeches until you or the observer/coach are satisfied with the speech that is delivered. This is a great time to work on language choices and time management. Additionally, since the tournament only guarantees thirty minutes of prep time, students should practice under those conditions. A student should work on vocal emphasis, eye contact, and fluidity during all practice rounds.

Performance Tips

It is important to remember that you are communicating to your judges. The decision rests solely in the hands of the judges! You must focus on persuading them, which means that you should be directing your speeches and cross-examination questions and answers to the judges, and not to your opponent. World Schools Debates are typically evaluated for both content and style, so bear both in mind as you present!



Confidence is vitally important for speakers in Worlds Debate. The more practice you have with the format, and with your teammates, the stronger your performances. Spend time reading the news and keeping up with current events so that you can be prepared to speak about many different topics. If you encounter a topic that you don't know very much about, make sure that you read up on it after the round so that you are prepared for next time.

Take feedback from judges as opportunities to improve. If judges provide oral feedback, take notes on what they share to review with your coach. Finally, do not fixate on the outcome of a round - focusing on wins and losses won't lead to greater success!

Resources

Many resources can be found on your dashboard at www.speechanddebate.org. As a debate event, many of the resources for LD, PF, Policy, or Congress would be a great starting point. Textbooks for the various events go through argumentation practices that would be effective in World Schools Debate. In addition, iDebate.org has produced a wonderful book called *Debating in the World Schools Style: A Guide* by Simon Quinn. Take advantage of the myriad resources available through the Association.