

Parliamentary Debate Judging Instructions



Thank you **for judging!** We're so glad that you're making this commitment to the students' education. Prepare for an entertaining, informative, and uplifting experience as you watch students with a broad range of experience practice their communication skills.

WHY AM I NEEDED?

Each school is obligated to provide a certain number of judges for the tournament based upon the total number of entries from that school. Every school's judges are placed within a "judging pool." You will be asked to judge competitors from *other* schools, although occasionally, you might be sent to a room that contains a competitor from your school.

WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING?

In order to judge, you need just a few basic supplies:

- Two or three pens or pencils (just in case one breaks!) for filling out your *Ballots* and writing comments.
- A timepiece for timing the debates--either a digital watch with a stopwatch function OR any other timepiece or timer that you can easily track.
- A book, newspaper, project, or any other material of your choice to fill any waiting time between rounds

WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN I GET TO THE TOURNAMENT?

1. At the entrance to the tournament school, look for a sign to direct you toward **The Judges' Room**.
2. Register at the Judges' Registration Table. You will be asked:
 - Your name, ☺
 - The school for which you are judging
3. Please wait in the Judges' Room until you are called to judge a particular event.
 - Due to the number of contestants and judges that we must accommodate, we are unable to assign judges to their preferred events.
 - If you leave the Judges' Room and are not present when called, your school may face consequences, such as speakers not advancing in the tournament.
4. When you are called, **take the *Ballot* with you to your assigned room**. If more than one judge is assigned to your room, you should walk together to your room and return together.

Please be on time! Competitors from your school may not be able to compete if you are late or absent.

WHAT IF I'VE NEVER JUDGED BEFORE?

Don't worry! We want the students to learn to communicate with all sorts of audiences. Review this packet,, observe the debate, pick which team you think debated better, and...ta da!...you're a judge!

You will have the opportunity to give each competitor feedback on the ballot, which they will receive after the awards ceremony. As we all know, students are most receptive to feedback when suggestions for improvement are balanced with praise, and we hope your recommendations will encourage them to continue their hard work. You will never have to orally explain or justify your rankings or comments to the students.

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HOW DO TOURNAMENTS WORK?

At SDIVSL Tournaments, all debaters compete in a set number of rounds and awards are based on record. However, at the State Qualifier Tournament and many invitational tournaments, debaters are eliminated as the tournament progresses.

Preliminary Rounds: Debate teams are randomly assigned to the first few rounds, and at a specified time they will be instructed to go to a classroom to compete. One judge will be sent to the room to judge the round. The judge will listen to the debate and decide who they think did the better job debating.

Out Rounds/Elimination Rounds: After the preliminary rounds, wins/losses are tabulated to determine the top teams. Those with the best win/loss records will advance to “out rounds”, and the others are eliminated from the competition. This continues until there are only two teams left to compete for the win.

WHAT IS PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE (PARLI)?

Parliamentary debate is an extemporaneous form of competitive debate that stresses rigorous argumentation, logical analysis, quick thinking, breadth of knowledge, and rhetorical ability over preparation of evidence. The format pits two two-person teams against each other in a contest of argument, wit and rhetoric that roughly simulates debate in a House of Parliament. The Affirmative (Aff) or team prepares and presents a case for debate based on a topic or resolution announced only 20 minutes before the beginning of the round. The Negative (Neg) team attempts to rebut the Aff's proposal through counter-argument and refutation. The use of recorded evidence during the debate round is prohibited. A different resolution is debated in every parliamentary debate round.

IN GENERAL, HOW SHOULD I JUDGE PARLI?

- 1. Tell the students to wait while you take a few moments to get ready to judge.** As soon as the following items are done, you are ready:
 - Allow the competitors who are assigned to your room to enter and find seats.
 - Find a seat that gives you a clear view of the front of the room where the competitors will speak. Some judges like to sit near the front; others like to sit toward the back.
 - Double-check that you are not *closely* or *personally* acquainted with any of the debaters in the room. (*If so, please return to the Judges' Room for reassignment.*)
 - Check that all assigned judges have arrived.
 - Test your timepiece.
 - Place your pen/pencil and scratch paper on your desk along with the *Ballot*.
- 2. Take “attendance”.** Check to make sure the teams in the room are the ones you are supposed to judge. If you are in error—alert the students and get the right kids into your room or go to the right room.
- 3. Fill out the top portion of the ballot.** At the beginning of the round, write the code, team school and initials, your name, round number and the names of the students on the ballot. Again, make sure you have the right debaters.

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4. **Tell the debaters what type of debate you prefer.** Consider discussing what arguments you like most or any other preferences you have that the debaters can adapt to. **IF YOU HAVEN'T SEEN A DEBATE BEFORE--TELL THEM.** Do not take more than 5 minutes to explain judging philosophy, answer questions, or engage the participants prior to the debate

5. **Make sure debate rounds start on time.** Don't let debaters stall. The first speaker **MUST** be ready to start by the time stated on your ballot; if that doesn't happen—give the absent debater/team the **LOSS**. Any exceptions to this **MUST** have an incredibly good excuse.

6. **There are two types of formal speeches in each round of parli debate:** constructive speeches and rebuttal speeches. The order, formal titles of the speakers, and time limits for each speech are as follows:
 - First Proposition (Aff speaker 1) 7 minutes
 - First Opposition (Neg speaker 1) 7 minutes
 - Second Proposition (Aff speaker 2) 7 minutes
 - Second Opposition (Neg speaker 2) 7 minutes
 - Opposition Rebuttal (Aff speaker 1) 5 minutes
 - Proposition Rebuttal (Neg speaker 1) 5 minutesThe first speaker for each side speaks twice (a constructive speech and a rebuttal speech). The second speaker for each side delivers a single constructive speech.

7. **Give time signals to the debaters.** The judge should signal time by hand for the final 5 minutes of each speech. The judge should raise a hand, signaling the remaining time to the debater at the 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 minute marks of the speech. The judge should raise the appropriate number of fingers and hold his/her raised hand for a few seconds to catch the attention of the speaker. Once seen by the debater, the judge may lower her/his hand. The judge should signal one-half minute remaining at the 30-second mark (a single finger, bent in half will do) and should raise a clenched fist as time elapses.

In addition to these time signals, the judge must announce the time for points of information in the debate. Debaters may advance points of information. Points are questions or statements offered by one or more speakers on a team to their opponent holding the floor. Points may be made after the first minute and before the last minute of each speech. The first and last minute of each speech, therefore, is 'protected time' and may not be interrupted by the opponent. The judge should 'knock' with the knuckles of a hand or slap a desk of table top one time to indicate that one minute has elapsed (this happens at the 6 minute mark of each speech, i.e., with 6 minutes remaining in the speech.) This lets the debaters know that points of information may commence. Judges should 'knock' with 1-minute remaining in each speech to indicate that no more points may be attempted.

If a qualified person is listening to the debate and will volunteer to keep time, the judge may designate a timekeeper for the debate.

8. **Take notes of the arguments the debaters present.** Some judges will "flow" a debate. A debate flow chart, also known as a flow sheet or, simply, flow, is simply a way to organize notes for multiple speakers. Key information from each speech is recorded in a column. Information is listed such that an initial argument and any subsequent development of the argument are recorded next to each other in adjoining columns. Notes detaining the argument are said to 'flow' from the left to the right side of the page, allowing a judge to identify the progress of any individual argument in the debate. For example (see next page):

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<p>1st Prop Speaker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing a problem: homelessness and poor quality • Need new public housing • Federal investment of \$1B would create 100,000 homes 	<p>1st Opp Speaker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree, but you have the wrong solution • Public housing the problem; need privatization • Keeping the government out of housing would create more housing 	<p>2nd Prop Speaker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must act immediately; private markets work too slowly • Need a short-term solution 	<p>2nd Opp Speaker/Opp Rebuttal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax advantages for private housing would develop it quickly • Quality and number of private projects better than federal housing 	<p>Prop Rebuttal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy will not support new housing in areas needing it • No guarantee of private housing and the need is too great to wait for it
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9. **Make a decision – record the winner on the ballot.** DO NOT PROVIDE ANY ORAL CRITIQUES. DO NOT DISCLOSE TO THE DEBATERS WHO WON. After the final rebuttal speech in the debate, the judge should carefully deliberate on the issues of the debate. The judge should avoid imposing personal opinions regarding the topic and should make a decision indicating which side did the better job of debating. In other words, did the proposition/affirmative team prove its case for the topic or did the opposition/negative team effectively undermine the proposition/affirmative team's case? The judge should be able to satisfactorily explain the reason that a team has won a debate before completing the debate ballot.

The judge should circle the winning team on the ballot. In addition, the judge should assign speaker points for each individual debater. Speaker points represent individual achievement in the debate. For example, how effectively did each of the individual speakers present her/his ideas? Was the speech well organized? Were arguments logical and consistent? Did the arguments make a convincing case? Was the speech delivered in a persuasive manner?

Although speaker points are on a 30-point scale (the score of 30 represents a perfect score), the range of points, in practical terms, is generally 30-22 points. Here is a model scale:

- 30 points Magnificent speech; the judge will not be likely to ever hear this sort of speech again
- 29 points Outstanding speech; a rare presentation akin to the finest public speeches in politics
- 28 points An extraordinary achievement in interscholastic debate; an impressive performance
- 27 points Consistently strong performance; superior delivery and content
- 26 points Well above average; only subtly flawed performance
- 25 points A solid speech but, perhaps, an uninspiring or unspectacular one
- 24 points An average speech; flawed in at least one major way
- 23 points Below average presentation with several major flaws but some well made points\
- 22 An inexperienced speaker; the speech is flawed in several major ways
- 21 and lower Any points below this ranking ought to be reserved for exceptional circumstances, for example, thoroughly obnoxious, offensive or unethical conduct by a debater

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10. **Include the reason for decision on your ballot.** Explain in, at least, a paragraph, which issues convinced you to vote the way that you did. If you need more room, ask the ballot table for an additional ballot
11. **Return your ballot to the judges room IMMEDIATELY.** Then, please wait in the Judge's Room for your next judging assignment. If you leave the Judges' Room and are not present when called, your school may face consequences.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I've been waiting for a long time and I still have not been called to judge. Why?

Gee, only 25 minutes? Tournament administrators do the best they can to avoid long waits for judges, but it takes time to tabulate results, assign match-ups and prepare ballots, especially at large tournament. They also need to be sure that judges are not assigned to rounds containing their own school's participants. Complications sometimes arise. Students and judges are sometimes late to rounds, and judges sometimes forget to return in their *Ballots*.

Make sure that you report to the Judges' Room when you complete a round. Feel free to do personal work or read while you wait and enjoy the refreshments and company of other parents. Chances are you will see them again at the next tournament!

Give me some idea of what I am I supposed to write on the Comment Sheets?

Thanks for asking this question! Students can't wait to read judges' comments. What you say to them will have an impact on how they refine their piece for the next tournament. Be specific, be constructive, and give pluses and minuses. Remember, speaking in public is a lot harder than these kids make it look!

What do I do if I know one of the contestants in the room to which I'm assigned?

You should come back to the Judges' Room to report the situation and be reassigned.

What if a topic, message, or language personally offends me?

For the most part, do your best to remain unbiased and don't let your personal opinions affect your evaluation of a student's debate. Judge their arguments, clash and speaking ability. Let the student know via your written comments on the *ballot*. If the speech is extremely offensive, you may wish to make a note of the student's code, come to the judge's desk after the round, and ask to speak to the student's coach.

How about lunch?

Judges are usually, at a minimum, provided with meals – generally breakfast, lunch and dinner, with snacks in between. Please note this food is provided for the judges only; please do not share the food with the students.

This is fun! When can I do it again?

If you enjoy your judging experience, we'll be happy to have you return to judge! We have tournaments throughout the year and we're always in need of judges! Know a friend or a neighbor who you think would like to do this? Please let the coach at your school know. And, again, thank you! We could not have a tournament if it weren't for people like you!