National Speech & Debate Association

NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE

Competition Events Guide

UPDATED 11/13/2017

High School Competition Events Guide

Updated 11/13/2017

The purpose of the Competition Events Guide is to assist members in learning about the events the Association offers. It provides insights into how to get started in each event. The guide is not a rules document, but, instead, a tool for understanding the fundamentals of events. There is no document that could adequately explain the ins and outs of every event. Getting to tournaments is the best way to learn about the intricacies of an event. Therefore, this guide is intended to help members get a performance up on its feet and to its first set of tournaments.

This guide is not an authoritative source on how speech and debate events should be done. Rather, the materials offered are suggestions for how to get started. The ideas presented are offered by past competitors and coaches to orient members to each event. While the suggestions offered are well thought out and tested, there are innumerable ways people may begin a speech, case, or interpretation.

The most important advice we can offer is simple. Do your best! This means that you should do your best to practice, get to a tournament, and reflect upon your experiences. Speech and debate is a journey. Enjoy the process!

Competition Events Guide

NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION
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Event Description

Using a play, short story, or other published work, students perform a selection of one or more portions of a piece up to ten minutes in length. With a spotlight on character development and depth, Dramatic Interpretation focuses on a student's ability to convey emotion through the use of a dramatic text. Competitors may portray one or multiple characters. No props or costumes may be used. Performances may also include an introduction written by the student to contextualize the performance and state the title and author.

Considerations for Selecting DI Literature

Students who do Dramatic Interpretation may perform selections on topics of serious social subject matter such as coping with terminal illness; significant historical situations, events, and figures; as well as racial and gender discrimination, suppression, and oppression. Students should select pieces that are appropriate for them. Considerations for selecting a DI topic should include the student's age, maturity, and school standards.

Traits of Successful DI Performers

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

- Insightful character analysis
- Mature demeanor
- Controlled performance
- Depth/breadth of emotion
- Makes motivated choices
- Expressive

Learn More!

The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Dramatic Interpretation, we provide a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in Interp; access to DI final round videos; an interpretation textbook for Resource Package subscribers; videos from champion coaches; and much more more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information.

Find Your Voice

> *DI helped me develop a better understanding of the world in which I live. To be able to create a narrative that portrays a person you have never known or a situation you've never been in so others can learn from it is worth everything."*
>
> **— Jamaque Newberry, Association Alum**

Dramatic Interpretation

Basic Understandings

Dramatic Interpretation, contrary to its name, is not all about drama. While dramatic elements are key aspects of the event, melodramatic, or overly-sad selections are not ideal choices for performance. DI lacks props, costuming, sets, and other luxuries seen in various forms of performance art. There is a set time limit of ten minutes, with a thirty second grace period. Students who choose to compete in Dramatic Interpretation should focus on suspending the disbelief of the audience by portraying a realistic, emotional journey of a character(s). The performance should connect to the audience.

Research

When looking for a Dramatic Interpretation, it's important to know your limitations, and your strengths. Technical skills, vocal flexibility, physicality, and gender can be factors in your choice. Additionally, it's important to think of the performance itself when searching for a script. Does the literature lend itself to performance, or is the language too flowery? Is the plot complicated or is it a simple story told in a simple way? Think about what you are capable of, and how you would like to be challenged throughout the season when making a selection. Remember to consult your state's rules in regards what is acceptable literature.

Ask yourself, what kind of character am I comfortable playing? What kind of story am I comfortable telling? What story do I want to tell? Narrow your search from there. Remember to keep an open mind. Sometimes, you can create an ideal of the piece you'd like to perform, and reject other suggestions that come along the way. Sometimes it's better to try something different that will stretch you as a performer.

When searching for a script, it's important that the language sounds natural when read aloud. For instance, Shakespeare and Hemingway may be be less effective choices for DI because the language is archaic and less conversational. Find a script that when read aloud, feels natural, or comfortable to speak and hear.

Tense is also an important factor of selecting a dramatic interpretation. Because the majority of DI's take place within one scene, or have an anchor reality, the tense should reflect the reality the character is telling the story from. An anchor reality is the imagined-space from which the character is speaking. For instance, a house-wife's anchor reality may be her kitchen. Throughout the story, she may move to other realities that exist in a different space and time, but she will return to tell her story from her anchor reality. Also, consider how the tense will influence blocking, or movement in the performance space, before deciding on a selection.

Go to your local library, visit the biographies section of a bookstore, or visit Play Scripts, Dramatists, or Samuel French online. These are just a few of the places you may find material for your performance.

Structural Components

Structure of an Interp (taken from *Interpretation of Literature, Bringing Words to Life*).

TEASER • 0:00 – 1:30
Previews the topic and mood of the selection

INTRO • 1:30 – 3:00
Explains the purpose of the performance

EXPOSITION • 3:00 – 3:30
Introduces characters and setting

INCITING INCIDENT • 3:30 – 4:00
Sends the conflict into motion

RISING ACTION • 4:00 – 7:30
Complicates the conflict

CLIMAX • 7:30 – 8:30
Emotional peak of the performance

FALLING ACTION • 8:30 – 9:30
Resolves the conflict

Dramatic Interpretation

There are a few key structural components of every DI:

Cutting. Your cutting is the 10 minute portion of your selection you chose to perform. This is how you've arranged the literature, and what aspects of the story you've decided to tell. It will directly influence the other two aspects of your performance.

Characterization is informed decisions you've made on how the character(s) will think, act, move and sound. The choices you make about your character should be informed by the script itself.

Blocking, or tech, is how the character(s) moves in the space you've created for him/her/them. Sometimes blocking is expressive in nature, symbolizing how that character is feeling emotionally, while at other times, denotes events that are occurring in the imagined space i.e. opening up a soda or sweeping the floor.

Introduction. An introduction explains the purpose of the performance. Typically, after the teaser, a performer will give a brief explanation of the piece's relevance, then give the title and author before returning to the performance.

Organizing

Before memorizing the material, take the time to "beat" out your script. This means reading the script aloud and making notes as you go. As you read aloud, use symbols to indicate shorter pauses "/" or longer pauses "//." Consider the emotionality behind each line. Ask yourself what the motivation for the characters' actions are. Use this to influence blocking choices.

Indicate rough blocking in the margins of your script. Choose gestures that reflect the emotional state of the character, or blocking that enhances or creates the illusion of the imagined space of the character. (i.e. resting a hand on a counter or leaning on the back of a chair.) Think in terms of symbolic gestures and psychological gestures. A symbolic gestures is a gesture that is not commonly used in day to day communication. Example: if you were to show me what "freedom" looked like, you may outstretch your arms like Maria Von Trapp singing "The Hills Are Alive" on the side of a mountain. This isn't a common gesture found in conversation. However, it communicates without words the idea of freedom. Conversely, a psychological gesture is one that is found in conversation. Examples include, scratching your nose, or shaking your head yes or no. For more information on these techniques, check out *Interpretation of Literature: Bringing Words to Life* by Travis Kiger and Ganer Newman.

Read your script aloud. Eliminate any excess language that sounds awkward or is unnecessarily redundant. A DI script should be no more than 1,200 words, which requires continuous cutting of superfluous language.

Standing it Up/Practicing

Often, you'll find that if you've spent the appropriate amount of time reading, cutting, and analyzing a script, memorization will be an easier process. Here are some things to keep in mind, to help simplify the process:

First, our brains are a muscle. The more time you practice memorizing, or simply memorize things, the better you become. Often, performers take more time in the beginning of a season to commit a script to memory than they do at the end of the competitive season. Memorizing is a process.

Next, memorization is physical. Sitting down staring at a script, re-reading the lines in your head will not be beneficial. Memorize the script with the intent to perform it. Type up a clean version with only your finalized text and blocking. Then, tape it to the wall and actively memorize. Read the lines aloud moving with them as indicated by your cutting. Sometimes, it's helpful to do this in front of a mirror, so you can evaluate the effectiveness of your movements. It is helpful to memorize a paragraph at a time, building off of the paragraph that came before. This will significantly decrease the time it takes to memorize your performance.

Once memorized, you and your coach can then build off of the choices you've made for your character. Adjustments to blocking, characterization, and line delivery can be made.

Performance Tips

It may sound cliche, but confidence is key! If you've put the legwork in, you should feel confident in the product you've created. Walk into that round with your head held high, ready to show the world what you've got! Trust what you and your coach created. Do what you practiced, and if you feel compelled to "try something new," review it with your coach beforehand. Consistency is key. It's hard to evaluate what to change in practice if your performance in the round is completely different than what you've been working on.

Pay attention to other performers. Smile, be a warm, inviting audience member. There is nothing worse than getting up to perform and having an audience that either stone faces you or won't look you in the eye. Think of it this way: each round is about 60 minutes. Ten of those involve you performing, the other 50 are for you to listen, learn, and support your competitors.

Keep a notebook for between rounds. Sometimes, another person's performance will inspire you, and it's a good idea to have a notebook handy to write down new ideas. It's also nice to know who you competed against in each round. This way, you have a better understanding of who your competition is. When you review your ballots after the tournament, you can go back through your notebook and compare your ballots to your notes.

Between rounds, figure out what room you will be performing in next. Congratulate your competitors on a good performance after the round ends, and make friends during downtime. Be gracious, and keep criticisms of other performers to yourself, even if someone else tries to start a negative conversation.

Resources

A great source is *Interpretation of Literature—Bringing Words to Life* by Travis Kiger and Ganer Newman. They cover cutting, characterization, blocking, and the structure of a story. Additionally, if this is your first time doing Dramatic Interpretation, go watch a final round of DI! Observe the rounds not only as entertainment, but keep your eyes peeled for effective cutting, characterization, and blocking. Ask yourself, how can I apply similar techniques to my performance? How can I build off of what this performer is doing? The best way to learn DI, outside of actively doing it, is by watching and learning from other performers.

Once you join the Association and register on our website, you can access the textbook, final rounds, and more at www.speechanddebate.org/resources. Use the filter function on the left hand side of the page to find resources specific to Interp and Dramatic Interp.

An Introduction to Duo Interpretation (DUO)

Event Description

Two competitors team up to deliver a ten-minute performance of a published play or story. Using off-stage focus, Duo Interpretation competitors convey emotion and environment through a variety of performance techniques focusing on the relationships and interactions between the characters. No props or costumes are used. Performances may also include an introduction written by the students to contextualize the performance and state the title and author.

Considerations for Selecting Duo Literature

When looking at literature, a Duo entry must consider how the literature would work for both members of the team. Duo Interpretation strives for a balanced performance with both partners being integral to the development of the piece's characters, relationships, plot, and more. Duo Interpretation allows for students to do humorous, dramatic, or pieces that combine both into the performance. Considerations for selecting a topic for a Duo Interpretation should include age, maturity, and school standards.

Traits of Successful Duo Performers

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 Duo students to keep in mind:

- Combination of comedic and dramatic skills
- Enthusiasm for choreography
- Strong listening skills
- Willingness to co-create
- Flexibility

Examples of Past Duo Titles

- *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* by Rachel Sheinkin
- *Complete Works of William Shakespeare Abridged* by Adam Long, Daniel Singer, and Jess Winfield
- *Expecting Isabel* by Lisa Loomer
- *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* by Joe DiPietro and Jimmy Roberts
- *Little Shop of Horrors* by Howard Ashman
- *Peter Pan* by J.M. Barrie
- *Regina Flector Wins the Science Fair* by Marco Ramirez
- *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* by Frank McGuinness
- *The Crayon Map* by Oliver Leslie and Christopher Marianetti
- *Year One* by Harold Ramis, Gene Stupnitsky, and Lee Eisenberg

Learn More!

The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Duo Interpretation, we provide a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in Interp; access to Duo final round videos; an interpretation textbook for Resource Package subscribers; videos from champion coaches; and much more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information.

Find Your Voice

> "Duo Interpretation is an excellent crash course on creativity. The process of cutting, blocking, and refining a script really encourages young artists to think differently and create form and empty space. I think the best part of Duo was the opportunity to meet so many talented, creative people who turn words on a page into phenomenal showcases of artistry, and to have the ability to do it all with my best friend." — **Zach Snow, Association Alum**

Basic Understandings

Duo. The event everyone wants to do with a best friend. In truth, while the appeal of duo might be performing with a friend, this approach may not be best. Duo is about balance. Partners need to compliment one another stylistically, have a similar skill set and work ethic. Chemistry is an important element of duo, but chemistry outside of a practice/performance setting does not always translate to chemistry when practicing or performing at a tournament. Be sure to share your goals with your coach as they help you through the process of getting started in duo.

Duo is an event that can be dramatic, comedic, or a combination of the two. With a ten minute time cap, and a requirement of an off-stage focus, Duo is one of the most unique forms of performance. The main objective is to maintain a sense of balance between performers that focuses on the relationship(s) between the characters they create.

Research

There are two ways to go about finding a script: You can either let the choice of partner influence the material you want to perform, or let the selection determine the ideal partner.

Go to your local library, visit the bookstore, check out children's stories, or search for plays with two or more characters. Look for a simple story told in a simple way.

Complex plots are hard to follow, especially if there are more than two characters in the selection. Remember: you have ten minutes to tell a story. Don't pick anything too abstract or complicated.

Keep in mind that each partner should be assigned to a specific character(s), and that you should not switch between characters throughout the performance.

Know the strengths and weaknesses of the team. If the piece requires a lot of physical tech, or vocal variance, and a partner struggles with this, it might not be the best idea to choose that selection.

Finally, it's always a good idea to watch the latest duo rounds. Duo is an incredibly diverse event. Watch a final round to get a feel for the stylistic differences that are found throughout the event.

Structural Components

Structure of an Interp (taken from *Interpretation of Literature, Bringing Words to Life*).

TEASER • 0:00 – 1:30
Previews the topic and mood of the selection

INTRO • 1:30 – 3:00
Explains the purpose of the performance

EXPOSITION • 3:00 – 3:30
Introduces characters and setting

INCITING INCIDENT • 3:30 – 4:00
Sends the conflict into motion

RISING ACTION • 4:00 – 7:30
Complicates the conflict

CLIMAX • 7:30 – 8:30
Emotional peak of the performance

FALLING ACTION • 8:30 – 9:30
Resolves the conflict

Cutting. This is the parts of the selection you've chosen to perform. Having a solid cutting is incredibly important because it influences every performative choice you make. It should dictate characterization, motivation, blocking, and relational tensions.

Duo Interpretation

Characterization. All interpretation events require that strong character choices are made. Distinct physical, vocal, and emotional choices should be made for each character.

Relationship. This is probably the biggest component of an effective duo. The duo should focus on the relationship between the characters. There should be a constant push and pull as the characters fight for power in the relationship. The approach can be humorous or dramatic in nature, but there should be defined goals for the performance, and each scene within that performance. Discuss the motivation for each character and set objectives for the message to convey in each scene and how the audience should feel.

Blocking. Duo can be the most visually stunning of interpretation events because when you've got double the performers, there is double the potential for creative blocking choices. Blocking is how the characters move within the imagined space you've created for them. Make sure the blocking creates the imagined space the characters exist in (i.e. a spaceship, or an office), and the emotional state of the characters (i.e. standing farther apart to symbolize emotional distance, or turning inward during an intimate conversation).

Intro. An introduction explains the purpose of the performance. Typically, each duo partner takes a turn explaining the justification for the performance. Competitors usually close the intro by giving the title and author before continuing with the performance.

Organizing

When you cut a duo, make sure partners agree on the objective of the story. Establish what the climax should be, and from there, construct the story leading up to it. Make sure that the lines are balanced, and remove redundant lines, or chunks of the story that are not integral to the plot of the cutting. Consider what the visual representation of the piece will look like, taking into account that duo is meant to be performed with an off stage focus. Denote in the cutting changes in pace, where to take beats (pauses), and important blocking moments. Partners need to discuss why the characters are doing what they're doing.

Standing it Up/Practicing

Often, if the appropriate amount of time was spent reading, cutting, and analyzing a script, memorization will be easier. However, it can still be a challenge. Here are things to keep in mind:

First, brains are a muscle. The more time a person practices memorizing, or simply memorize things, the better s/he become. Memorizing is a process.

Next, memorization is physical. Sitting down staring at a script, re-reading the lines will not be beneficial. Memorize the script with the intent to perform it. Type up a clean version with only finalized text and blocking. Then, tape it to the wall to actively memorize. Read the lines aloud moving with them as indicated by the cutting. Partners should be in front of a mirror, so they can evaluate the effectiveness of their movements. This is particularly important in duo because "clean" blocking, or blocking that is defined, motivated, and executed with precision, will factor into the rank in the round. It is helpful to memorize a scene at a time, building off of the previous scene. Partners need to remember that a character is responding to what a character said before. Conceptualize the lines as a conversation to help memorization.

Because Duo is a dialogue heavy, relationship focused performance, it's important for the characters to listen and react to each other. Notice how friends engage with each other when they talk. Facial reactions, gestures, and other nonverbal response are a huge part of

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communication. Make sure that each character is engaged in the performance, even when they aren't speaking. Having well thought out, motivated reactions can bring a Duo to the next level.

Once memorized, the duo students and their coach can then build off of the choices that've been made for characters. Adjustments to blocking, characterization, and line delivery can be made.

Performance Tips

It may sound cliche, but confidence is key! If the legwork has been put in, confidence is a natural product. Competitors should walk into that round with heads held high, ready to show the world what they've got! Trust what has been created. Do what was practiced, and if feeling compelled to "try something new," the coach should be consulted. Consistency is key. It's hard to evaluate what to change in practice if the performance in the round is completely different than what was worked on for the past few weeks.

Pay attention to other performers. Smile, and be a warm, inviting audience member. Partners should not conspire with each other during the round! If there's something they need to tell each other, it can be said after the round in private. There is nothing worse than getting

up to perform and having an audience that either stone faces you, won't look you in the eye, or is clearly more concerned about talking to their partner than paying attention to the performance. Think of it this way: each round is about 60 minutes. Ten of those involve a duo performing, the other 50 are for your duo to listen, learn, and support your fellow competitors.

Keep a notebook for between rounds. Sometimes, another person's performance will be inspirational, and it's a good idea to have a notebook handy to write down new ideas. It's also nice to know who your duo competed against in each round. A duo should review their ballots after the tournament, and then they can go back through their notebook and compare their ballots to their notes.

Between rounds, duo students should figure out what room they will be performing in next. They should congratulate competitors on a good performance after the round ends, and make friends during downtime. They should be gracious, and keep criticisms of other performers to themselves, even if someone else tries to start a negative conversation.

Resources

A great source is *Interpretation of Literature—Bringing Words to Life* by Travis Kiger and Ganer Newman. They cover cutting, characterization, blocking, and the structure of a story. Additionally, if this is your first time doing Duo Interpretation, go watch a final round of Duo! Observe the rounds not only as entertainment, but keep your eyes peeled for effective cutting, characterization, and blocking. Ask yourself, how can I apply similar techniques to my performance? How can I build off of what this duo is doing? The best way to learn Duo, outside of actively doing it, is by watching and learning from other performers.

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An Introduction to Humorous Interpretation (HI)

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Examples of Past HI Titles

- *Avenue Q* by Robert Lopez
- *Batboy* by Keythe Farley and Brian Flemming
- *Bobby Wilson Can Eat His Own Face* by Don Zolidis
- *Disney Mom Group Therapy* by Mo Gaffney
- *Drugs are Bad* by Jonathan Rand
- *Junie B. Jones is (Almost) a Flower Girl* by Barbara Parks
- *Law & Order - Fairy Tale Unit* by Jonathan Rand
- *Legally Blonde the Musical* by Laurence O'Keefe
- *Ruthless* by Joel Paley
- *The Hunger Pains: A Parody* by The Harvard Lampoon

Event Description

Using a play, short story, or other published work, students perform a selection of one or more portions of a piece up to ten minutes in length. Humorous Interpretation is designed to test a student's comedic skills through script analysis, delivery, timing, and character development. Competitors may portray one or multiple characters. No props or costumes may be used. Performances can also include an introduction written by the student to contextualize the performance and state the title and author.

Considerations for Selecting HI Literature

When searching for literature, a student should look for more than one-liner jokes. Humor can be created through strategic choreography, creative characterization, and dynamic non-verbal reactions. Typical selection topics range from light-hearted material including interpretations of comics, children's literature, plays, short stories, and more. Considerations for selecting an HI topic should include the student's age, maturity, and school standards.

Traits of Successful HI Performers

When considering what event you should choose, or which direction to point a student when selecting an event, here are some traits of successful HIers to keep in mind:

- Creative
- Physical control
- Bold/high energy
- Ability to think outside the box
- Dynamic physical and vocal techniques
- Risk taker

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Find Your Voice

> *Robin Williams said, 'You're only given a little spark of madness. You mustn't lose it.' HI was my way of keeping and exercising my madness muscle, because we all need a little madness to keep the insanity away. HI, and speech in general, helped to cultivate a sense of fearlessness, not only in my performances, but also in my life."*
>
> **— Dan Johnson, Association Alum**

Humorous Interpretation

Basic Understandings

Humorous Interpretation, as its name indicates, is humorous. Competitors often use multi-character selections to tell relatable stories using humor as a device to connect with the audience. Think about your favorite comedian's latest stand up routine, or something funny that recently happened. Ask yourself why it's funny. Then ask yourself if that joke would be funny to, say, your mom, or great-great Uncle Joe. Humor is a complex human quirk. Each individual's sense of humor is unique. However, other aspects of humor are more universal in nature. So, when choosing an HI, it is imperative to consider not only the humorous elements of the selection, but also to keep in mind how the story itself will appeal to the audience. Not everyone will laugh at the same joke, but if a character's plight is relatable, the audience will identify with him or her. Humor in a Humorous Interpretation should be tasteful and motivated.

Research

Finding an HI that's right for you may seem a little daunting. Go to your local library, visit the biographies section of a bookstore, or visit Play Scripts, Dramatists, or Samuel French online. These are just a few of the places you may find material. There are a few things to keep in mind when questing for a script.

Strengths and limitations. HI often requires a performer to manipulate their voice, move quickly in and out of different characters, and have a strong sense of comedic timing. Think about your vocal register when looking at a cutting. Would you be required to play characters with voices in your upper register? What characters would be played using your lower register? How many ways can you manipulate your voice? How well can you manipulate your body and facial expression to create distinct, unique characters? If you have limited physical or vocal control, it might be beneficial to chose a selection with fewer characters. Think about your abilities outside of acting: can you sing, dance, stand on your head? Could those skills be utilized in your performance? Be aware of how you can showcase your unique skill set.

What makes you laugh? This is your piece, your performance, and your interpretation. Find writing you think is hilarious. If it makes you laugh, and you enjoy performing it, then your audience will enjoy it, too.

Is it honest? Is it relatable? Pick a piece with meaning. No, you don't need to be performing Tolstoy's "Family Happiness" (and honestly, that's probably a bad idea); however, you should choose literature that speaks to a universal truth. As performers, we not only look to entertain our audience, but to engage them in meaningful communication through performance.

Structural Components

Structure of an Interp (taken from *Interpretation of Literature, Bringing Words to Life*).

TEASER • 0:00 – 1:30
Previews the topic and mood of the selection

INTRO • 1:30 – 3:00
Explains the purpose of the performance

EXPOSITION • 3:00 – 3:30
Introduces characters and setting

INCITING INCIDENT • 3:30 – 4:00
Sends the conflict into motion

RISING ACTION • 4:00 – 7:30
Complicates the conflict

CLIMAX • 7:30 – 8:30
Emotional peak of the performance

FALLING ACTION • 8:30 – 9:30
Resolves the conflict

Cutting. As with any interp, it's important to cut for performance. Read the dialogue aloud, and remove excessive language that does not build toward the story you are trying to tell. Play with comedic elements, like three part jokes, or reviving jokes from earlier in the cutting. Think about how you will physically depict the story. The visual element of HI lends itself to great, creative jokes. Think about how you will use the imagined environment of your HI to tell a joke.

Blocking. The technical aspect of HI requires complete physical control. Transitioning, or "popping" between characters should be practiced. These transitions are fast paced, and require strong physical stamina. Consider how you can tell the story physically. Get in front of a mirror and break down the movements. Increase speed as you build muscle memory. Play with levels and focal points.

Characters. Each character should be uniquely distinct with vocal, physical, and emotional choices carefully thought out. Characters in HI tend to stretch the limits of reality. However, be careful to craft characters to which the audience can relate. One of the great challenges with HI is the ability to craft a performance with different levels. Remember that in all good comedy, there is the well-adjusted character who stands in stark contrast to the humorous characters. Find the balance in your selection. Think about the proximity characters would stand in relation to each other, and illustrate the difference by using various physical levels. Bend your knees slightly for a shorter character, or have a taller character look down when addressing someone shorter.

Introduction. An introduction explains the purpose of the performance. Typically, in HI, the introduction will start off with a joke relevant to the theme of the piece. The performer will then relate the joke back to the theme, and why the piece is relevant to the audience before returning to the performance.

Organizing

You only have ten minutes in an HI to tell a story and make an audience laugh. Pick your moments accordingly. Decide what jokes you want to play up, and what parts of your story will contrast the humorous moments. As you

finalize your cutting, read it aloud to help make informed decisions about characterization and blocking.

Beat out your script. This means reading the script aloud and making notes as you go. As you read aloud, use symbols to indicate shorter pauses "/" or longer pauses "//." Consider the emotionality behind each line. Ask yourself what the motivation for the characters' actions are. Use this to influence blocking choices. Make sure your choices are not just funny for the sake of funny, but make sense contextually in your script. Make sure you are listening for the reactions of the characters to the lines that came before. If you are doing a multi-character performance, remember that this is a dialogue, and should be treated as such.

Standing it Up/Practicing

Often, you'll find that if you've spent the appropriate amount of time reading, cutting, and analyzing a script, memorization will be an easier process. Here are some things to keep in mind, to help simplify the process:

First, our brains are a muscle. The more time you practice memorizing, or simply memorize things, the better you become. Often, performers, take more time in the beginning of a season to commit a script to memory than they do at the end of the competitive season. Memorizing is a process.

Next, memorization is physical. Sitting down staring at a script, re-reading the lines in your head will not be beneficial. Memorize the script with the intent to perform it. Type up a clean version with only your finalized text and blocking. Then, tape it to the wall and actively memorize. Read the lines aloud moving with them as

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Humorous Interpretation

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indicated by your cutting. It is helpful to memorize a scene at a time, building off of the scene that came before. Remember that dialogue is motivated by the line that came before it. Everything is a response, or reaction. Conceptualize your script this way to decrease the time it takes to memorize your performance.

As you develop a physical sense of the piece, consider how you will express ideas without words. Much of communication is nonverbal; therefore, it makes sense that some of the funniest aspects of an HI are the non-verbal reactions of characters to the events happening in the performance.

Once memorized, you and your coach can then build off of the choices you've made for your characters. Adjustments to blocking, characterization, and line delivery can be made. Often, standing up in front of a coach will help determine whether or not your jokes are landing, or getting a reaction from the audience. Practicing in front of a mirror or videotaping your performance is also a great way to 'see' what the audience sees when you perform. Play with characters. HI is all about experimenting with what makes your audience laugh. Don't be afraid to act ridiculous to get a laugh. Try something new until you get the desired reaction, and then solidify the joke through practice.

Performance Tips

It may sound cliche, but confidence is key! If you've put the legwork in, you should feel confident in the product you've created. Walk into that round with your head held high, ready to show the world what you've got! Trust what you and your coach created. Do what you practiced, and if you feel compelled to "try something new," review it with your coach beforehand. Consistency is also vital. It's hard to evaluate what to change in practice if your performance in the round is completely different than what you've been working on for the past few weeks.

Pay attention to other performers. Smile, and be a warm, inviting audience member. There is nothing worse than getting up to perform and having an audience that either stone faces you or won't look you in the eye. Each round is 60 minutes. Ten of those involve you performing, the other 50 are for you to listen and learn.

Keep a notebook for between rounds. Sometimes, another person's performance will inspire you, and it's a good idea to have a notebook handy to write down new ideas. When you review your ballots after the tournament, you can go back through your notebook and compare your ballots to your notes.

Between rounds, figure out what room you will be performing in next. Congratulate your competitors on a good performance after the round ends, and make friends during downtime. Be gracious, and keep criticisms of other performers to yourself, even if someone else tries to start a negative conversation.

Resources

A great source is *Interpretation of Literature—Bringing Words to Life* by Travis Kiger and Ganer Newman. They cover cutting, characterization, blocking, and the structure of a story. Additionally, if this is your first time doing Humorous Interpretation, go watch a final round of HI! Observe the rounds not only as entertainment, but keep your eyes peeled for effective cutting, characterization, and blocking. Ask yourself, how can I apply similar techniques to my performance? How can I build off of what this performer is doing? The best way to learn HI, outside of actively doing it, is by watching and learning from other performers.

Once you join the Association and register on our website, you can access the textbook, final rounds, and more at www.speechanddebate.org/resources. Use the filter function on the left hand side of the page to find resources specific to Interp and Humorous Interp.

An Introduction to Program Oral Interpretation (POI)

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photo: Sur la Lune Photography

Event Description

Using a combination of Prose, Poetry and Drama, students construct a program up to ten minutes in length using at least two out of the three genres. With a spotlight on argumentation and performative range, Program Oral Interpretation focuses on a student's ability to combine multiple genres of literature centered around a single theme. Competitors are expected to portray multiple characters. No props or costumes may be used except for the manuscript. Performances also include an introduction written by the student to contextualize the performance and state the titles and authors used in the program.

Considerations for Selecting POI Literature

Students who do POI are expected to bring together a wide variety of literature for their program. Students should select pieces that are appropriate for them and that create a well-balanced program which may incorporate humor and drama. Considerations for selecting a POI topic should include the student's age, maturity, and school/team/coach standards.

Traits of Successful POI Performers

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

- Ability to characterize multiple perspectives
- Strong argumentation skills
- Controlled performance
- Depth/breadth of emotion
- Knowledge of poetic, prosaic and dramatic convention

Sample literature for a POI:

TOPIC: *Magical Realism*
DRAMA:
- *Lily Plants a Garden by Jose Cruz Gonzalez*
- *Joe Turner's Come and Gone by August Wilson*

POETRY:
- *The Rusted Door by Stephan Delbos*
- *Write about an Empty Birdcage by Elaina M. Ellis*
- *The Giant Golden Boy of Biology by Anis Mojgani*

PROSE:
- *The People of Paper by Salvador Plascencia*
- *One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez*
- *The Great Divorce by Kelly Link*

Learn More!

The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Program Oral Interpretation, we are developing a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in Interp; an interpretation textbook for Resource Package subscribers; videos from champion coaches; and much more more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information.

Find Your Voice

> "POI challenged me to construct my own unique message in a creative yet purposeful way. Piecing together multiple genres of literature not only exposed me to the different styles in which we can voice our ideas, but to the importance of amplifying and unifying these voices fighting for a collective cause"
>
> **— Kenny Lau, Association Alum**

Program Oral Interpretation

Basic Understandings

Program Oral Interpretation relies on the performer's ability to portray a wide range of characters and literature all held together under a common theme. Each program must contain at least two of the three genres and students are encouraged to include all three. There is a set time limit of ten minutes, with a thirty second grace period. Students who choose to compete in POI should focus on making an interesting argument that is supported in different ways by each piece of literature they select.

Research

When looking for a Program Oral Interpretation topic, it's important to know your limitations, and your strengths. Students with a background in Humorous Interpretation may find they have a greater ability to portray multiple characters within the program and choose to include more literature than a student who has a background in Dramatic Interpretation. Conversely, a student with a background in DI may choose to devote more time in the program to a select few pieces of literature, developing each character with greater depth.

What makes POI unique is the performer's ability to choose what kinds of stories they want to tell and the way those stories are told. When deciding on a topic, think about what motivates you. What do you want to change about the world? Whom do you want to lend your voice to? By answering questions like this performers are given a strong sense of potential topics.

Searching for literature in POI can seem intimidating, since you have more scripts to find than the other interpretation events. However, keep in mind that POI allows for the most freedom when searching for literature. As long as it follows the publishing guidelines of the National Speech and Debate Association, and it meets team and coach standards for appropriateness, you can use it!

To start, think about why you wanted to speak about your topic. Then, think about any books, plays or poetry you have encountered that relate to the topic. Find that literature and include it in your POI.

Then, broaden your search. Start researching online, at local libraries and bookstores, and begin piecing together enough literature for a program.

Not only will you be finding different genres of literature, you will also encounter different tones, perspectives and length. Good POI's will include longer narratives for the audience to relate to, short snippets packed with information and literature that lets the audience laugh. Finding a diverse set of literature enables a more dynamic performance.

photo: Sur la Lune Photography

Structural Components

Structure of an Interp (taken from *Interpretation of Literature, Bringing Words to Life*).

TEASER • 0:00 – 1:30
Previews the topic and mood of the selection

INTRO • 1:30 – 3:00
Explains the purpose of the performance

EXPOSITION • 3:00 – 3:30
Introduces characters and setting

INCITING INCIDENT • 3:30 – 4:00
Sends the conflict into motion

RISING ACTION • 4:00 – 7:30
Complicates the conflict

CLIMAX • 7:30 – 8:30
Emotional peak of the performance

FALLING ACTION • 8:30 – 9:30
Resolves the conflict

Program Oral Interpretation

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Program Oral Interpretation

There are a few key structural components of every POI:

Programming is the process of cutting your literature and threading it together throughout the performance. That does not mean that your POI will consist of performing a poem in full, then reading a short story and closing with a monologue from a play. Instead, break your literature down into pages and build a program that follows the structure of interp. For example, introduce the compelling character from your Prose in the intro, and then dedicate time later on in the performance to that same character.

Each selection of literature should be distinct in your performance. Perhaps the non-fiction book you use is performed by characterizing the literature as a lecturer, whereas a poem is performed with a great attention to vocal meter, rhythm and pace. In short, each piece of literature in your POI should have a distinct feel to it.

Blocking or tech, is how the character(s) moves in the space you've created for him/her/them. In POI, the manuscript may be used as a prop as long as you stay in control of it throughout the entirety of the performance. For example, if you are using a black binder for a manuscript it would be appropriate to mimic using a laptop with your binder.

Introduction. An introduction explains the purpose of the performance. Typically, after the teaser, a performer will give a brief explanation of the program's relevance, then give the title and author of each piece used during the performance.

photo: Sur la Lune Photography

Organizing

Each POI will be organized in a unique way. However, there are some guidelines that create a memorable performance.

Pay attention to balance among genres in the program. Eight minutes from the same play with a little time devoted to a poem at the end is not the recipe for a strong program. Instead, try to devote time to each genre. It is not necessary to carve out exactly three minutes for each, but make sure that each genre is present throughout the program.

Look for thread pieces to help you along. A thread is a piece of literature that tells a complete story throughout the program. This is generally a character that the audience can relate to which helps contextualize your argument in the program. Include a page that introduces the character, another that outlines the conflict, a climax page and resolution. There can be more than one thread piece in a program,(there is no one right answer for how to organize POI), but, make sure the audience has a character they can connect to.

Not all pieces of literature have to be prominently featured in the program. There will likely be pieces that only have one page dedicated to them. Whether it be a funny punchline, an emotionally powerful stanza from a poem, or a short excerpt from a non-fiction book, don't be afraid to include a piece that is short if it adds to your program's theme or argument

Standing it Up/Practicing

After you have finished cutting and organizing your program, it's time to start constructing your performance. The first thing you need to do is put together the manuscript you will be using. The most common manuscript is a small black binder with page protectors (often referred to as slicks), which can be found in our online store and most office supply stores. Type up your cutting, format it into two columns and print the document. Then, simply cut out each specific page and place it in your page slicks. Some people like to put black cardstock in each page slick and glue or tape the cutting to the cardstock. Your cutting should read like a book,

meaning, a peer or coach could pick up your manuscript and read your program from beginning to end.

Once you have put the manuscript together, it's time to start creating distinct characters for each piece of literature. Think about different mannerisms, voices and postures each character might have. What kind of environment are they in? Do you have some characters that need to have a lot of blocking? Find a way to make each piece distinct.

Don't be afraid to use your manuscript as a tool in the performance. As a general rule, make sure that all of the words from each section (or scene) of your cutting fit onto one page. In this way, each time you turn the page, the audience knows that you are transitioning between pieces of literature. Think of each page turn as a pop in and out of the different parts of your program.

Performance Tips

It may sound cliche, but confidence is key! If you've put the legwork in, you should feel confident in the product you've created. Walk into that round with your head held high ready to show the world what you've got! Trust what you and your coach created. Do what you practiced, and if you feel compelled to "try something new," review it with your coach beforehand. Consistency is key. It's hard to evaluate what to change in practice if your performance in the round is completely different than what you've been working on.

Pay attention to other performers. Smile. Be a warm, inviting audience member. There is nothing worse than getting up to perform and having an audience that either stone faces you or won't look you in the eye. Think of it this way: each round is about 60 minutes. Ten of those involve you performing, the other 50 are for you to listen, learn, and support your competitors.

Keep a notebook for between rounds. Sometimes, another person's performance will inspire you, and it's a good idea to have a notebook handy to write down new ideas. It's also nice to know who you competed against in each round. This way, you have a better understanding of who your competition is. When you review your ballots after the tournament, you can go back through your notebook and compare your ballots to your notes.

Between rounds, figure out what room you will be performing in next. Congratulate your competitors on a good performance after the round ends, and make friends during downtime. Be gracious, and keep criticisms of other performers to yourself, even if someone else tries to start a negative conversation.

photo: Sur la Lune Photography

Resources

A great source is *Interpretation of Literature—Bringing Words to Life* by Travis Kiger and Ganer Newman. They cover cutting, characterization, blocking, and the structure of a story. Additionally, pay special attention to how others in your community are doing POI. Keep your eyes peeled for effective cutting, characterization, and blocking. Ask yourself, how can I apply similar techniques to my performance? How can I build off of what that POI is doing? The best way to learn POI, outside of actively doing it, is by watching and learning from other performers.

Once you join the Association and register on our website, you can access the textbook, final rounds, and more at www.speechanddebate.org/resources. Use the filter function on the left hand side of the page to find resources specific to Interp and Program Oral Interp.

An Introduction to Informative Speaking

Event Description

Students deliver a self-written, ten-minute speech on a topic of their choosing. Limited in their ability to quote words directly, Informative Speaking competitors craft a speech using evidence, logic, and optional visual aids. All topics must be informative in nature; the goal is to educate, not to advocate. The speech is delivered from memory.

Considerations for Selecting an Informative Topic

Students who write Informatives should think seriously about a topic that is of personal interest to them. Given students may be doing Informative for the entirety of the school year, they will want to find a topic that they can keep fresh and engaging for extended periods of time. Additionally, Informative speakers should consider topics that are current and relatable to audience members. Informative is an ongoing process! The last speech that is performed will never be a "final" draft. There is always room for revision, so pick a topic that student's will enthusiastically explore and reflect upon during the season.

Traits of Successful Informative Performers

When considering what topic students should choose, or which direction to point a student when selecting an event, here are some traits of successful Informative speakers to keep in mind:

- Driven
- Well-spoken
- Enthusiastic
- Logical
- Personable
- Curious

Examples of Potential Informative Topics

- Social Security
- Urban Agriculture
- Body Language
- New Medicines/Treatment Plans
- Holographic Technology
- Senses
- Gaslighting
- Exciting New Technologies

Learn More!

The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Informative Speaking, we are developing a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in public speaking; videos from champion coaches; and much more more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information.

Find Your Voice

Informative helped me grow as both a writer and performer. The event allowed me to explore a diverse range of topics that would have never worked in Oratory. You'll learn how to discern the line between what is and is not persuasive - and focus solely on educating and entertaining the audience!"

— **Kevin King, Association Alum**

Competition Events Guide
Informative Speaking

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Basic Understandings

Informative is a speech written by the student with the intent to inform the audience on a topic of significance. Informative gives students the unique opportunity to showcase their perpsonality while educating the audience.

An Informative is not simply an essay about the topic—it is a well researched and organized presentation with evidence, logic and sometimes humor to convey a message. Topics are varied and interesting. Whether it be a new technological advance the audience is unaware of or a new take on a concept that everyone is familiar with, Informative is the students opportunity to teach the audience. Types of topics and structure vary greatly, so talk to your coach and work out what works best for you!

While content is very important, Informative requires students to balance that content with delivery and style. Informative speakers must be articulate, engaging, and smooth with their delivery at both a vocal and physical level. Students will want to watch some rounds of other public speaking events to determine what types of style, delivery, and content might work best for them.

The Informative speaker must also consider the audience as a vital component of the speech. What parts of the speech does the student want to spend the most time developing? Are there parts of the students topic that might take more time to explain? How does humor play a role with regard to the topic? As style and content go hand-in-hand, it's vital that students think carefully about their message, style, and composition of the audience as they construct the speech.

Research

Informative research is as diverse as the topics students select. Informative research might include newspaper and magazine articles, academic journals, non-fiction books, interviews, and credible digital content. Depending upon the topic, it might be possible that a student's own meaningful experiences may be in the speech.

The key to researching an effective Informative is to guide the audience through the topic. Find research that helps broadly define the topic and then begin narrowing the scope. Keep track of the questions that arise while researching; those are likely the same questions the audience will have, and finding those answers can help make the difference.

Source materials need to be incorporated throughout the speech with oral citation. The citation style varies with the type of source. For example, students should provide author and title of books, although some students will also provide the source credibility of the author. The name of the source and date may be sufficient for newspaper articles. It is important to recognize that whether the material is quoted directly from the source, or paraphrased, sources must be cited. When drafting the Informative, indicate direct quotations from sources using both quotation marks and some other marking such as highlighting or underlining in the script. Remember: only 150 directly quoted words may be used. Students, choose quoted text wisely. Once all of the research is gathered, the sources should be compiled into a works cited page.

Structural Components

After research has been conducted, the student can compose the speech. Let's go back to the idea of questions as the guide to the speech. Based upon the research and the student's own thoughts on the topic, the student needs to craft a thesis statement. The student should outline two to four major arguments to support the thesis. Argument's have a unique role in Informative Speaking. Since the speech is not persuasive the goal of the argument is not to advocate for change, instead, the goal is to inform the audience. Thus, arguments are used

Informative Speaking

to establish the significance of the topic or to argue that the topic merits discussion.

Arguments are made up of three important components. First, a student must clearly establish a claim. This is a declarative statement that establishes the point the student sets out to justify in the speech. Next, the student must clearly establish why the argument is valid.

This is known as the warrant for an argument. This means that Informative speakers go beyond just asserting their claims to explaining why their claims should be accepted by the audience. Finally, the student must provide an impact for the argument. Why does the argument matter? Who is affected by this argument?

Now let's pull all of this together. Informative speeches consist of an introduction, body (with 2-4 major points), and a conclusion. Students can group their research to support each element of the speech. For example, if the student finds a great personal narrative from a source which might grab the audience's attention, it can be marked for the intro. The process continues until each portion of the speech has evidence that backs up the claim, warrant, and impacts for each argument.

Organizing

Students should start with the body of the speech which features the major arguments and ideas. Students should take their main points with supporting research and decide an order. Major points might inform the audience of an issue, challenge assumptions the audience may have, or encourage the audience to visualize what the world might be like. Some questions to consider: What argument or idea makes the most logical sense to start with? What does the audience need to know or understand before they can accept later arguments? Many students want to start by writing the introduction first, but the student can't introduce a speech without understanding what is in that speech and how the arguments will be organized.

After the body of the speech has been established, the student can outline an introduction and conclusion. The introduction should engage the audience, establish the significance of the topic, transition to a thesis statement,

and preview the major points that will be covered in the speech. After the body of the speech there is a conclusion which involves a restatement of the thesis, a review of the major points, and final thoughts that engage the audience and call them to action.

With a complete outline now developed, the student can write the speech section by section. It is important for the coach to review each part of the speech for consistency of style and approach. Although the speech needs to be conversational, some students will feature more formal language choices, or incorporate some type of humor throughout the speech, or take a more personal or narrative approach. There is no "right" or "wrong" voice but it needs to match the student's thoughts, ideas, and engagement with the audience.

Standing it Up/Practicing

Students don't have to wait until the speech is completely written to stand it up. Students should take sections of the speech, such as the introduction and conclusion, or one of the major points in the speech, and talk it out. An effective writing technique is for students to verbalize their thoughts, record them, and then review those recordings to see how their language sounds to the human ear. This will help the student identify what style might be most appropriate for delivery of the message. Although not all students are comfortable being recorded, their ideas, expressions, and turns of phrase can be captured while experimenting with the content.

Once the speech is written, many students struggle with memorization. This doesn't have to be the case! One effective practice technique is breaking the speech up by section or paragraph, such as their introduction, and practicing that section until it is solidly memorized. Once that section is memorized, they can move on to the next section and so on. Students can print out the speech in large type, tape it down a hallway, and read their speech aloud, complete with gestures, to reinforce memorization.

Team and family members are also extremely valuable when it comes to practicing the speech after it is memorized. Since the audience is such a vital component of Informative, it is important to perform in front of real and varied groups. Students may seek out community groups, such as a local Rotary club, or community centers, such as a senior living facility, and perform their speeches. Students should perform as often as possible in front of an audience to help them get more comfortable before their first tournament. This also provides an excellent opportunity to see how the speech sounds to an audience and test any humor that they might want to use.

Performance Tips

Students need to recognize that they spend only a small percentage of their time speaking and most of the tournament listening to others. While students watch the other speakers in rounds of Informative, they should take note of what is effective and what needs improvement in other students' speeches. Students can carry a notebook with them and write down thoughts about audience appeals, structure, and language used by other students. What works? What doesn't? They then can share comments with coaches after the tournament is complete

and talk about how adjustments might be made to their own speeches.

Informative students need to make sure that they are excellent audience members. That means students are engaged in the round, taking notes, thinking about the arguments and analysis of others' speeches, and being responsive to the speakers. Students need to keep all of their comments about performances to themselves until after the tournament is complete as it is disrespectful to make comments with other students present, in particular critical comments about specific student performances.

After a period of time, students may become a bit bored with their speeches after delivering them over and over again. That is okay! Once the speech is written the student needs to recognize that it is not carved in stone. Making changes to the manuscript is a natural part of the process of speechwriting. After a tournament the students should take the comments on ballots and reflect upon how those comments can improve the speech content and style. Additionally, students need to be reminded that every performance is important, that there is always someone in the room who has never heard that speech before, and that they need to keep up their energy every round of every tournament. Perhaps the writing can be refreshed a bit or perhaps a section of the speech needs a bit more polish, but that should not deter student's performance for that particular audience. Every speech should be given with the same dedication and enthusiasm as the first.

Resources

The National Speech & Debate Association provides excellent resources for our members including sample ballots, final round videos, and more. Additionally, examining resources that already exist for Oratory and Extemp can give students a good foundation for how to structure a speech, evaluate sources, and create logical arguments.

Once you join the Association and register on our website, you can access these and other materials at www.speechanddebate.org/resources. Use the filter function on the left hand side of the page to find resources specific to Informative Speaking.

An Introduction to Original Oratory (OO)

NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION
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Event Description

Students deliver a self-written, ten-minute speech on a topic of their choosing. Limited in their ability to quote words directly, Original Oratory competitors craft an argument using evidence, logic, and emotional appeals. Topics range widely, and may be informative or persuasive in nature. The speech is delivered from memory.

Considerations for Selecting an OO Topic

Students who write orations should think seriously about a topic that is of personal interest and significance to them. Given the number of weeks students may be doing Oratory, they will want to find a topic that they can keep fresh and engaging for extended periods of time. Additionally, orators should consider topics that are current and relatable to audience members. Oratory is an ongoing process! The last speech that is performed will never be a "final" draft. There is always room for revision, so pick a topic that you will enthusiastically explore and reflect upon during the season.

Traits of Successful OO Performers

When considering what topic you should choose, or which direction to point a student when selecting an event, here are some traits of successful Orators to keep in mind:

- Creative
- Unique
- Well-spoken
- Personable
- Enthusiastic
- Process-oriented

Examples of Past OO Topics

- Body Image
- Cultural Norms
- Distractions
- Face-to-Face Communication
- Motivation
- Negative Attention
- Over Commitment
- Sarcasm
- Self-confidence
- White Lies

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Original Oratory, we provide a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in Oratory; access to OO final round videos; an Oratory textbook for Resource Package subscribers; videos from champion coaches; and much more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information.

Find Your Voice

The skills that I acquired from Oratory are skills most fundamental to the human condition. Oratory allowed me to advocate for what I believed in, in my words. It gave me the ability to tell my story from the stories and experiences of others. I learned the importance of organization, fact checking, word economy, along with innumerable other skills that form the foundation of great writing. Competing in Oratory gave me a unique opportunity to venture into elements of other events. Storytelling, humor, drama, spontaneity, argumentation, and research are all elements that are actively applied in Oratory. It's an event for anyone and everyone."

— Avi Jaggi, Association Alum

Original Oratory

Basic Understandings

Original Oratory is a speech written by the student with the intent to inform or persuade the audience on a topic of significance. Oratory gives students the unique opportunity to showcase their voice and passion for their topic.

An Oratory is not simply an essay about the topic—it is a well researched and organized presentation with evidence, logic, emotional appeals, and sometimes humor to convey a message. Topics may be of a value orientation and affect people at a personal level, such as avoiding peer pressure, or they can be more of a policy orientation and ask an audience to enact particular policies or solve societal problems. As the types of structure vary widely across the country, it may be wise to ask coaches in your region what is common.

While content is very important, Oratory requires students to balance that content with delivery and style. Oratory speakers must be articulate, engaging, and smooth with their delivery at both a vocal and physical level. Students will want to watch some rounds of Oratory to determine what types of style, delivery, and content might work best for them.

The Oratory speaker must also consider the audience as a vital component of the speech. What does the student want the audience to think, feel, believe, or be motivated to accomplish? Some students want the judges and fellow students to change attitudes. Others may simply want the audience to think about ideas though a different lens by challenging norms. As style and content go hand-in-hand, it's vital that students think carefully about their message, style, and composition of the audience as they construct the speech.

Research

Oratory research is as diverse as the topics students select. Oratory research might include newspaper and magazine articles, academic journals, non-fiction books, interviews, and credible digital content. Depending upon the topic, it might be possible that a student's own meaningful experiences may be in the speech.

The key to researching a powerful Oratory is to start with the message the student wants to deliver. Students will look to more personal and emotional styles to motivate the audience in a values based Oratory. Policy oratories may do more research related to government and policy, as well as organizational and community perspectives.

Source materials need to be incorporated throughout the speech with oral citation. The citation style varies with the type of source. For example, students should provide author and title of books, although some students will also provide the source credibility of the author. The name of the source and date may be sufficient for newspaper articles. It is important to recognize that whether the material is quoted directly from the source or paraphrased, sources must be cited. When drafting the Oratory, indicate direct quotations from sources using both quotation marks and some other marking such as highlighting or underlining. Remember: only 150 directly quoted words may be used. Choose your quoted text wisely. Once all the research is gathered, the sources should all be compiled into a works cited page.

Structural Components

After research has been conducted, the student can develop the composition of the speech. Let's go back to the idea of a message as the guide to the speech. Based upon the research and the student's own thoughts on the topic, the student needs to craft a thesis statement. The student should outline two to four major arguments to support the thesis.

Arguments are made up of three important components. First, a student must clearly establish a claim. This is a declarative statement that establishes the point the student sets out to justify in the speech. Next, the student must clearly establish why the argument is valid.

Original Oratory

This is known as the warrant for an argument. This means that Oratory speakers go beyond just asserting their claims to explaining why their claims should be accepted by the audience. Finally, the student must provide an impact for the argument. Why does the argument matter? Who is affected by this argument?

Now let's pull all of this together. Oratory speeches consist of an introduction, body (with 2-4 major points), and a conclusion. Students can group their research to support each element of the speech. For example, if the student finds a great personal narrative from a source which might grab the audience's attention, it can be marked for the intro. The process continues until each portion of the speech has evidence that backs up the claim, warrant, and impacts for each argument.

Organizing

Students should start with the body of the speech which features the major arguments and ideas. Students should take their main points with supporting research and decide an order. Major points might inform the audience of an issue, challenge assumptions the audience may have, compel the audience to make a personal change, or encourage the audience to visualize what the world might be like. Some questions to consider: What argument or idea makes the most logical sense to start with? What does the audience need to know or understand before they can accept later arguments? Which point most persuasively calls the audience to action? Many students want to start by writing the introduction first, but the student can't introduce a speech without understanding what is in that speech and how the arguments will be organized.

After the body of the speech has been established, the student can outline an introduction and conclusion. The introduction should engage the audience, establish the significance of the topic, transition to a thesis statement, and preview the major points that will be covered in the speech. After the body of the speech there is a conclusion which involves a restatement of the thesis, a review of the major points, and final thoughts that engage the audience and call them to action.

With a complete outline now developed, the student can write the speech section by section. It is important for the coach to review each part of the speech for consistency of style and approach. Although the speech needs to be conversational, some students will feature more formal language choices, or incorporate some type of humor throughout the speech, or take a more personal or narrative approach. There is no "right" or "wrong" voice but it needs to match the student's thoughts, ideas, and engagement with the audience.

Standing it Up/Practicing

Students don't have to wait until the speech is completely written to stand it up. Students should take sections of the speech, such as the introduction and conclusion, or one of the major points in the speech, and talk it out. An effective writing technique is for students to verbalize their thoughts, record them, and then review those recordings to see how their language sounds to the human ear. This will help the student identify what style might be most appropriate for delivery of the message. Although not all students are comfortable being recorded, their ideas, expressions, and turns of phrase can be captured while experimenting with the content.

Once the speech is written, many students struggle with memorization. This doesn't have to be the case! One effective practice technique is breaking the speech up by section or paragraph, such as their introduction, and practicing that section until it is solidly memorized. Once that section is memorized, they can move on to the next section and so on. Students can print out the speech in

large type, tape it down a hallway, and read their speech aloud, complete with gestures, to reinforce memorization.

Team and family members are also extremely valuable when it comes to practicing the speech after it is memorized. Since the audience is such a vital component of Oratory, it is important to perform in front of real and varied groups. Students may seek out community groups, such as a local Rotary club, or community centers, such as a senior living facility, and perform their speeches. Students should perform as often as possible in front of an audience to help them get more comfortable before their first tournament. This also provides an excellent opportunity to see how the speech sounds to an audience and test any humor that they might want to use.

Performance Tips

Students need to recognize that they spend only a small percentage of their time speaking and most of the tournament listening to others. While students watch the other speakers in rounds of Oratory, they should take note of what is effective and what needs improvement in other students' speeches. Students can carry a notebook with them and write down thoughts about audience appeals, structure, and language used by other students. What works? What doesn't? They then can share comments with coaches after the tournament is complete and talk about how adjustments might be made to their own speeches.

Oratory students need to make sure that they are excellent audience members. That means students are engaged in the round, taking notes, thinking about the arguments and analysis of others' speeches, and being responsive to the speakers. Students need to keep all of their comments about performances to themselves until after the tournament is complete as it is disrespectful to make comments with other students present, in particular critical comments about specific student performances.

After a period of time, students may become a bit bored with their speeches after delivering them over and over again. That is okay! Once the speech is written the student needs to recognize that it is not carved in stone. Making changes to the manuscript is a natural part of the process of speechwriting. After a tournament the students should take the comments on ballots and reflect upon how those comments can improve the speech content and style. Additionally, students need to be reminded that every performance is important, that there is always someone in the room who has never heard that speech before, and that they need to keep up their energy every round of every tournament. Perhaps the writing can be refreshed a bit or perhaps a section of the speech needs a bit more polish, but that should not deter your performance for that particular audience. Every speech should be given with the same dedication and enthusiasm as the first.

Resources

The National Speech & Debate Association provides excellent resources for our members. The textbook *The Art & Science of Original Oratory* is a fantastic resource for beginning orators and veterans alike. Oratory specific activities for topic selection, delivery and humor help to develop students' skills. Also, the Association provides members with access to past national finals rounds as well as top notch webinars to provide coaches and students alike with ideas and tips on how to make their orations the best they can be.

Once you join the Association and register on our website, you can access these and other materials at www.speechanddebate.org/resources. Use the filter function on the left hand side of the page to find resources specific to Original Oratory.

An Introduction to United States Extemporaneous Speaking (USX)

Event Description

In United States Extemporaneous Speaking, students are presented with a choice of three questions related to current events in the U.S. and, in 30 minutes, prepare a seven-minute speech answering the selected question. Students may consult articles and evidence they gather prior to the contest, but may not use the Internet during preparation. Topics range from political matters to economic concerns to U.S. foreign policy. The speech is delivered from memory.

Considerations for Unites States Extemp

Students who do USX are typically very curious about matters of domestic interest. Students should be well read and understand current events within the U.S. To learn more about domestic issues, students should spend significant time reading from a variety of news sources. Recommended reading lists include, but are not limited to: *New York Times*, *Brookings Institute*, *Economist*, *Bloomberg Business Weekly*, *The Guardian*, *Congressional Research Committee*, *The Financial Times*, and more.

Traits of Successful USX Speakers

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

- Enjoys reading
- Naturally curious or inquisitive
- Passionate about domestic issues
- Determined
- Reflective
- Quick thinker

List of Past USX Questions

- Will the 113th Congress pass comprehensive immigration reform?
- Does the U.S. economy's contraction in the first quarter signal a new downturn?
- Did President Obama accomplish what he set out to during his foreign policy address at West Point?
- Will the Supreme Court legalize gay marriage nationwide?
- Can Rick Perry win the GOP nomination for President in 2016?
- What steps must Sylvia Burwell take to ensure the ACA's successful implementation?
- What role should the U.S. Army play in a post-Afghanistan military?
- Should President Obama decide on Keystone XL before the 2014 midterms?
- What has been the most important national news story of 2014?

Learn More!

The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For United States Extemporaneous Speaking, we provide a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in Extemp; access to Extemp final round videos; an Extemp textbook for Resource Package subscribers; practice questions; topic analysis; and much more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information.

Find Your Voice

"*Extemp made me the poised, organized, and strong woman I am today. It taught me how to be myself in front of a room full of strangers, to break down complex theories so they are easily accessible, to quickly problem solve, and, most importantly, that I never need to apologize for being a girl who wants to talk about labor market policies more than celebrity drama.*"

— Talan Tyminski, Association Alum

An Introduction to International Extemporaneous Speaking (IX)

NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE

Event Description

In International Extemporaneous Speaking, students are presented with a choice of three questions related to international current events and, in 30 minutes, prepare a seven-minute speech answering the selected question. Students may consult articles and evidence they gather prior to the contest, but may not use the Internet during preparation. Topics range from country-specific issues to regional concerns to foreign policy. The speech is delivered from memory.

Considerations for International Extemp

Students who do IX are typically very curious about matters of a global interest. Students should be well read and understand current events outside the U.S. To learn more about international issues, students should spend significant time reading from a variety of news sources. Recommended reading lists include, but are not limited to: *Council on Foreign Relations*, *New York Times*, *Asia Times*, *Jerusalem Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, BBC, *Foreign Policy*, *Foreign Affair*s, and more.

Traits of Successful IX Speakers

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 Extempers to keep in mind:

- Enjoys reading
- Naturally curious or inquisitive
- Concerned with the global society in which s/he lives
- Sees interconnectedness of concepts and events
- Reflective
- Focused

List of Past IX Questions

- What should the AU do to help combat Boko Haram?
- Will North Korea test another nuclear weapon in the near future?
- What does Narendra Modi's election mean for India-Pakistan relations?
- How should the WHO respond to a global resurgence in polio?
- Has President Peña Nieto's anti-drug strategy been more effective than his predecessors?
- Will renewed U.S.-Iranian nuclear negotiations be successful?
- What does Petro Poroshenko's election mean for Ukraine's relationship with Russia?
- Can Colombia's peace talks with the FARC succeed?
- What's next for Sino-Japanese relations?

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For International Extemporaneous Speaking, we provide a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in Extemp; access to Extemp final round videos; an Extemp textbook for Resource Package subscribers; practice questions; topic analysis; and much more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information.

Find Your Voice

The fast-paced nature of Extemp quickly cultivated my speaking skills, while the never-ending subject matter of current events provided an outlet for my intense curiosity. On its most fundamental level, Extemp gave me a microphone to address the world, imbued eloquence into my voice and ideas, and taught me to make concise arguments."

— Dylan Adelman, Association Alum

Extemporaneous Speaking

Basic Understandings

Extemporaneous Speaking, typically called extemp, is a speech on current events with limited preparation time. A student's understanding of important political, economic, and cultural issues is assessed along with critical thinking and analytical skills. Students report to a draw room (often referred to as extemp prep) where all of the extempers gather at tables, set out their files, and await their turn to draw topics. A staff member in the prep room calls out student codes based upon a pre-assigned speaker order. When a student's code is called, the student will approach the draw table and take three questions from an envelope. The student will then select one of those questions and return the other two to the envelope, and prepare for thirty minutes to deliver a speech answering the chosen topic. When prep time is up, the student reports to the competition room to deliver a 7 minute speech.

Students may access research brought with them to the tournament during the 30-minute preparation period. We refer to these resources as files. Teams may bring their files in paper form, often print-outs of articles organized in hanging file folders by topic area in large plastic bins or totes, or electronic format on laptops or other portable devices such as tablets (for more information, see Research).

During preparation time, students review their files on the topic selected and outline arguments that will be made throughout the speech. Some students outline with notecards; others use legal pads. Students should document the source of their research on their notes so that they can cite the materials while they speak. Students have a lot to do in 30 minutes—they must select a question, review research, outline arguments with supporting materials, and practice at least part of the speech before time expires. Many tournaments prohibit the consultation of notes during the speech in which case speech structure and evidence need to be memorized during prep time as well.

After the 30-minute preparation time, students report to their competition rooms to deliver their speeches. Students must never watch the speakers before them, although students may watch those who speak after

them. Judges should give time signals to the competitors while they speak to indicate how much time remains of their 7 minutes.

Research

Students who compete in Extemp must keep up with current events. Students who do International Extemp must read articles concerning events of world-wide importance as they may draw questions regarding conflict among various countries, economic challenges experienced by third world countries, or new leadership in nations across the globe. US Extemp participants must understand political, social, and economic policies of the US and how the US relates to the rest of the world. Reading articles is a vital practice for keeping students informed on topics frequently asked at tournaments. It is also important because students may want to frame their analysis with historical context.

Students should read widely, both on topics of personal interest as well as on issues that they struggle to understand. Because the topics are so diverse and can change rapidly, students should keep up with current events by reading print or online versions of various newspapers, magazines, and journals. Students may want to file at least one US-oriented source and one international source to broaden their exposure to varied ideas and perspectives.

There are various methods to organizing team extemp files depending upon the format chosen. Students should file articles from reputable newspapers, magazines, and

electronic resources. Students may not access the Internet while they are in extemp prep; thus, all articles must be printed or stored on a laptop prior to entering the room. If a service such as Dropbox is used for digitial files, all of the online files must be synced with the downloaded versions prior to the start of the tournament.

Students need to cite sources during their speeches. Typically, the name of the source and date are a minimal requirement, although sometimes speakers need to provide additional source credibility. For example, "As reported in the *New York Times* of September 4, 2014..." or, "Janet Yellen, chair of the Federal Reserve, is quoted in *The Economist* of September 6, 2014...."

Structural Components

Overall, an excellent extemporaneous speech is one that provides critical thinking and perspective on an issue of contemporary significance. Extempers must address the question as worded on the draw slip and support their positions with analysis and evidence. Extempers who can provide a clear explanation of what is taking place, and why, will be particularly favored by judges. This is important for those judges who have limited experience with extemp or who are not as well versed in current events. Students must remember that they sometimes know more about certain parts of the world or specific aspects of our economy than a number of their judges or the observers in the round. Clarity is vitally important. Extempers should not use specialized terms or phrases unless they are placed in context. For example, an International Extemper might discuss a recent development in the currency valuation of a specific country by referencing the name of the currency. A US extemper might analyze the impact of Super PACs (Political Action Committees) by explaining what a PAC is, how Super PACs differ from historical notions of PACs, and how federal and Supreme Court decisions changed the political landscape. It is possible that the judge or observers in the round may not know the value of another nation's currency, or how corporations can donate to political campaigns, unless the extemper provides that information.

Organizing

Most speeches feature an introduction that gains the audience's attention, sets up the speech, and transitions to recitation of the question and the student's answer to the question. This is followed by a thesis statement for the speech as a whole. Extemp speeches typically have a preview statement after the introduction that summarizes the key points the student will make in the body of the speech. Students then organize the body of the speech with major points and sub-points. Students might choose three major points of analysis, for example, or perhaps two major points with two sub-points under each. Speeches also typically feature a review of the major points, a restatement of the question and student response to the question, and a conclusion. Students should practice with a stopwatch to determine how long they should speak on each section. Each major point should be roughly equal to another to keep the speech balanced.

Here is a sample outline:
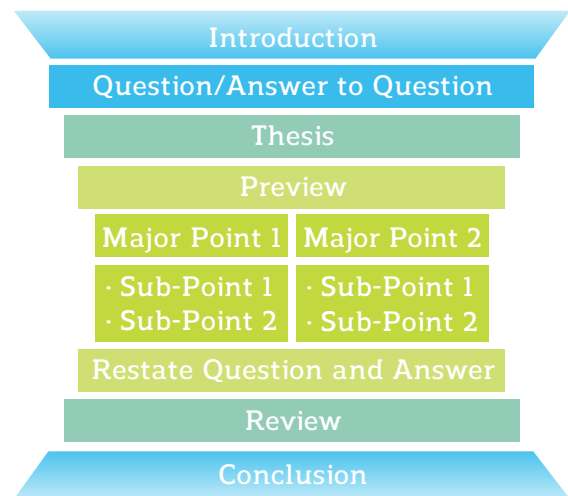
Standing it Up/Practicing

Extempers need to start with the basics. Beginning extempers should spend considerable time reading credible news sources on a range of topics. Beginners should receive practice questions and take the time to review them, talk through answers to the questions, and focus on creating excellent thesis statements. Beginners

Extemporaneous Speaking

could start practices with a notecard and perhaps focus on one major point of analysis instead of two or three. A great beginning strategy for extempers is to deliver their first speech with unlimited prep time. Following this performance, gradually reduce the amount of prep time used until the speaker reaches 30 minutes. It is easy for students to be intimidated by extemp. As with any skill, practicing will take some of the anxiety out of approaching the event. Students should not wait to stand it up -—if the student knows a lot about a particular topic of interest, stand-up practices can take place right away. Students do not have to know everything about every country, world leader, or U.S. policy in order to practice. After a number of extemp practices, students can spend time working on language selection, smoothing out the verbal and physical delivery, and filling in the gaps of their knowledge base.

Performance Tips

Due to the nature of Extemp, competitors will find that each round is unique. Some questions are incredibly challenging, either due to the specific wording or lack of background knowledge of the topic for the extemper, and others seem incredibly easy. Every Extemp competitor will encounter a round where there simply are no files on a given topic. Extempers need to accept that some rounds are excellent and others are not and to learn from every speech. There are ways extempers can better prepare for Extemp and put their best foot forward every time. Some advice for students:

Ask questions. If you don't understand an economic principle or can't explain why a particular country's actions are significant, be sure to ask coaches, teachers, and teammates.

Take notes. If your files are missing something important, make a note of it and either fill the gaps or talk to your teammates so that everyone is on the same page.

Practice language. Extempers often use the same types of language for transitional material. Practice with this language so that you aren't struggling to come up with something fresh in every speech. As you gain experience, you can mix it up, but at the outset, just get comfortable with the format of the speech and the language to get you from point A to point B.

Line-by-line. Save your notes from your speeches and revisit them. Give sections of speeches, or entire speeches, over and over again to improve argument quality and language considerations. If you struggle with vocalized pauses and fillers, such as uhms and likes, you can redo lines of your speech repeatedly.

Resources

Keeping up with the news, while very rewarding, can also feel very overwhelming. Students can take advantage of a number of free electronic resources to keep up-to-date. For example, students might use an RSS reader (which is a news aggregator, bringing news to the student in one website on a continual basis), such as Feedly, to keep up with news. Students can choose to follow particular types of news or specific news outlets. Students can also keep up with current events by following news organizations or analysts on Twitter. Flipboard is a service that brings students the news in a visually appealing format, similar to flipping through the pages of a magazine. Students can also have news updates pushed to them through individual emails or news digests offered by services such as Google News or Yahoo!

The National Speech & Debate Association has many resources specific to Extemporaneous Speaking, including sample Extemp questions, videos of Extemp speeches, a textbook, helpful webinars, and more! Once you join the Association and register on our website, you can access these items and more at www.speechanddebate.org/resources. Use the filter function on the left hand side of the page to find more Extemp related materials.

An Introduction to Lincoln-Douglas Debate (LD)

Event Description

In this one-on-one format, students debate a topic provided by the Association. Lincoln-Douglas Debate topics range from individual freedom versus the collective good to economic development versus environmental protection. Students may consult evidence gathered prior to the debate but may not use the Internet in round. An entire debate is roughly 45 minutes and consists of constructive speeches, rebuttals, and cross-examination.

Considerations for Lincoln-Douglas Debate

Lincoln-Douglas Debate typically appeals to individuals who like to debate, but prefer a one-on-one format as opposed to a team or group setting. Additionally, individuals who enjoy LD like exploring questions of how society ought to be. Many people refer to LD Debate as a "values" debate, as questions of morality and justice are commonly examined. Students prepare cases and then engage in an exchange of cross-examinations and rebuttals in an attempt to convince a judge that s/he is the better debater in the round.

Traits of Successful LD Debaters

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

- Independent
- Thinks logically
- Analytical
- Intrigued by philosophy
- Determined
- Thoughtful

List of Past LD Topics

- Resolved: The United States ought to prioritize the pursuit of national security objectives above the digital privacy of its citizens.
- Resolved: Placing political conditions on humanitarian aid to foreign countries is unjust.
- Resolved: Developing countries should prioritize environmental protection over resource extraction when the two are in conflict.
- Resolved: Targeted killing is a morally permissible foreign policy tool.
- Resolved: Individuals have a moral obligation to assist people in need.
- Resolved: The United States is justified in using private military firms abroad to pursue its military objectives.
- Resolved: In the United States, juveniles charged with violent felonies ought to be treated as adults in the criminal justice system.
- Resolved: The abuse of illegal drugs ought to be treated as a matter of public health, not of criminal justice.

Note: For novices, the Association designates the following topic for districts to use during the first two months of a novice season: **Resolved: Civil disobedience in a democracy is morally justified.**

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Lincoln-Douglas Debate, we provide a number of helpful resources— including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in LD; access to LD final round videos; an LD textbook; specific guidance on the annual novice topic; topic analysis; research assistance; and much more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information.

Find Your Voice

LD allowed me to question basic assumptions and reevaluate aspects of the world. Despite debating individually, the community is so welcoming; I made friends across the country."
— Jordan Friedman, Association Alum

Lincoln-Douglas Debate (LD)

NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE

Basic Understandings

Lincoln Douglas Debate (LD) is a one-on-one event where debaters argue against one another on a specified resolution. Therefore, it is imperative when students begin LD, they know the resolution being debated. If you visit www.speechanddebate.org/currenttopics, you will see the topics assigned by month. Additionally, the Association specifies a separate topic for the first two months of a novice season. It is important to note that not all tournaments use the topic suggested for their competition. Therefore, be sure to check the invitation for complete information.

Once a debater knows the resolution, the student should begin brainstorming arguments on the topic. An argument's basic structure is referred to as claim, warrant, and impact (more details below). The debater should also construct their cases (more details below). Finally, they should consider their opponent's arguments and brainstorm responses. At the end of the round, a debater should also offer summary reasons as to why they should win, which are commonly referred to as "voting issues."

Research

After students do an initial brainstorm session, conduct research. Look in reputable journals for articles written by experts in the field and texts written by philosophers. Additional sources include, but are not limited to, newspaper articles, think tanks, and credible websites. Check with your school's Media Center/Library Services Department for research tips and information on what you have access to through your school.

Structural Components

The structure of the round, and corresponding speaker responsibilities, can be found below:

Speech	Time Limit	Responsibility of Debater
Affirmative Constructive	6 min	Present the affirmative case
Negative Cross-Examination	3 min	Negative asks questions of the affirmative
Negative Constructive/ Negative Rebuttal	7 min	Present the negative case and refute the affirmative case
Affirmative Cross-Examination	3 min	Affirmative asks questions of the negative
First Affirmative Rebuttal	4 min	Refute the negative case and rebuild the affirmative case
2nd Negative Rebuttal	6 min	Refute the affirmative case, rebuild the negative case, and offer reasons that negative should win the round, commonly referred to as voting issues.
2nd Affirmative Rebuttal	3 min	Address negative voting issues and offer crystallization for why the affirmative should win.

*Each debater is also entitled to four minutes of prep time during the round.

Organizing

Argumentation

First, a debater must clearly establish their claim. This is generally a declarative statement that establishes the point they are setting out to justify. Next, a debater must clearly establish why their argument is valid. This is known as the warrant for an argument. Debaters need to go beyond asserting their claims by backing them up with analysis explaining why the argument is true. The warrant can come in many forms, but is necessary for the
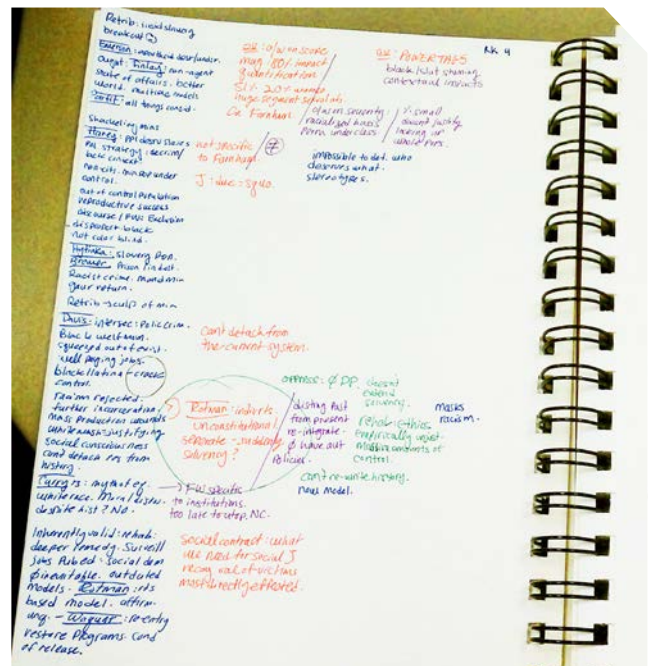
development of the argument. It is important to note that having an author simply make an assertion about a topic is not a warrant. Finally, a debater must provide an impact for their argument. This means the debater establishes why the argument is significant in the round.

Casing

After students brainstorm arguments, it is time to construct cases. While there is no rule requiring a specific structure, there is a traditional approach to constructing a case. Most commonly, LD debaters use a value and criterion model to structure their case. Under this model, the students propose a specific value that they feel is the ultimate goal debaters should be striving for in the round. Subsequently, they offer a criterion which offers a specific mechanism to determine if the value is being achieved by either debater in the round. A common example is offering a value of Justice with a criterion of Rights Protection. A debater should offer definitions of these terms, as well as explain how the value best fits the resolution and how the criterion best measures if the value is achieved. After they establish their value and criterion, they would offer contentions. These are the main arguments of the affirmative or negative and would strive to assert that the value/criterion is being achieved. When developing arguments the arguments should link back to the value/criterion.

Refutations

Lincoln Douglas debate is more than just cases! 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, asserting the reverse of the argument, showing the opponent's arguments do not carry as much weight as their arguments, or taking out the link between the opponent's argument and the value/criterion being used in the round. Students can pre-write their answers to arguments they expect their opponents to make. These are commonly known as "blocks."

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 affirmative, the other for anything said about the negative. Each speech in the round will receive its own column on these pages.

- At least one pen, but we recommend two, in different colors.

Lincoln-Douglas Debate (LD)

- If your opponent is speaking, you should be writing (do not try and determine what is or isn't important—just get as much down as possible)

- Orient both pieces of paper vertically, as in a book. Fold (or draw lines) on the sheet of paper into 5 columns of equal width. This can be achieved by folding an initial 1.5" column from either side. Flip the paper and fold in another column to match; continue until the piece of paper has 4 folds to produce 5 columns. This is your affirmative flow.

- Fold the other sheet of paper into 4 columns of equal width. This is your negative flow.

- Label the top of each column on the affirmative flow with the names of the speeches, in chronological order from left to right.

- Label the top of each column on the negative flow with the names of the speeches, in chronological order from left to right.

Standing it Up/Practicing

It is a great idea to do practice rounds before going to your first tournament. At first, it may seem that you do not have enough to say to fill up the speech times. However, that will change with practice. The first round could be a stop and go round where a coach or observer stops you when there's a missed opportunity 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. Additionally, since your cases are prepared in advance, students should spend time working on the delivery of that speech. A student should work on emphasis, eye contact, and fluidity.

Performance Tips

It is important to remember that you are communicating to your judge. The decision rests solely in the hands of the judge! You must focus on persuading them, which means that you should be directing your speeches and cross-examination questions and answers to the judge, and not to your opponent.

When at your first tournament it is important to keep in mind that it gets easier with more practice. The goal

is not about where you begin, but where you end. If you get better from round to round or tournament to tournament—you're successful. Focus not only on what you could improve upon, but also on what you did well. Celebrate what worked and try and emulate that in future rounds or tournaments. 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!
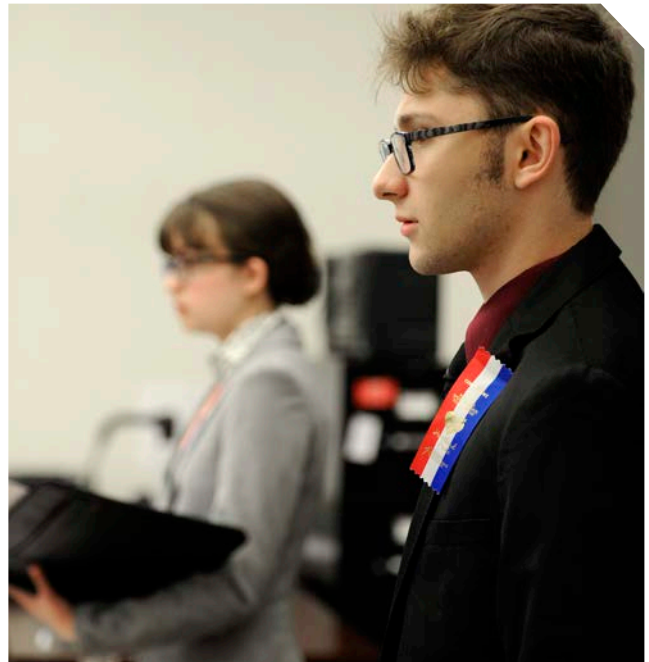
Resources

The Association offers great resources to our members. These include lesson plans for introducing Lincoln-Douglas Debate to novices, recorded videos on casing, flowing, and drills, written topic analyses, research guides, a textbook, and more!

Once you join and register on our website, you can access these and other materials at www.speechanddebate.org/resources. Use the filter function on the left hand side of the page to find resources specific to Lincoln-Douglas Debate.

An Introduction to Policy Debate (CX)

NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE

Event Description

A two-on-two debate that focuses on a policy question for the duration of the academic year, this format tests a student's research, analytical, and delivery skills. Policy Debate involves the proposal of a plan by the affirmative team to enact a policy, while the negative team offers reasons to reject that proposal. Throughout the debate, students have the opportunity to cross-examine one another. A judge or panel of judges determines the winner based on the arguments presented.

Considerations for Policy Debate

Students who do Policy Debate must be able to work well with a partner. Balanced teams, both in terms of preparation before debates and contributions within a debate, helps provide a competitive advantage during tournaments. Policy debaters are interested in examining specific policies in an intricate and detailed manner. Depth of research is a common trait of successful Policy debaters. Policy Debate is commonly viewed as the most technical debate event within the Association.

Traits of Successful Policy Debaters

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

- Critical of what s/he is told
- Team player
- Scans as s/he reads
- Determined to find the best research
- Longer attention span
- Single minded

List of Past Policy Topics

- Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its non-military exploration and/or development of the Earth's oceans.
- Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its economic engagement toward Cuba, Mexico or Venezuela.
- Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its transportation infrastructure investment in the United States.
- Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its exploration and/or development of space beyond the Earth's mesosphere.
- Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reduce its military and/or police presence in one or more of the following: South Korea, Japan, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Iraq, Turkey.
- Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase social services for persons living in poverty in the United States.

Learn More!

The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Policy Debate, we provide a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in Policy; access to Policy final round videos; a Policy textbook; a starter file for beginning debaters; research assistance; and much more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information.

Find Your Voice

"Policy Debate provided me immeasurable critical thinking skills and confidence in not only my ability to speak but also my ability to think. But what I loved most about Policy Debate is that the nature of the activity is one that rewards hard work— nobody is born a good debater. Instead Policy Debate is pure effort and perseverance and I love that." — **Nathaniel Sawyer, Association Alum**

Policy Debate (CX)

Basic Understandings

Policy debate is a two-on-two debate where an affirmative team proposes a plan and the negative team argues why that plan should not be adopted. The topic for policy debate changes annually, so debaters throughout the course of the year will debate the same topic.

The debate unfolds throughout a series of speeches as outlined below:

1st Affirmative Constructive	1AC	8 minutes
Negative Cross-Examination of Affirmative		3 minutes
1st Negative Constructive	1NC	8 minutes
Affirmative Cross-Examination of Negative		3 minutes
2nd Affirmative Constructive	2AC	8 minutes
Negative Cross-Examination of Affirmative		3 minutes
2nd Negative Constructive	2NC	8 minutes
Affirmative Cross-Examination of Negative		3 minutes
1st Negative Rebuttal	1NR	5 minutes
1st Affirmative Rebuttal	1AR	5 minutes
2nd Negative Rebuttal	2NR	5 minutes
2nd Affirmative Rebuttal	2AR	5 minutes
Prep Time (each team)		5 minutes

One member of each team will perform the 'first' speeches, the other the 'second' speeches. So the person who reads the 1AC wil also perform the 1AR, for example. Note that the debate begins with the affirmative speaking first, and then switches midway through the debate where the negative speaks first, thus giving the affirmative the ability to speak last.

Research

Policy debate is a very research-intensive activity. Unlike traditional writing where the author may briefly quote or even paraphrase evidence, Policy Debate relies on the use of cards, or pieces of evidence directly quoted word-for-word from the source.

A typical piece of evidence consists of three parts: the tagline, the citation, and the evidence. The tagline is the argument or claim that either the evidence asserts or that the debater is asserting based on the evidence. For example, if the Department of Labor had produced a report saying that more people have left the workforce, the tagline might be 'The number of discouraged workers are on the rise' or 'The federal government must respond to the growing number of people leaving the workforce.' The citation provides the information necessary to track down the source, similar to an MLA/APA citation. The author, the title, the publication the source, the page, etc. This information will not be read aloud in the round except for the author and the year (or more specific date if necessary). Finally, a piece of evidence consists of the text of the evidence itself. The expectation in Policy Debate is that cards are read verbatim, so the paraphrasing of evidence as it is being read for the first time is discouraged. Instead, the debater should underline or bold the parts of the text of the evidence they deem most necessary. Please see the resources provided by the Association (listed at the end of this guide) for examples of evidence and cut cards.

So where do all these cards come from? The Association offers a starter pack of affirmative and negative evidence, as well as biweekly updates of evidence research for resource package members. There are other resources available, one of which is the National Debate Coaches Open Evidence Project. As debaters become more advanced, they are better served, though, if they use evidence they have compiled from original research.

Scholarly databases, news outlets, books, journal articles, and other reputable sources are great avenues for finding the best evidence. As research is gathered, be sure to organize your findings based on argument and when you may use that evidence in a round.

Structural Components

Affirmative

The affirmative begins the debate by offering a plan, a specific example of the year's topic or resolution, and arguing that it is a good idea. In many circumstances, they will address the "stock issues" of a case in Policy Debate; in other instances, they may use a more advanced format of simply discussing advantages to the plan. The ultimate goal of the affirmative is to advocate for the passage of a plan that falls under the resolution. The presumption is that the status quo, or the way things are in the world without the passage of the plan, is worth rejecting in favor of living in a world with the plan adopted. Thankfully for the affirmative, they do not have to demonstrate that the plan would pass in the real world, only that it should. Policy proposals that may never survive the political climate of Congress are still fair game under the presumption of fiat—or the ability of the affirmative to will their plan into existence without having to worry about whether or not it would actually be adopted. To convince audiences to adopt their plan, affirmative cases directly or indirectly address the stock issues of significance, harms, inherency, topicality, and solvency. The Policy 101 debate textbook covers these issues in greater detail.

Negative

The negative has a wide variety of strategies available to respond to the affirmative case. The presumption in policy debate is that if the negative can win one of the aforementioned stock issues, they win the debate. Alternatively, the negative can demonstrate that the harms of the plan outweigh the benefits. These strategies are divided into two broad types: on-case and off-case.

On-case responses to the affirmative position clash directly with arguments posed by the plan's advocates and generally focus on the stock issues. If the affirmative says the plan will save 500,000 lives, the negative may attempt to demonstrate why that claim is untrue. If the affirmative says we are wasting billions of dollars in the status quo on inefficient research, the negative may demonstrate why that research is necessary. We will discuss the structure of those arguments in a moment.

Off-case responses are positions developed that do not directly respond to the arguments posed by the affirmative. This can consist of a variety of positions. First, the negative may offer a disadvantage, or a harm or problem that will be caused when the plan is passed. Disadvantages must generally prove that a harm is brewing in the status quo, something about the passage of this plan will bring that harm into reality or intensify it, and then discuss the impacts of those harms. Second, the negative may propose a counter-plan, or a competitive, non-topical, mutually exclusive plan proposal compared to the affirmative. Third, the negative may directly address the topicality of the affirmative position, arguing that the affirmative's plan is not an example of the resolution, by providing definitions for the words of the resolution, showing how the affirmative fails to meet those definitions, and then discussing why the affirmative case ought to lose for violating this debate rule.

Organizing

Keeping track of the arguments during the debate can be challenging, but most debaters flow arguments separately. The different components of the affirmative case (significance, harms, inherency, etc.) can be flowed on one sheet of paper or each position may be tracked separately.

Policy Debate (CX)

The negative will typically keep track of arguments on separate pieces of paper (the first disadvantage on one, the topicality on a second, a counterplan on the third, etc.). Arguments are listed shorthand on one side of the page. Each response is flowed in a different color ink next to it representing the two sides of the debate—affirmative arguments may be listed in black while negative arguments are listed in red, for example. More details on how to flow and different flowing techniques can be found in the resource section below.

Standing it Up/Practicing

Policy debate can be a fast-talking event! With strict time limits and the need to present arguments supported by well-articulated research, students will speak as efficiently as possible. Your first foray into performance practice should be reading your case and your positions out loud with a stop-watch. See how long it takes for you to read your case (and make sure your affirmative constructive is in time!). Focus on enunciation and pronunciation as you go. Remember, fewer and better-explained arguments will often win more debates. Ultimately, your judgesset the pace for the round and so you should be prepared to speak at the speed they prefer.

It is always helpful to have practice debates before your first contest, against either teammates or even teams from other schools. These debates should be instructional in nature—the goal isn't to 'win.'

Performance Tips

The first tournament can be an intimidating experience, but don't worry! Every round is an opportunity to learn! Approach your first rounds with confidence and act like you've done this before, even if you haven't. Prior to the debate, you may ask your judge if they have any preferences or paradigms, which will clue you into what kinds of arguments they may prefer and which kinds they may not. When your first round is over, keep your flows and listen to the advice the judge has to offer, either during the oral critique or written down on the ballot. Consult with your coach after the round to see how best to implement feedback. Keep these notes for future tournaments—it is not unusual to have the same judge several times during a year!

Between rounds, it is not unusual for debaters to gather more evidence and look at the organization of their files. Was there an argument you had trouble explaining or answering? Now's a great time to talk to your coach or teammates on how to prepare a "block" to use in future debates. Is there a card you wish you had in the round? Now's a good time to find it! Do you seem to have trouble finding the material you have gathered when you need it? Take a look at the organization of your files. Following the tournament, you can use your old flows to discuss strategy—what arguments seemed to work? What could you have improved on?

Some tournaments feature elimination rounds following the guaranteed preliminary rounds. If you advance and get to debate again, congratulations! It's just like any other round, except typically you will have a panel of judges as opposed to just one. If you don't, use this as an opportunity to observe other rounds to learn more about how to debate effectively.

Resources

The resource page provided by the National Speech and Debate Association provides a variety of resources to help you in debate!

The Debate 101 textbook will further your understanding of the fundamentals of the event and provide tips and tricks for developing arguments.

The Introduction to Policy Debate section includes several helpful videos including how to decide a Policy Debate round, tips for flowing, further understanding stock issues, and other topics. You can also find videos of previous final rounds to see Policy Debate in action!

Our general resources for Resource Package subscribers include evidence updates, starter packets, and other research resources to help get your files started.

Once you join the Association and register on our website, you can access these and other materials at www.speechanddebate.org/resources. Use the filter function on the left hand side of the page to find resources specific to Policy Debate.

An Introduction to Public Forum Debate (PF)

NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE

Event Description

Public Forum Debate involves opposing teams of two, debating a topic concerning a current event. Proceeding a coin toss, the winners choose which side to debate (PRO or CON) or which speaker position they prefer (1st or 2nd), and the other team receives the remaining option. Students present cases, engage in rebuttal and refutation, and also participate in a "crossfire" (similar to a cross-examination) with the opportunity to question the opposing team. Often, community members are recruited to judge this event.

Considerations for Public Forum Debate

As a team event, students who compete in Public Forum need to be able to work well with a partner. Balanced teams, both in terms of preparation before debates and contributions within a debate, helps provide a competitive advantage during tournaments. PF is the newest form of debate in the Association and looks at current event topics. Students who do Public Forum must be prepared to debate in front of judges without any formal debate training. Being able to persuade a range of judges is a central component to this event. Additionally, PF is focused upon debating varying resolutions that change frequently, which exposes students to a variety of topics during a singular competitive season.

Traits of Successful PF Debaters

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

- Thinks logically
- Simplifies concepts
- Big-picture thinker
- Professional
- Organized in both presentation and thought
- Engaging personality that is persuasive to a variety of people

List of Past PF Topics

- Resolved: NATO should strengthen its relationship with Ukraine in order to deter further Russian aggression.
- Resolved: Single-gender classrooms would improve the quality of education in American public schools.
- Resolved: Immigration reform should include a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States.
- Resolved: The benefits of domestic surveillance by the NSA outweigh the harms.
- Resolved: The continuation of current U.S. anti-drug policies in Latin America will do more harm than good.
- Resolved: On balance, the rise of China is beneficial to the interests of the United States.
- Resolved: Congress should renew the Federal Assault Weapons Ban.
- Resolved: The benefits of post-9/11 security measures outweigh the harms to personal freedom.

Learn More!

The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Public Forum Debate, we provide a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in PF; access to PF final round videos; a PF textbook; a starter file for beginning debaters; research assistance; and much more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information.

Find Your Voice

"Public Forum played a large role in who I am today. It taught me to be persuasive. At its core, the event's structure and audience forced me to shape and mold my thoughts into concise, simple, yet elegant arguments."

— Danny Rego, Association Alum

Competition Events Guide
Public Forum Debate (PF)

Basic Understandings

Public Forum Debate (PF) is a two-on-two event where teams argue against each other on a specified resolution. Therefore, it is imperative that when students begin PF, they know the resolution being debated. If you visit www. speechanddebate.org/currenttopics, you will see the topics, which are assigned by month of competition. . It is important to note that not all tournaments use the topic suggested due to the timing of their tournament. Therefore, be sure to check the tournament invitation for complete information.

Once a debater knows the resolution, s/he should begin brainstorming potential arguments on the topic. An argument's basic structure is referred to as claim, warrant, and impact (more details below). A debater will also construct their positions, referred to as cases (more details below). Finally, s/he should think through potential arguments by their opponent and brainstorm responses. As the round progresses, a team should also offer reasons why they should win the round to the judge.

Research

After students do an initial brainstorm session, they should conduct research. Evidence can come from anywhere—newspapers, journal articles, studies, books, primary documents, etc. When gathering research, a student should ask four questions:

1. Is the source reputable? Sources should have a good reputation for 'getting it right'—newswires such as the AP and Reuters tend to be less credible than newspapers.

2. Is the source verifiable? This refers to the ability to verify the data and claims made by the source. If a source is based on a personal interview or some other insider knowledge, that generally cannot be verified through independent means.

3. Is the source authoritative? Different sources are expert at different fields. The Office of Budget and Management is an authority on budget policy on the US, but may not be the ideal source for a resolution about foreign policy in the Middle East.

4. Is the source recent? While not every source must be up-to-the-minute, generally, a more recent source is better.

Structural Components

One team advocates for the resolution, known as the PRO, and one team advocates against the resolution, known as the CON. Before the debate begins, the teams conduct a coin flip. The winner of the flip chooses either the side of the debate OR the speaking order. The team losing the

Public Forum Debate (PF)

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flip makes the other choice. For example, Jonesville High School wins the coin flip and chooses CON. Smithtown High School, who lost the flip, chooses the speaking order. If they choose 2nd, Jonesville would speak 1st on CON and Smithville will speak 2nd on PRO. Note that unlike other forms of debate, the CON may speak first. The structure of the round, and corresponding speaker responsibilities, follow:

Speech	Time Limit	Responsibility of Debater
Team A Speaker 1 - Constructive	4 min	Present the team's case
Team B Speaker 1 - Constructive	4 min	Present the team's case
Crossfire	3 min	Speaker 1 from Team A & B alternate asking and answering questions
Team A Speaker 2 - Rebuttal	4 min	Refute the opposing side's arguments
Team B Speaker 2 - Rebuttal	4 min	Refute the opposing side's arguments
Crossfire	3 min	Speaker 2 from Team A & B alternate asking and answering questions
Team A Speaker 1 - Summary	2 min	Begin crystallizing the main issues in the round
Team B Speaker 1 - Summary	2 min	Begin crystallizing the main issues in the round
Grand Crossfire	3 min	All four debaters involved in a crossfire at once
Team A Speaker 2 - Final Focus	2 min	Explain reasons that you win the round
Team B Speaker 2 - Final Focus	2 min	Explain reasons that you win the round

Each team is entitled to two minutes of prep time during the round.

Organizing

Argumentation

First, a debater must clearly establish a claim. This is generally a declarative statement establishing the point they are setting out to justify. Second, a debater must clearly establish why their argument is This is known as the warrant for an argument. Debaters need to go beyond asserting their claims and back them up with analysis explaining why the argument is valid. The warrant can come in many forms, but is necessary for the development of the argument. Debaters may use logic or research to back up their claims. It is important to note that having an author make an assertion about a topic is not on its own a warrant. Third, a debater must provide an impact for their argument. This means the debater establishes why the argument is significant in the round.

Casing

After students have brainstormed arguments, it is time to construct cases. While there is no rule requiring a specific structure, there is a traditional approach to constructing a case. Often, a case starts with a well thought out thesis statement as an introductory lead-in to the position. Next, the case would define key terms. Following this introduction the debater would offer contentions, or main arguments.

Refutations

But, PF is more than just cases! After presenting cases, students engage in refuting each other's arguments. Students commonly refute cases by denying the validity

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of the argument. Additional strategies include, but are not limited to, justifying the reverse of the argument, showing the opponent's arguments do not carry as much weight as their arguments, or taking out the link between the opponent's argument and the priority they establish in the round. Students can pre-write their answers to arguments they expect their opponents to make. These are commonly known as "blocks."

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 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 notated as possible. Here are some tips:

- Two sheets of paper. One page will be for anything said about the affirmative, the other for anything said about the negative, regardless of which debater is saying it. Each speech in the round will receive its own column on these pages.

- At least one pen, but we recommend two, in different colors.

- If the opponent is speaking, write (don't try to determine what's important at the outset—just write as much as you can)

- Orient both pieces of paper vertically, like a book. Note that columns will be narrow, which will increase the need for accurate/efficient abbreviations.

Standing it Up/Practicing

It is a great idea to do practice rounds before going to your first tournament. At first, it may seem you do not have enough to say to fill up the speech times. However, that will change with practice. The first round could be a stop and go round where a coach stops you when there's a missed opportunity or confusion about what to do during the speech. During these rounds, you may re-give speeches until you or the coach are satisfied with the speech. Additionally, students should practice delivering prepared speeches focusing on emphasis, eye contact, and fluidity.

Performance Tips

When at your first tournament it is important to keep in mind that it gets easier with more practice. The goal is not about where you begin, but where you end. Improving from round to round, and tournament to tournament, is the true mark of success. Focus not only on what you could enhance, but also on what you did well. Take feedback from judges as opportunities to improve. If they provide oral feedback, take notes on what they share to review with your coach. Finally, do not fixate on the wins and losses—it won't lead to greater success!

Resources

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An Introduction to Congressional Debate (CD)

NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE

List of Past Legislation Titles

- Bill to Regulate E-Cigarettes
- Resolution to Recognize the Republic of Somaliland
- Resolution to Amend the Constitution to Legalize Same-Sex Civil Unions
- Bill to Update the Clean Air Act
- Bill to Increase Development in Space
- Bill to Regulate Three-Dimensional Printing to Prevent the Production of Private Firearms
- Bill to Lift the Ban on Crude Oil Exports
- Bill to Alter Agricultural Subsidies
- Bill Concerning Raising the Federal Minimum Wage
- Resolution to Repeal Zero Tolerance Policies in Public Schools

Event Description

A simulation of the U.S. legislative process in the Senate and the House, students generate a series of bills and resolutions for debate in Congressional Debate. Debaters (also referred to as Senators and Representatives) alternate delivering speeches for and against the topic in a group setting. An elected student serves as a presiding officer to ensure debate flows smoothly. Students are assessed on their research, argumentation, and delivery skills, as well as their knowledge and use of parliamentary procedure.

Considerations for Congressional Debate

Students who do Congressional Debate are typically interested in learning about issues that are significant to the legislative process within the United States. Students are exposed to a deeper application of *Robert's Rules of Parliamentary Procedure*. Students must prepare for debate on numerous topics in any given competition and be able to extend a long-lasting debate with unique and fresh ideas, as well as by refuting previous speakers on a specific topic.

Traits of Successful Congressional Debaters

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

- Interested in legislative process
- Networker
- Analytical thinker
- Interested in varied issues
- Persuasive
- Enjoys research

Learn More!

The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For Congressional Debate, we provide a number of helpful resources—including live and recorded webinars designed to introduce foundational and advanced concepts in Congress; access to Congress final round videos; a Congress textbook; sample Congress dockets; and much more! Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information.

Find Your Voice

Congressional Debate is an exercise in leadership. It's a political game where your fellow students can have as much influence on the outcome of the round as your judges. You're rewarded for taking risks; one cannot simply fade into the background and expect to succeed. It's these exact skills that translate into success later in life—those who think a little bit differently are those who make permanent change in the world."

— Christina Gilbert, Association Alum

Congressional Debate (CD)

Basic Understandings

Congressional Debate is like a simulation of the real United States legislature. A group of 10-25 students, called a Chamber, will compete in a legislative session. A series of bills and resolutions will be proposed by students from various schools. Students in turn will be selected by a presiding officer—a student elected to conduct the business of the round—to give speeches both advocating for and encouraging the defeat of the measure in front of them. Following each speech, competitors will be able to pose questions of the speaker. Once debate is exhausted on a particular item, the chamber will vote either to pass or fail the legislation, and debate moves on to the next item.

Legislation comes in two types—a bill and a resolution. A bill is a plan of action, detailing how a particular policy proposal will be implemented. A resolution, meanwhile, is a statement expressing the opinion of the chamber. Passing the resolution does not change anything about the world around us, it merely states the preference of the chamber. For example, let's say a school had a dress code. The student body may pass a piece of legislation expressing their displeasure with the dress code (a resolution) or legislation modifying the colors and styles of the school uniform (a bill).

At the beginning of the session, the students will elect a presiding officer, otherwise known as the PO. The PO's job is to select speakers to give speeches, select questioners, maintain decorum in the chamber, and facilitate a fast and smooth debate for all.

Typically, one session of Congress lasts about 2-3 hours. During that time, students typically give speeches 3 minutes in length. The first two speeches on a piece of legislation are known as the first advocacy, or first pro, and the first rejection, or first con. These speeches are followed by 2 minutes of cross examination. After the first pro and con speech are established, each additional speaker is subject to one minute of cross examination by the chamber. The PO selects the members of the chamber to ask the questions of the speaker.

Research

Congress arguments generally have solid evidence supporting their claims. Evidence can come from anywhere—newspapers, journal articles, studies, books, primary documents, etc. The type of evidence varies based on the topic being debated, but when gathering research, you want to ask yourself four questions:

1. Is the source reputable? Sources should have a good reputation for 'getting it right'—newswires such as the AP and Reuters tend to be less credible than newspapers. Wikipedia is good background reading to get an overview of a topic, but doesn't have a reputation of being a credible source.

2. Is the source verifiable? This refers to the ability to verify the data and claims made by the source. If a source is based on a personal interview or some other insider knowledge, that generally cannot be verified through independent means.

3. Is the source authoritative? Different sources are expert at different fields. The Office of Budget and Management is an authority on budget policy on the US, but may not be the ideal source for a resolution about foreign policy in the Middle East. Think about whether the source in question is an expert on the field the legislation is about.

4. Is the source recent? While not every source has to be up-to-the-minute, generally, the more recent the source, the better. As current events evolve, older sources may become outdated or irrelevant, but the nature of timeliness will vary based on the topic.

When presenting the evidence to support your claims in the round, students may read the evidence verbatim, or paraphrase. Students would be wise to keep copies of the original source for all evidence used in a speech, including that evidence which is paraphrased. Since paraphrasing is common in Congressional Debate, backing up the paraphrasing with the original source will help eliminate any question that may arise. Oral source citations should also be provided—state the name of the source and the date of publication. For example, "The *New York Times* claims on August 15, 2014 that malnourishment is plaguing the nation of Sudan."

Structural Components

A Congress speech typically consists of an introduction, a series of arguments and a conclusion. The introduction should be a succinct overview of what is to come in the speech—an attention-getter to get the audience focused, a clear thesis statement, and a preview of the arguments to come. Try to contain the introduction to about 30 seconds—anything longer than that eats up valuable time for content!

Each argument consists of a claim, backing to support that claim, a warrant, and one or more impacts. The claim is simply the argument being made—without support though, the claim is not inherently valid. Thus, it needs backing, or logic and evidence to support why the claim is true. The warrant connects the backing to the claim—it serves as support for why the backing is relevant to the claim. This may be an unstated assumption: for example,

let's say the claim is that Program X is a waste of money and the backing is that Program X costs ten billion dollars. The warrant here might be "that's too much money to spend on this program." The argument concludes with an impact—the benefits or drawbacks of the argument being true. By spending too much money on Program X, we won't have the money to spend on some other initiative that would be good. Or by spending this much money on Program X, certain harms will be generated that we want to avoid.

The arguments in a Congress speech can either be constructive in nature or they can serve as refutations to arguments posed by the other side. Constructive arguments build up support for one side of the debate; rebuttals tend to refute arguments on the opposite side. As debate progresses, it is important to avoid rehash, or the mere repeating of previous arguments. Generally speaking, the later the speech is on a given topic, the higher expectation there is to refute and debate previous arguments. After all, 'refutation' is an essential element in any debate event!

Congress speeches end with a conclusion that recaps the main points, repeats the introduction, and ties the speech together thematically.

Organizing

When preparing your Congress materials, organize research by legislation. It helps to 'tag' your evidence by indicating what claim or arguments that evidence supports. Include

Congressional Debate (CD)

a full citation in your notes so you can refer to the original source again should you need to.

You can even organize responses to potential arguments that may be raised throughout the course of debate. If you encounter the same piece of legislation at multiple tournaments, it helps to keep track of the arguments made by other speakers and prepare responses to those claims in advance. Organize your research in a way that will make it easily accessible to you during the session.

Be prepared to debate both sides of the legislation—some topics may encourage many advocacy speeches, so giving a speech opposing the legislation will be more advantageous. Be mindful of the balance of speeches in the chamber and adjust accordingly.

Standing it Up/Practicing
Giving practice speeches is a great way to get familiar with the mechanics of the event. You can either give speeches on your own, or ask a teammate(s) to debate with you to get familiar with the event. It helps to try to simulate the conditions of the Congress round as much as possible—use the same kind of notes you would in an actual speech.

It may be useful to prepare questions to ask both before the tournament as well as during the session. Having a few good questions prepared is always a good strategy, especially if someone who is called on before you asks a similar question to yours! One tactic may be to see how many questions you can ask of a teammate even though in the real round you may only get one question in.

Performance Tips
In your first Congress chamber, the key is confidence! Act like you've done this before and follow the lead of your fellow competitors. While it can be intimidating at first, your goal should be to get as many questions and speeches in as you can.

The basic delivery mechanics can take you a long way—eye contact, posture, physically walking between your points to indicate transitions, volume and projection, enunciation, etc. Practice these skills before the tournament so you are sure to demonstrate your mastery in the round!

As the round progresses, notice not only who stands out but why. What is it about their performance that is so appealing? Are they well researched? Do they have solid evidence? Keep track of the kinds of performances that stand out to you so you can focus on those skills in practice!

Resources
The Association provides resources on its website to help debaters get started in Congressional Debate. In addition to videos of previous final rounds, we offer videos to help you understand a session, argument selection, logical fallacies, as well as an archive of webinars on both topics frequently covered in Congressional Debate and strategies for approaching the activity. We also offer a guide for getting started in debate and templates for developing bills and resolutions.

Once you join the Association and register on our website, you can access these items at www.speechanddebate.org/resources. Use the filter function on the left hand side of the page to find resources specific to Congressional Debate.

The website www.congressionaldebate.org is another great resource to help you get started. There you will find comprehensive guides on presiding in round, writing legislation, templates to help you craft bills and resolutions, developing arguments, and other tips and tricks.

An Introduction to World Schools Debate (WSD)

NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE

Event Description

World Schools Debate features a dynamic format that combines the concepts of "prepared" motions with "impromptu" motions, encouraging debaters to focus on specific issues rather than debate theory or procedural arguments. This highly interactive style of debate allows debaters to engage each other, even during speeches. The challenging format requires good teamwork and in-depth quality argumentation.

Considerations for World Schools Debate

World Schools Debate is a three-on-three format. While a 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 *proposition* team proposing the motion or the *opposition* team advocating the rejection of the motion. Debaters present their position on a motion, refute their opponents, and respond to questions throughout the course of the debate.

Traits of Successful World Schools Debaters

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

- Thinks logically
- Analytical
- Persuasive
- Team-oriented
- Interested in world events
- Culturally competent

Past World Schools Motions

- This House would eliminate all occupational licensing requirements for practicing the law.
- This House supports the creation of LGBT schools.
- This House would establish an international cap and trade system for refugees.
- This House believes that a two party system is preferable to a multi party system.
- This House supports the privatization of all government owned energy companies.
- This House would prevent immediate family members of leaders from working in the government.
- This House regrets the use of technology to correct perceived imperfections (e.g,. Photoshop, auto-tuning, etc.).
- This House regrets celebrity political speech.
- This House supports parental leave.
- This House supports national funding of the arts.

Learn More! The National Speech & Debate Association is the leading provider of competitive and educational resources to aid students and coaches as they explore our competitive events. For World Schools Debate, we provide a number of helpful resources—including judge training, sample ballots, motion guides, access to final round videos, and more. Take advantage of the amazing benefits of being a member by using our resources to help advance yourself in competitive speech and debate activities. Visit www.speechanddebate.org for more information.

Find Your Voice

World Schools Debate opened my eyes to issues of global importance while sharpening my communication, critical thinking, and collaboration skills. The unique format of Worlds enables a teamwork dynamic that is not found in other formats of debate."

— Tiana Menon, Association Alum

World Schools Debate (WSD)

Basic Understandings

In World Schools Debate (WSD), two teams of three students debate each other. While a 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 are assigned one of two sides in each round—either the *proposition* team proposing the motion or the *opposition* team advocating the rejection of the motion. Debaters present their position on a motion, refute their opponents, and respond to questions throughout the course of the debate.

Research

After students do an initial brainstorming session on prepared motions, they should conduct research. In World Schools Debate, evidence is viewed differently than people tend to view it in more traditional forms of debate (LD, PF, Policy). Trying to approach evidence like one would in other events is counter-productive to individuals participating in Worlds. Instead, in order to be competitive in this event, one should incorporate contemporary and historical examples, statistics that show data and trends, analogies, and experiential evidence.

For impromptu motions, students cannot conduct outside research. Instead, they must rely upon their own understanding of the motion plus an almanac and a dictionary. As a result, it is important for students to stay up-to-date on current events and understand global issues of significance. Researching not just current events but the history to understand how we've arrived at these current events is important. Additionally, in the Worlds format, there are motions that focus on social, entertainment, and other issues, not just political ones.

Research is useful to understand motions and be able to generate arguments. The emphasis in World Schools is less on individual pieces of evidence and more on developing analysis and showing understanding. Research is acceptable on a prepared motion; however, citing evidence is not the primary means of developing argumentation in World Schools Debate.

Structure

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 Reply	4 minutes
Proposition Reply	4 minutes

Organization

Casing

Both prepared and impromptu motions are offered at every Worlds competition. Prepared motions are released prior to a tournament, so you have nearly an unlimited amount of time to think through writing your cases. However, for impromptu motions, you only have a limited amount of time (one hour!) to divide your time between case-writing and practicing.

Below is a case outline that can be used for both prepared and impromptu motions, along with explanations of what each portion of the outline means. Many arguments for prepared motions will be guided by your prior research in addition to thinking about a topic, whereas arguments for an impromptu motion will be guided purely by thinking about a topic and what material you already know going into the round.

The following example outlines the introduction and arguments for a first proposition speech. Similarly, the first opposition speech may use the same outline for the framing and arguments for their side. The second proposition and second opposition speakers also can use the argument outline for creating the third argument presented in their respective speeches.

Intro Outline:

Hook: A few sentences aimed at grabbing the attention of the audience.

Team Line: A short sentence that is rhetorically pleasing aimed at explaining the core of your side on a given topic.

State the Motion/Side

Framing: This section has necessary definitions for vague terms or terms of art in the motion, a model/criteria/definition of the value term for policy/fact/value motions respectively, and explanation of the burden of each side of the debate.

Roadmap: An explanation of what you are going to do in your speech. (e.g., "I will give our first two arguments, and my teammate <Name> will give our third argument.")

Argument Outline:

Tagline: Begins with "Our first/second/third argument is…" followed by five to seven words explaining the claim to your argument.

Thesis: Two or three sentences giving a summary of your argument. Think of it like the thesis to an English essay.

Steps: Steps are the warrant to your argument. Use evidence to explain why your argument is true. Use different forms of "steps" to back up the validity of your claim. For example, "steps" could reference different stakeholders who are affected by the argument; "steps" could be subpoints with different examples; or "steps" could be chronological or causal.

Impact: A few sentences explaining why your argument matters. Who does it affect? How does it affect them?

Weighing: A few sentences explaining why your argument should matter more than the other team's arguments. (Generally this comes after the first proposition speech, since there isn't anything to compare your impacts to yet!)

Refutation Strategies

Debaters should use a combination of both offense and defense when responding to their opponent's arguments. Stick to one to three arguments at most against every constructive argument that your opponent makes, because you should prioritize more efficient and better explained arguments rather than blippy, short arguments. Offense tends to be better than defense because it forces the opposing team to defend their arguments or risk losing to your offensive response.

World Schools Debate (WSD)

The Two Types of Refutation

There are two main types of refutation: *offense* and *defense*. Your responses to your opponent's arguments can utilize both or simply one of the two.

"Offense" refers to points of refutation that make your opponent's argument a reason for why they should *lose* the debate or for why you should *win* the debate. For example, on the topic, "Cats are better than dogs," one side might argue that cats are better because they tend to keep to themselves and are low-maintenance. The other side might make an offensive argument saying that is actually why cats are *not* better than dogs. Because people purchase pets for a primary reason— to have a companion—if cats keep to themselves and are low-maintenance, then they are in fact *not* a good pet, whereas dogs love their owners and make great companions.

"Defense" refers to points of refutation that indicate an argument is not true, doesn't matter, or does matter *but* is outweighed by another argument in the debate. For example, with the same topic, "Cats are better than dogs," a defensive response might say that cats are in fact not low-maintenance because they require more frequent grooming.

Flowing

"Flowing" as it is commonly known in debate refers to how you take notes in your respective version of debate. Each style tends to have their own form of flowing. If you are learning WSD, you have likely learned a way to flow that you prefer from another style of debate. Students can use any form of flowing that they find easiest for them to follow the structure and arguments of the debate round. However, it is important to know how many WSD judges will flow your speeches and how that might impact the way you should speak.

Judges who flow in a more "conventional" WSD format will likely fold up their paper into six equal proportions horizontally rather vertically. Each sixth of the paper, which forms a column, will represent one of the constructive speeches from the first proposition speech to the third opposition speech. Then, they will flow the reply speeches side by side on another sheet of paper. Other judges will fold up their paper into eight equally proportioned columns and flow every speech including the reply speeches. Regardless of how they proportion their flows, they will flow each speech from the top down as you speak then draw arrows connecting arguments and their respective points of refutation.

Additionally, some judges might take note of who offers POIs (Points of Information) and what side they are on. At the end of the debate, if a team member has offered no POIs, their speaker points might be docked a speaker point. If an entire team has no POIs, the entire team will be docked speaker points. This is not true of all judges, but many keep some form of tally as debates occur. Since WSD ought to be decided by the team that has the most speaker points at the end of the debate, this is crucial to note.

World Schools Debate (WSD)

Standing it Up/Practicing

Practicing and speaking is one of the most important things to do while preparing for any speech or tournament. Each speech needs to be fluid and seemingly off-the-cuff (even if that means you have practiced it nearly a dozen times). WSD has a huge focus on persuasion/public speaking, which must be earned. Persuasion comes from standing up and practicing your speeches to get your tone, emphasis, and rate of speech for your arguments right. A nearly perfect case means nothing in a world where you have not practiced delivering the speech.

As such, you should devote a huge portion of your time preparing for a tournament to practicing delivering your respective arguments as well as engaging in full practice debates. Practice how you play so that you can be one of the most prepared teams at a tournament. A good rule of thumb is that you should never go into a debate round having a) not practiced your assigned speech and b) not having had a practice debate on that topic.

Performance Tips

When at your first tournament, it is important to keep in mind that it gets easier with more practice. The goal is not about where you begin, but where you end. Improving from round to round, and tournament to tournament, is the true mark of success. Focus not only on what you could enhance, but also on what you did well. Take feedback from judges as opportunities to improve. If they provide oral feedback, take notes on what they share to review with your coach. Finally, do not fixate on the wins and losses—it won't lead to greater success!

Resources

The Association offers great resources to our members. These include webinars, motion guides, judging materials, and more. Once you join the Association and register on our website, you can access these and other materials at www.speechanddebate.org/resources. Use the filter function on the left hand side of the page to find resources specific to World Schools Debate.

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