



Judge's Guide



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Event Guidelines

Congressional Debate

In CD, students research a docket, follow procedures, and give speeches.



Presiding Officer

One student is elected to run the meeting. They recognize speakers and keep the clock. The PO **must use precedence and recency** to ensure everyone gets a fair turn to speak.



Docket

This is the packet of legislation everyone researches before the tournament. **The chamber votes** on which bill to debate first.



Author/Sponsorship

The very **first speech on a bill**. It explains why the bill was written and what it hopes to achieve.



Questioning

After each speech, there is a dedicated time for other Senators/Representatives to ask questions. **No multi-part questions** allowed!

Segment	Time	Who?	What is Happening?
Authorship/Sponsorship	3 Min	Pro	The "Opening Argument." Explains what is wrong with the status quo and how the bill solves the concern. Followed by 2 mins of questioning from the chamber.
First Negative Speech	3 Min	Con	The "Opposition Start." Explains the harms the bill causes and how the status quo (or an alternative) is better. Followed by 2 mins of questioning from the chamber.
All Subsequent Speeches 	3 Min	Mixed	The "Alternating Pro and Con Speeches." Explains the flaws in the previous speakers' logic while establishing new perspectives to advance the debate. Followed by 1 min of questioning from the chamber.

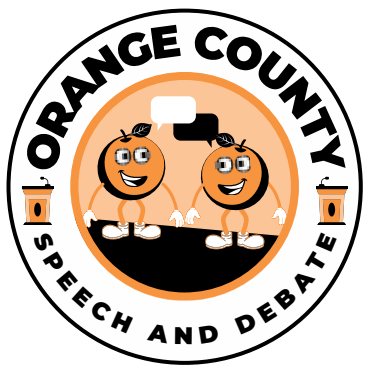
One-Sided Debate

If the debate becomes one-sided, the PO says: *"Seeing no speakers on the opposing side, the Chair will entertain a motion to move the previous question (vote), or we will continue with a one-sided debate."*

Final Speeches for Each Side	3 Min	Mixed	"The Final Speeches." Explains the major arguments of the round by weighing them against one another to determine whether the bill should pass or fail. Followed by 1 min of questioning from the chamber.
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OCPS Speech and Debate League Mission Reminder: From first-timer to finalist, we champion every student, every coach, every round.

- We provide accessible, structured tournament experiences exclusively for Orange County Public Schools.
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A Judge Guide for **Congressional Debate**

You are more than a referee; you are a teacher for a day! Your written feedback is the primary tool students use to build resilience and master their skills.



Remember the Beginners

Many students are nervous. **No cell phones or recording devices allowed in this room.** A kind smile and a nod can make a huge difference in their confidence!



Results are Private

Do not tell the students who won or lost in the room. **Give a verbal "Nice job!" but no specific feedback or critique should be given verbally.** Let them read it on the ballot.



Do Not Disqualify

As a Learning League, competitors are only disqualified for major behavioral issues. Students who miss key event requirements (like memorization) **cannot place 1st.** Use feedback to reinforce expectations.



Momentum is Key

In Congressional Debate, first place is typically awarded to the speaker who commands the room with a balance of **persuasive delivery, insightful refutation, and active leadership** in the chamber.

Ranking Speakers

At the end of the round, you must rank the top 8 students in the chamber.

"Statesman Standard"

- Impact: Did their speeches move the debate forward or just repeat previous points?
- Leadership: Did they ask high-quality questions and remain engaged even when not speaking?
- Professionalism: Did they treat fellow representatives with respect and decorum?

Don't Forget the Presiding Officer (PO)! If they ran the room efficiently, they deserve a spot in your Top 8.

Assigning Speaker Points

Points are awarded for each speech delivered in chamber.

- **6 (A+): Exceptional.** Masterful delivery, sophisticated evidence, and clear "clash" with previous speakers.
- **5 (A/A-): Good.** Very clear arguments, confident delivery, and effective questioning.
- **4 (B/B+): Emerging.** Solid understanding of the bill with some room to grow in presentation.
- **3 (C+/B-): Needs Support.** Significant struggle with clarity and time, but tried their best.

Note: Scores below 3 are reserved for unprofessional or inappropriate behavior only.

Writing Actionable Feedback

The best ballots give students a "to-do list" for their next round. Avoid vague comments like "Good job!"

GLOWS

- "Your sponsorship speech was very persuasive."
- "You stayed calm and polite during a very aggressive questioning period."
- "Great 'clash' and nice job summarizing other claims."

GROWS

- "Try to quote specific data or a source to support your claims about the bill's cost."
- "Slow down just a bit so the chamber can follow your stance."
- "In later speeches, try to offer new points, instead of repeating other's claims."

Quality over Quantity

- A student with two impactful speeches can outrank one with four mediocre or repetitive ones.
- Between two students of equal skill, the higher rank should go to the one with more speeches or questions.

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Event Guidelines

Declamation

In Dec, students deliver a speech originally written/delivered by someone else.



The Material

The speech must have been given publicly and available to print in transcript form (e.g., **commencement addresses**, **historical speeches**, **TED talks**).



Memorization

The speech ought to be **memorized** by the student. Speakers should not use notes or scripts during the performance.



The Introduction

Every performance should include an "Introduction." This is where the student speaks to the audience to **state the title / author and necessary context** for the speech.

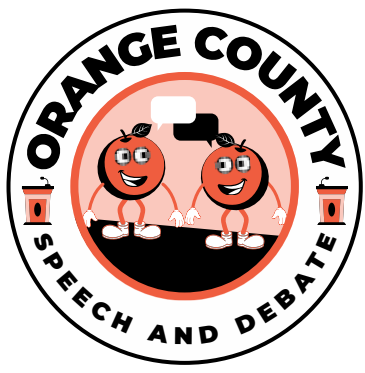


Time Limit

The maximum time limit is 10 minutes. There is a **30-second "grace period" after the 10-minute mark**. There is no minimum time limit but length can be a point of consideration when ranking speakers and providing feedback.

Segment	Suggested Time	What is Happening?
The Teaser	0:00 - 1:30	Hook. A short segment from the speech to grab attention before the intro.
The Intro	1:30 - 2:30	Context. The student introduces the original author, the date/location of the speech, and its "why".
The Body	2:30 - 8:30	Performance. Delivery of the core message of the original speaker with personal style and conviction.
The Conclusion	8:30 - 10:00	Impact. Bringing the speech to a powerful close and leaving a lasting impression on the audience.

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A Judge Guide for Declamation

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Conviction is Key

In Declamation, first place is typically awarded to the speaker who commands the room by making the original author's words feel like their own personal conviction through a balance of sincere delivery, purposeful movement, and a deep understanding of the speech's historical impact.

Ranking Speakers

At the end of the round, you must rank the speakers.

The "Reason for Ranking" (RFR) explains why you ranked the way you did.

Examples

- "To maintain a first-place rank, **continue to** embody the original speaker's conviction so authentically that the words feel like your own."
- "To move up in rankings, **try to** find more 'vocal levels' throughout the piece. While your energy is impressive, delivering the entire speech at a high volume can cause the audience to lose interest."

Assigning Speaker Points

Each speaker must outscore or tie lower-ranked participant(s).

- **100 (A+): Exceptional.** Masterful, polished, and deeply impactful.
- **98-99 (A/A): Strong.** Command of the room with high technical skill.
- **96-97 (B/B+): Good.** Very strong delivery with minor polish needed.
- **95-94 (C+/B-): Emerging.** Professional performance; meets all requirements.
- **93-92 (C/C-): Needs Support.** Clear effort and understanding with room to grow.

Note: Scores below 92 are reserved for unprofessional or inappropriate behavior only

Writing Actionable Feedback

The best ballots give students a "to-do list" for their next round. Avoid vague comments like "Good job!"

GLOWS

- "Your articulation was crystal clear! I didn't miss a single word, even during the emotional climax."

GROWS

- "Try to use your hands to emphasize key words rather than keeping them at your sides the whole time."

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Event Guidelines

Dramatic Performance

In DP, students perform as multiple characters using their voice, face, and body.



The Material

The performance must be from a **single published work**. It can be a Monologue (one character) or, typically, a cutting that involves multiple characters.



Memorization

The speech ought to be **memorized** by the student. Speakers should not use notes or scripts during the performance.



The Introduction

Every performance should include an "Introduction." This is where the student drops character, and speaks to the audience to **state the title / author and necessary context** for the story.



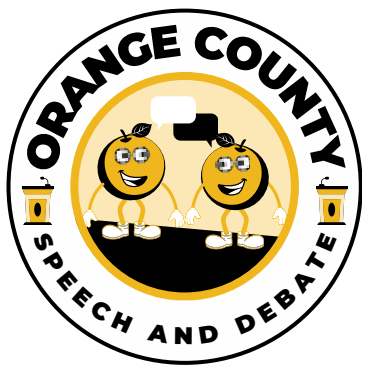
Time Limit

The maximum time limit is 10 minutes. There is a **30-second "grace period" after the 10-minute mark**. There is no minimum time limit but length can be a point of consideration when ranking speakers and providing feedback.

Segment	Suggested Time	What is Happening?
The Teaser	0:00 - 1:30	Hook. A short segment from the script to grab attention before the intro.
The Intro	1:30 - 2:30	Context. The student introduces the title, author, and "why" of the story.
The Exposition	2:30 - 5:00	Setting the Scene. Building the world and introducing the conflict.
The Climax	5:00 - 8:30	Peak. The emotional high point where the conflict reaches its limit.
The Resolution	8:30 - 10:00	Falling Action. Bringing the story to a close and leaving an impact.

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A Judge Guide for Dramatic Performance

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Characters are Key

In Dramatic Performance, first place is typically awarded to the speaker who makes "Character A" and "Character B" look and sound like two **completely different people** through distinct posture and vocal shifts.

Ranking Speakers

At the end of the round, you must rank the speakers.

The "Reason for Ranking" (RFR) explains why you ranked the way you did.

Examples

- "To maintain a first-place rank, **continue to** use the entire performance space. Your blocking felt purposeful and helped tell the story visually."
- "To move up in rankings, **try to** find more 'levels' in your performance. If the whole piece is at a high energy level, the audience can get tired; find a quiet moment to contrast the loud ones."

Assigning Speaker Points

Each speaker must outscore or tie lower-ranked participant(s).

- **100 (A+): Exceptional.** Masterful, polished, and deeply impactful.
- **98-99 (A/A): Strong.** Command of the room with high technical skill.
- **96-97 (B/B+): Good.** Very strong delivery with minor polish needed.
- **95-94 (C+/B-): Emerging.** Professional performance; meets all requirements.
- **93-92 (C/C-): Needs Support.** Clear effort and understanding with room to grow.

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Writing Actionable Feedback

The best ballots give students a "to-do list" for their next round. Avoid vague comments like "Good job!"

GLOWS

- "Your physical transitions between characters were seamless! I never had to guess which person was speaking."

GROWS

- "Be careful not to let your volume drop too low during the emotional climax; I want to hear every word of that beautiful dialogue!"

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Event Guidelines



Extemporaneous Debate

In Ext-D, students have 30 minutes to prepare a case each round.



Prep Room

In a separate room, competitors will **receive the resolution and their assigned side**. They are given time to find evidence and write an outline.



Prep Time

Before the round, students have 30 minutes to prepare for the event. **During** the round, there are two minutes of mandatory prep time.



Cross-Examination

CX is the time to **ask questions**, clarifying your opponent's points and finding logical gaps.



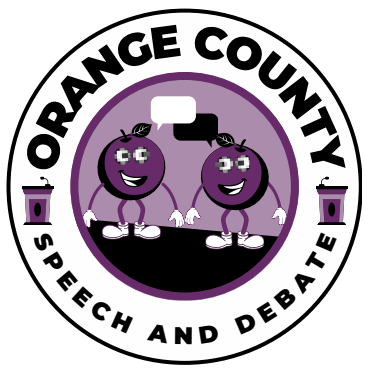
One v. One

This is a **solo event**. One student will debate against another. They all prepare in the same room before heading to their competition rooms.

Segment	Time	Who?	What is Happening?
Proposition Constructive	2 Min	Prop	The "Fast Start." Proposition presents main points in favor of the resolution.
Opp Cross-Ex of Proposition	1 Min	Opp	The "Quick Probe." Opposition asks 1-2 questions to test the Proposition's logic.
Opposition Constructive	2 Min	Opp	The "Counter-Punch." Opposition presents their case and attacks the Proposition's points.
Prop Cross-Ex of Opposition	1 Min	Prop	The "Focus Check." Proposition asks 1-2 questions to challenge the Opposition's position.
1 Minute of Mandatory Prep Time			
Proposition Rebuttal	2 Min	Prop	The "Rebuild." Proposition defends their case and responds to the Opp attacks.
Opposition Rebuttal	2 Min	Opp	The "Rebut." Opposition defends their points and responds to the Prop rebuttal.
1 Minute of Mandatory Prep Time			
Proposition Rebuttal	2 Min	Prop	The "Last Chance." Proposition rebuts a final time and then crystallizes the round, emphasizing why their side won the round.
Opposition Rebuttal	2 Min	Opp	The "Last Word." Last speech of the round! Opposition gives their final rebuttal, crystallizes, and explains why their side wins.

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A Judge Guide for **Extemporaneous Debate**

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Logic is Key

In Extemporaneous Debate, the winning side is typically awarded to the debater who **prioritizes logical consistency and rebuttal over raw evidence.**

Selecting a Winner

At the end of the round, you must pick one winner.

The "Reason for Decision"
RFD explains why you voted the way you did.

Examples

- "I voted for the Proposition **because** they directly addressed the Opposition's concerns about cost while maintaining their own logic."
- "I voted for the Opposition **because** their 'impact' argument provided a clearer explanation of why the Proposition's proposal would be difficult to implement."

Assigning Speaker Points

In this league, the winner must outscore or tie their opponent in speaker points.

- **30 (A+): Exceptional.** Polished, logical, and masterfully handled.
- **28-29 (A/A-): Strong.** Very clear arguments and confident delivery.
- **26-27 (B/B+): Good.** Solid understanding with some room to grow.
- **24-25 (C+/B-): Emerging.** The student followed the format and tried their best.
- **22-23 (C/C-): Needs Support.** Significant struggle with time or clarity.

Note: Scores below 22 are reserved for unprofessional or inappropriate behavior only.

Writing Actionable Feedback

The best ballots give students a "to-do list" for their next round. Avoid vague comments like "Good job!"

GLOWS

- "Great eye contact during your Proposition Constructive!"
- "Your evidence for your first claim was powerful and hard for your opponent to rebut."
- "You stayed calm and polite during a tough Cross-Ex."

GROWS

- "Try to use your Prep Time to write down 2-3 specific 'clash' points."
- "Slow down just a bit when reading your evidence so I can follow your logic."
- "In your final rebuttal, tell me exactly why your side wins."

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Event Guidelines

Extemp. Speaking

In Ext-S, students have 30 minutes to prepare a speech each round.



Prep Room

In a separate room, competitors will **draw three questions and pick one** to research. They will then outline and potentially draft a speech.



Prep Time

Students have **30 minutes to prepare** for this event ahead of time.



No Notes

In this league, Extemp is a "no-note" event. Students can use their prep time to outline, but should **leave notes behind** when they go to speak!



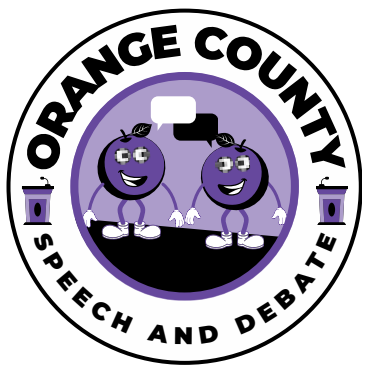
Seven Minute Rule

The maximum time limit is **7 minutes**. There is a **30-second "grace period"** after the 7-minute mark. There is no minimum time limit but length can be a point of consideration when ranking speakers and providing feedback.

Segment	Suggested Time	What is Happening?
The Hook & Question	0:00 - 1:30	Intro. Grab attention, state the exact question, and provide your answer (thesis).
Point 1: The Context	1:30 - 3:15	Background. Use evidence to explain the history or current state of the issue.
Point 2: The Analysis	3:15 - 5:00	"How/Why." Dig into the deeper cause or the impact - politically, socially, economically.
Point 3: The Future	5:00 - 6:15	Looking Ahead. What happens next? Why does this matter for the world?
The Conclusion	6:15 - 7:00	Tie-Back. Restate the question and your answer, then finish with a strong final thought.

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A Judge Guide for Extemp. Speaking

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-  **Remember the Beginners**
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-  **Results are Private**
Do not tell the students who won or lost in the room. **Give a verbal "Nice job!" but no specific feedback or critique should be given verbally.** Let them read it on the ballot.
-  **Do Not Disqualify**
As a Learning League, competitors are only disqualified for major behavioral issues. Students who miss key event requirements (like memorization) **cannot place 1st.** Use feedback to reinforce expectations.
-  **The Answer is Key**
In Extemporaneous Speaking, first place is typically awarded to the speaker who most directly and comprehensively **answers the specific prompt they drew** in the prep room.

Ranking Speakers

At the end of the round, you must rank the speakers.

The "Reason for Ranking" (RFR) explains why you ranked the way you did.

Examples

- "To maintain a first-place rank, **continue to** provide deep analysis. You didn't just tell me what happened; you explained why it happened."
- "To move up in rankings, **try to** polish your delivery. You have great facts, but working on a more confident, 'news anchor' style will help those facts land harder."

Assigning Speaker Points

Each speaker must outscore or tie lower-ranked participant(s).

- **100 (A+): Exceptional.**
Masterful, polished, and deeply impactful.
- **98-99 (A/A): Strong.**
Command of the room with high technical skill.
- **96-97 (B/B+): Good.**
Very strong delivery with minor polish needed.
- **95-94 (C+/B-): Emerging.**
Professional performance; meets all requirements.
- **93-92 (C/C-): Needs Support.** Clear effort and understanding with room to grow.

Note: Scores below 92 are reserved for unprofessional or inappropriate behavior only.

Writing Actionable Feedback

The best ballots give students a "to-do list" for their next round. Avoid vague comments like "Good job!"

GLOWS

- "You cited a great variety of sources (The Economist, AP, etc.), which gave your answer a lot of credibility."

GROWS

- "Try to use more 'Signposting.' Explicitly saying 'My second point is...' helps the judge follow logic through a complex topic."

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Event Guidelines

Impromptu Speaking

In IMP, students craft and deliver a speech with almost no preparation time.



The Draw

Each student will be given **three prompt options**. They choose one and then their timer starts. The topics not chosen are put back in the envelope.



Budgeting Time

Students each have a total of **7 minutes**. They decide how much to use for "Prep" and how much to use for "Speaking."
Example: 2 minutes of prep and 5 minutes of speaking is a common goal.



No Notes

In this league, Impromptu is a **"no-note" event**. Students can write an outline during prep time, but should not hold it while speaking. They **can hold** their prompt from the draw.



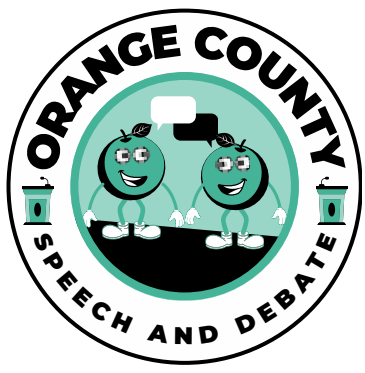
Structure

Most speeches follow a **"Rule of Three"**—an introduction, two or three supporting examples (from current events, popular culture, or personal experiences), and a conclusion.

Segment	Suggested Time	What is Happening?
Preparation	0:00 - 2:00	Brainstorm. Create a thesis and choose 2-3 examples to support it.
Introduction	2:00 - 3:00	Hook. State the prompt, explain your interpretation, and preview your points.
Body Points	3:00 - 6:00	Evidence. Use stories from current events, popular culture, or personal experiences to prove your point.
Conclusion	6:00 - 7:00	Tie-Back. Summarize your points and leave the judge with a final thought.

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A Judge Guide for **Impromptu Speaking**

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Structure is Key

In Impromptu Speaking, first place is typically awarded to the speaker who has a **clear Intro, Body, and Conclusion** over a student who speaks well but wanders off-topic.

Ranking Speakers

At the end of the round, you must rank the speakers.

The "Reason for Ranking" (RFR) explains why you ranked the way you did.

Examples

- "To maintain a first-place rank, **continue to** use diverse examples. Pairing a historical event with a personal story showed a great range of knowledge."
- "To move up in rankings, **try to** manage your time more evenly. You spent three minutes on your first point but only thirty seconds on your second."

Assigning Speaker Points

Each speaker must outscore or tie lower-ranked participant(s).

- **100 (A+): Exceptional.** Masterful, polished, and deeply impactful.
- **98-99 (A/A): Strong.** Command of the room with high technical skill.
- **96-97 (B/B+): Good.** Very strong delivery with minor polish needed.
- **95-94 (C+/B-): Emerging.** Professional performance; meets all requirements.
- **93-92 (C/C-): Needs Support.** Clear effort and understanding with room to grow.

Note: Scores below 92 are reserved for unprofessional or inappropriate behavior only.

Writing Actionable Feedback

The best ballots give students a "to-do list" for their next round. Avoid vague comments like "Good job!"

GLOWS

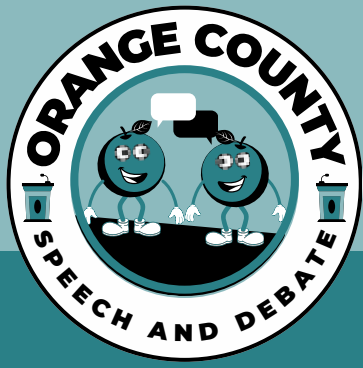
- "You did a fantastic job 'checking back' to the prompt in every single point, which made your speech feel very unified."

GROWS

- "Work on your 'Roadmap' in the introduction. Tell the judge exactly what your two points will be before you start explaining them."

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Event Guidelines

Lincoln-Douglas Debate

In LD, students are debating the moral or ethical principles behind a topic.



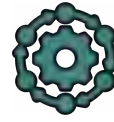
Prep Time

Each debater has **4 minutes** of total preparation time. They can use this in any amount between speeches to organize their thoughts, write down arguments, or review evidence.



Cross-Ex

These are periods for **questioning only**. It is a time to ask questions to better understand the opponent's case, rather than making new speeches.



Framework

Constructive speeches are centered around a **Value** (the ultimate ethical goal) and a **Criterion** (the mechanism used to reach or measure that value).



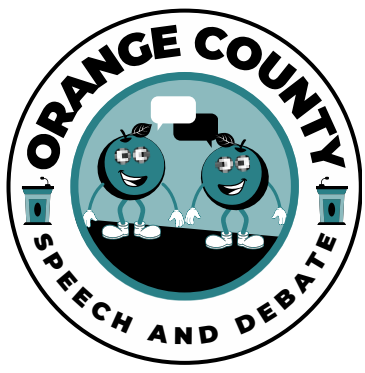
Rebuttals

No new arguments are generally allowed in later rebuttals; these segments are for **extending, defending, and summarizing** arguments already made in the previous speeches.

Segment	Time	Who?	What is Happening?
Affirmative Constructive (AC)	6 Min	Aff	The "First Impression." The Affirmative presents their Value/Criterion framework and contentions.
Neg Cross-Ex of Aff	3 Min	Neg	The "Investigation." Negative asks questions to clarify the AC and find holes in the logic.
Negative Constructive (NC)	7 Min	Neg	The "Counter-Attack." Negative presents their own case AND begins to attack the Affirmative's points.
Aff Cross-Ex of Neg	3 Min	Aff	The "Second Investigation." Affirmative asks questions to challenge the Negative's positions.
1st Affirmative Rebuttal (1AR)	4 Min	Aff	The "Busy Speech." Affirmative must defend their case while also attacking the Negative case.
Negative Rebuttal (NR)	6 Min	Neg	The "Closing Argument." Negative's final chance to rebut their opponent's contentions and explain why their logic wins the round.
2nd Affirmative Rebuttal (2AR)	3 Min	Aff	The "Final Word." Affirmative summarizes the "clash" points and gives the final plea to the judge.

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A Judge Guide for **Lincoln-Douglas Debate**

You are more than a referee; you are a teacher for a day! Your written feedback is the primary tool students use to build resilience and master their skills.



Remember the Beginners

Many students are nervous. **No cell phones or recording devices allowed in this room.** A kind smile and a nod can make a huge difference in their confidence!



Results are Private

Do not tell the students who won or lost in the room. **Give a verbal "Nice job!" but no specific feedback or critique should be given verbally.** Let them read it on the ballot.



Do Not Disqualify

As a Learning League, competitors are only disqualified for major behavioral issues. Students who miss key event requirements (like memorization) **cannot place 1st.** Use feedback to reinforce expectations.



Audience is Key

In Lincoln Douglas, the winning side is typically awarded to the debater who best connects their arguments to their **value** and **criterion** throughout the entire round, while also refuting the claims of their opponent.

Selecting a Winner

At the end of the round, you must pick one winner.

The "Reason for Decision" (RFD) explains why you voted the way you did.

Examples

- "I voted for the Affirmative **because** they proved that their Value of Liberty was more important for this topic than the Negative's Value of Safety."
- "I voted for the Negative **because** they successfully showed that the Affirmative's plan would lead to more harm than good."

Assigning Speaker Points

In this league, the winner must outscore or tie their opponent in speaker points.

- **30 (A+): Exceptional.** Polished, logical, and masterfully handled.
- **28-29 (A/A-): Strong.** Very clear arguments and confident delivery.
- **26-27 (B/B+): Good.** Solid understanding with some room to grow.
- **24-25 (C+/B-): Emerging.** The student followed the format and tried their best.
- **22-23 (C/C-): Needs Support.** Significant struggle with time or clarity.

Note: Scores below 22 are reserved for unprofessional or inappropriate behavior only.

Writing Actionable Feedback

The best ballots give students a "to-do list" for their next round. Avoid vague comments like "Good job!"

GLOWS

- "Great eye contact during your TAC!"
- "Your Value of *Human Rights* was very well-explained."
- "You stayed calm and polite during a tough Cross-Ex."

GROWS

- "Try to use your Prep Time to write down 2-3 specific 'clash' points."
- "Slow down just a bit when reading your evidence so I can follow your logic."
- "In your final rebuttal, try to tell me exactly why your Criterion wins."

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Event Guidelines

Original Oratory

In OO, student-written speeches address a significant issue and offer a solution.



The Script

The speech must be the student's **original work**. While it can include up to 150 words of quoted material, the majority should be the student's unique voice.



Memorization

The speech ought to be **memorized** by the student. Speakers should not use notes or scripts during the performance.



The Structure

Most oratories follow a "**Problem-Cause-Solution**" format. Speakers demonstrate this structure by stepping in a triangle. They use a mix of humor, heart, and hard data to keep the audience's attention.



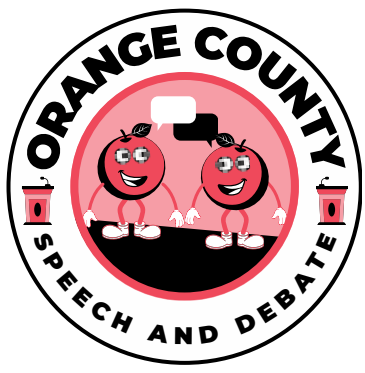
Time Limit

The maximum time limit is 10 minutes. There is a **30-second "grace period" after the 10-minute mark**. There is no minimum time limit but length can be a point of consideration when ranking speakers and providing feedback.

Segment	Suggested Time	What is Happening?
The Teaser	0:00 - 1:30	Hook. An attention-getting opening (story, joke, stat) that introduces the topic.
The Roadmap	1:30 - 2:00	Thesis. The student clearly states the problem and what they will discuss.
The Problem	2:00 - 5:00	Why it Matters. Evidence and stories that show the significance of the issue.
The Cause	5:00 - 7:30	Roots. Explaining why this problem exists in our society or mindset.
The Solution	7:30 - 9:00	Call to Action. What can the audience (or society) do to fix the problem?
The Conclusion	9:00 - 10:00	Tie-Back. A final summary that connects back to the opening teaser.

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A Judge Guide for Original Oratory

You are more than a referee; you are a teacher for a day! Your written feedback is the primary tool students use to build resilience and master their skills.

-  **Remember the Beginners**
Many students are nervous. **No cell phones or recording devices allowed in this room.** A kind smile and a nod can make a huge difference in their confidence!
-  **Results are Private**
Do not tell the students who won or lost in the room. **Give a verbal "Nice job!" but no specific feedback or critique should be given verbally.** Let them read it on the ballot.
-  **Do Not Disqualify**
As a Learning League, competitors are only disqualified for major behavioral issues. Students who miss key event requirements (like memorization) **cannot place 1st.** Use feedback to reinforce expectations.
-  **Connection is Key**
In Original Oratory, first place is typically awarded to the speaker who best **balances a well-crafted message with a sincere, engaging delivery** that resonates with the audience.

Ranking Speakers

At the end of the round, you must rank the speakers.

The "Reason for Ranking" (RFR) explains why you ranked the way you did.

Examples

- "To maintain a first-place rank, **continue to** lean into your personal connection to the topic. Your sincerity is what ultimately won the room today."
- "To move up in rankings, **try to** strengthen your 'Call to Action.' Give the audience a very specific step they can take to help solve the issue you presented."

Assigning Speaker Points

Each speaker must outscore or tie lower-ranked participant(s).

- **100 (A+): Exceptional.** Masterful, polished, and deeply impactful.
- **98-99 (A/A): Strong.** Command of the room with high technical skill.
- **96-97 (B/B+): Good.** Very strong delivery with minor polish needed.
- **95-94 (C+/B-): Emerging.** Professional performance; meets all requirements.
- **93-92 (C/C-): Needs Support.** Clear effort and understanding with room to grow.

Note: Scores below 92 are reserved for unprofessional or inappropriate behavior only.

Writing Actionable Feedback

The best ballots give students a "to-do list" for their next round. Avoid vague comments like "Good job!"

GLOWS

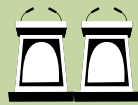
- "Your use of humor in the introduction effectively broke the ice and made your serious topic much more relatable."

GROWS

- "Try to vary your vocal pitch more during the 'Problem' section; a lower, more serious tone would help emphasize the urgency of your message."

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Event Guidelines

Public Forum Debate

In PF, pairs of students debate current events, using evidence-based advocacy.



Prep Time

Each team has **3 minutes** of total preparation time. They can use this in any amount between speeches to organize thoughts, write down "clash" points, or review evidence.



Crossfire

In these periods, debaters "hold the floor" together to **ask each other questions**. It is a time to ask questions in order to find holes in logic, rather than making new speeches.



Coin Flip

Before the round, teams flip a coin. The winner chooses either the

- **Side** (Pro or Con) or
- **Speaking Position** (1st or 2nd).

The loser chooses the remaining option.



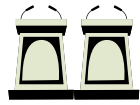
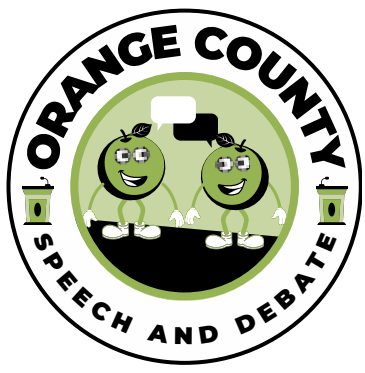
Final Focus

The last speech from each team. No new arguments are allowed; this segment is for **summarizing** the most important reasons why each team claims they won the round.

Segment	Time	Who?	What is Happening?
1 st Speaker - Team A (A1)	4 Min	A1	" 1st Impression. " Team A presents their case and main arguments (contentions).
1 st Speaker - Team B (B1)	4 Min	B1	" Counter-Case. " Team B presents their case and main arguments (contentions).
Crossfire (A1 & B1)	3 Min	Both	" Investigation #1. " The 1 st speakers ask questions to clarify positions.
2 nd Speaker - Team A (A2)	4 Min	A2	" Rebuttal A. " Team A defends their case and begins to address Team B's points.
2 nd Speaker - Team B (B2)	4 Min	B2	" Rebuttal B. " Team B defends their case and continues their attack.
Crossfire (A2 & B2)	3 Min	Both	" Investigation #2. " The 2 nd speakers challenge each other's evidence.
Summary - A1	3 Min	A1	" Shrinking Round. " A1 identifies the remaining key "clash" points.
Summary - B1	3 Min	B1	" Opposition Summary. " B1 explains why they still win the logic.
Grand Crossfire - All	3 Min	All 4	" Investigation #3. " All four debaters may ask and answer questions.
Final Focus - A2	2 Min	A2	" Final Plea. " A2 names the "voting issues" to decide the winner.
Final Focus - B2	2 Min	B2	" Last Word. " B2 provides their final persuasive summary.

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A Judge Guide for Public Forum Debate

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Do Not Disqualify

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Audience is Key

In Public Forum, the winning side is typically awarded to the debaters who were **most persuasive and accessible**, over a team who used a lot of technical jargon.

Selecting a Winner

At the end of the round, you must pick one winner.

The "Reason for Decision" RFD explains why you voted the way you did.

Examples

- "I voted for the Pro team **because** they weighed their impacts; they proved that the economic benefits were more urgent than the localized risks raised by the Con."
- "I voted for the Con team **because** they countered the Pro's primary data point, leaving the Pro's main argument without enough support to win the round."

Assigning Speaker Points

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- **30 (A+): Exceptional.** Polished, logical, and masterfully handled.
- **28-29 (A/A-): Strong.** Very clear arguments and confident delivery.
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Note: Scores below 22 are reserved for unprofessional or inappropriate behavior only.

Writing Actionable Feedback

The best ballots give students a "to-do list" for their next round. Avoid vague comments like "Good job!"

GLOWS

- "Great eye contact during your summary!"
- "Your evidence was strong in quality and quantity."
- "You stayed calm and polite during a tough crossfire."

GROWS

- "Try to use your Prep Time to write down 2-3 specific 'clash' points."
- "Slow down just a bit when reading your evidence so I can follow your logic."
- "In your final focus, try to tell me exactly why your side wins."

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Event Guidelines

Public Speaking

In PS (formerly "Just Talk"), students read aloud a provided piece.

This event is only open to Middle School students.



Receiving the Piece

At the start of the tournament, all competing students receive a **700-word story or speech for each round**. This will be their first time seeing it!



Familiarization

Students do not need to memorize the piece. Instead, they use their time before the round to **read through it**, underline tricky words, and decide where to pause.



Competition

Each student will stand in front of a judge and read the piece aloud. Their goal is to **make the story come alive** using only their voice and body language.



Criteria

Judges are looking for the **"Tools of a Speaker"**: Volume, Speed, Articulation, Confidence, Tone, Gestures, Eye Contact, etc.

Segment	Suggested Time	What is Happening?
The Setup	0:00 - 0:30	Intro. Walk to the front, make eye contact with the judge, and state your name as well as the title of the piece.
The Reading	0:30 - 6:30	Performance. Read the piece with expression. Don't just "read words"—tell the story!
The Finish	6:30 - 7:00	Close. Make eye contact with the judge, say a clear "Thank you," and return to your seat.

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A Judge Guide for Public Speaking

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Speaking Tools are Key

In Public Speaking, first place is typically awarded to the speaker who uses purposeful **gestures**, varied **volume**, and a **pace** that is easy to follow.

Ranking Speakers

At the end of the round, you must rank the speakers.

The "Reason for Ranking" (RFR) explains why you ranked the way you did.

Examples

- "To maintain a first-place rank, **continue to** look up from the page. Those moments of eye contact really made the story feel like it was being told directly to me."
- "To move up in rankings, **try to** find the 'mood' of the piece. If the story is suspenseful, slow down and lower your voice to build that tension for the judge."

Assigning Speaker Points

Each speaker must outscore or tie lower-ranked participant(s).

- **100 (A+): Exceptional.** Masterful, polished, and deeply impactful.
- **98-99 (A/A): Strong.** Command of the room with high technical skill.
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Writing Actionable Feedback

The best ballots give students a "to-do list" for their next round. Avoid vague comments like "Good job!"

GLOWS

- "Your articulation was crystal clear! I didn't miss a single word, even during the faster parts of the story."

GROWS

- "Try to use your hands to emphasize key words rather than keeping them at your sides the whole time."

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