

Rancho California  
Debate League

# Tips & Rubric for Judges

## Order of Speeches

1<sup>st</sup> Prop Constructive – 5 min  
1<sup>st</sup> Opp Constructive – 5 min  
2<sup>nd</sup> Prop Constructive – 5 min  
2<sup>nd</sup> Opp Constructive – 5 min  
Opp Rebuttalist – 5 min  
Prop Rebuttalist – 5 min

## Points of Information

A POI is a request of the speaker by a member of the opposing team to make a statement or ask a question. They may only be made after the first minute and before the last minute of the constructive speeches. A POI is requested when a student stands or stands and says, "Information." POIs must be fewer than 15 seconds long. A speaker may decline a POI, but if the opposing team is requesting POIs, a strong debater will take 2-3 during his/her speech.

## Argumentative Heckling

This is a respectful interruption during an opponent's speech, which must be 1-2 words only. Heckles are directed to the judge, as they are meant to communicate information to the judge, not interfere with a speaker's ability to deliver a speech. Heckles may be made during any of the speeches of the opposing team, including the rebuttal speech.

## Things to Remember When Judging

**DURING THE DEBATE, STUDENTS MAY ONLY USE NOTES WRITTEN ON COLORED PAPER AND BLANK FLOW SHEETS** (on which they should take notes during the debate). The paper may only be the color provided for prep time for that round. Judges should remind debaters to put away any other materials before the debate begins.

**DEBATERS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO INTRODUCE THEMSELVES** at the beginning of their speeches. In fact, this cuts into their time and they are coached not to do it. Do not penalize them for not introducing themselves.

**TAKE THOROUGH NOTES ON YOUR FLOWSHEET.** This will help you decide the debate and set a good example for the students.

**LEAVE YOUR OPINIONS AT THE DOOR!** Judge the debate on the arguments and evidence offered by the debaters, not on your knowledge or beliefs about the resolution. When deciding the round, ask yourself, "If I had no prior knowledge or beliefs about this resolution, would the round as a whole have made me more likely to believe the resolution was true or not true?"

**DON'T FILL IN FOR SPEAKERS.** Judges should not "fill in" what they believe a speaker was going to say, should have said, or probably meant. What speakers say is what the speakers said, and that's all there is.

**PROPOSITION TEAMS MAY REASONABLY LIMIT A TOPIC.** An example would be when the topic "television does more good than harm" is limited to "television does more good than harm for children." An abusive limit would be one that creates an undebatable resolution or changes the essence of the topic.

**NO NEW ARGUMENTS IN REBUTTAL SPEECHES.** Rebuttalists may amplify or further develop a line of argument from an earlier speaker with analysis or evidence, if the new material does not fundamentally alter an established position. Any new arguments presented in a rebuttal speech may not be considered in the debate evaluation. There is only one exception to this rule: Since the 2<sup>nd</sup> Opp Constructive Speaker may present new arguments in his/her speech, the Proposition team's only chance to respond to those arguments is in the Rebuttal. You should allow the Rebuttalist to make new responses to new arguments raised by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Opp, but otherwise he/she is prohibited from making new arguments and responses.

**REVEAL YOUR DECISION VERBALLY AFTER THE DEBATE.** Give constructive advice to the students to help them to improve their debating. You must tell the debaters their speaker points.

## When Writing Your Ballot

- Indicate the winner of the debate: PROP or OPP
- Sign your name and write your affiliation (You don't have to fill in the "Low Points Win" space)
- **Neatly** write in the speaker points of the debaters and their speaker position numbers
- Provide a reason for decision
- Tell debaters what they did well and what they could do to improve
- Discuss and compare arguments made during the round

## SPEAKER PERFORMANCE RUBRIC®

SCORE & DESCRIPTION	ARGUMENTATION	REFUTATION	ORGANIZATION	PRESENTATION
<b>(60-64 points)</b> This score indicates that a student has yet to master any element of debate. Not a "failure": simply a skill level based on a single debate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not provide supporting details (evidence, reasoning, impact) [ARES format] for any assertion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not address any of the points of opponents</li> <li>Accepts/makes no attempt at POIs or heckles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not group together any arguments or refutations</li> <li>Speaks for one minute or less</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not display any aspects of effective public speaking *(eye contact, volume, rate, posture, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>(65-69 points)</b> Generally, the speaker is modestly successful in one element (e.g. argumentation) but is ineffective in <i>all</i> other major elements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rarely provides supporting details (evidence, reasoning, impact) [ARES format] to any assertion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addresses one (maybe two) of the major opponent arguments</li> <li>Accepts/makes one POI or heckle OR uses POIs and heckles <i>far</i> too frequently and disruptively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rarely groups together arguments or refutations</li> <li>Speaks for two minutes or less</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rarely displays any aspect of effective public speaking*</li> </ul>
<b>(70-74 points)</b> The speaker is inconsistent – some speech elements are done well and others are unsuccessful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes provides supporting details (evidence, reasoning, impact) [ARES format] to any assertion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses some direct refutation with limited effectiveness</li> <li>Makes one or two POIs and heckles OR occasionally disruptive with them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes groups together arguments and/or refutations</li> <li>Speaks for approximately half of allotted time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes displays aspects of effective public speaking*</li> </ul>
<b>(75-79 points)</b> Speaker knows his/her role and tries to accomplish it. He/she is competent and does some things well but is likely to make a few significant errors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually provides supporting details (evidence, reasoning, impact) [ARES format] to any assertion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses direct refutation with general effectiveness</li> <li>Sometimes makes effective POIs and heckles - rarely disruptively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually groups together arguments and/or refutations</li> <li>Uses (nearly) full speaking time effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually displays aspects of effective public speaking*</li> </ul>
<b>(80-84 points)</b> Speaker appears comfortable with format, eager to participate and confident. A few inconsistencies in performance, but they are likely only minor distractions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently provides supporting details (evidence, reasoning, impact) [ARES format] to any assertion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses some detailed (4-Step Method) refutation with some direct refutation</li> <li>Usually makes effective POIs and heckles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishes an effective narrative structure nearly consistently throughout speech</li> <li>Uses speaking time effectively - (nearly) full time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently displays aspects of effective public speaking *</li> </ul>
<b>(85-89 points)</b> An extraordinarily fine speech from a consistently strong debater. Confident and capable, the speaker is an effective model for new debaters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Always provides highly effective reasoning and applies different varieties of evidence</li> <li>Includes detail (evidence, impact, reasoning) [ARES format] with all arguments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses a majority of detailed (4-Step Method) refutation and limited direct refutation to answer all of the major points of opponents</li> <li>Always makes effective POIs and heckles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishes effective grouping of own (and opponents') points</li> <li>Includes effective introduction and conclusion</li> <li>Uses speaking time effectively - (nearly) full time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Always displays aspects of effective public speaking *</li> </ul>
<b>(90-94 points)</b> An outstanding debater delivering a highly successful speech in <b>ALL</b> respects. Still, some room for improvement can be identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes detail (evidence, impact, reasoning) [ARES format] with all arguments</li> <li>Describes multiple causes &amp; diverse consequences</li> <li>Supplies/analyzes multiple examples of evidence to support sound reasoning</li> <li>Explains detailed and complex issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses only detailed (4-step Method) refutation</li> <li>Offers exemplary use of POIs/heckles</li> <li>Uses opponents' ideas to advance own side</li> <li>Investigates inconsistencies in opponent's claims</li> <li>Identifies and exploits opportunity costs, assumptions and logical fallacies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes captivating introductions and conclusions</li> <li>Integrates arguments from both sides seamlessly into one compelling presentation</li> <li>Uses speaking time effectively - (nearly) full time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displays a variety of advanced rhetorical devices such as pausing, repetition, facial expressions, vocal inflection, humor (when appropriate)</li> <li>Presents mastery of aspects of effective public speaking*</li> </ul>
<b>(95-100 points)</b> Difficult to identify any error of omission or commission. Unlikely that there will be even one speech of this ranking in several years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displays mastery of ARES format and all details involved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responds appropriately, argumentatively and convincingly to every aspect of the opposing speeches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishes highly organized structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completely engages the judge/audience</li> </ul>

Performances are judged using this rubric in the direction of top to bottom. Scores below 60 are reserved for students who are unsuccessful as debaters as well as uncooperative, mean-spirited or disruptive during the debate. Revised July 2017. All rights reserved.