

IDC Congressional Debate Quick Reference Sheet

1) Principles

- a) Students, coaches, and judges come from different leagues, with different rules; be forgiving of differences while enforcing our rules.
- b) Prioritize all students being able to participate and speak. When in doubt, or when rules are unclear, err on the side of participation.
- c) It is the duty of parliamentarians and judges to ensure inclusive and equitable chambers. The treatment of peers should be considered when ranking competitors, and parliamentarians should intervene when chambers are excluding or silencing students.

2) Procedures

- a) Set the agenda before Session 1 and ensure that the agenda rotates through the three committees. Do not allow changes to the agenda later on, beyond tabling and un-tabling bills; students should be able to fairly prepare for all sessions. Amendments to legislation are allowed during debate.
- b) Elect the presiding officer for each session at the beginning of that session.
- c) Precedence and recency reset at the beginning of each session.
- d) Students have material to debate for the full time allotted. Sessions may not end early.

3) Debate

- a) All speeches are three minutes long followed by two minutes of direct questioning. There are no authorship speeches.
- b) There are no time limits per bill, no automatic previous question due to one-sided debate, no requirement for a “complete cycle” of debate. However, judges should take into account how much each speaker adds to overall debate on a given topic in both their speech scores and their rankings at the end of each session.

4) Advancement

- a) In each division, four students advance per chamber based on preferential ballots of the judges (and parliamentarian if assigned). Judges may not rank students from their own schools. Each debater’s lowest rank will be dropped.
- b) Two additional students (Four if only two chambers) not among those advancing by preferential ballot with the highest speech point average will also advance. In order to qualify for advancement by speech score, students must have given at least five speeches in the preliminary sessions
- c) The final chamber will then consist of twelve or fourteen students and two hours of debate.