

Congressional Debate Technical Best Practices

The Yale Invitational will be using the NSDA Campus to conduct Congressional Debate and Tabroom.com to assist with legislation submission and tabulation. As we are moving to an online format, the Tournament would like to provide the following best practices:

Equipment Recommendations

- **A laptop, netbook, or tablet to participate in online debate.**
 - Device must have a camera capability.
 - Ensure that the camera and microphone are permissioned to run on Google Chrome/browser
 - NSDA Campus is an internet based platform. It should not require download of any applications.
- **An external microphone or headset with microphone included to ensure you can be heard.**
 - Headphones (e.g. corded cellphone ear buds or gaming headphones) attached to the computer via audio jack or USB.
 - Ear pods (e.g. Samsung Galaxy buds, AirPods) connected to the device.
 - Please note the bluetooth devices may create a delay of voice and video connection.

Competition Location Recommendations

- A private space free of external distraction (e.g. bedroom, living room, classroom).
 - We understand that ambient noise may come through during competition.
- Setting up in a desk area with comfortable seating and a solid background behind you (e.g. wall, curtain, sheet).
- Lighting that allows the speaker to be seen on screen.
 - Recommend that you avoid setting up in front of windows or large light sources so as not be backlit.
 - Congressional Debate **does not** require or depend on media grade lighting.
- **Judges Note:** Unless it is a case of extreme distraction (e.g. loud noises, extreme glare from lighting), scorers are not to consider the student's surroundings as part of their scoring rubrik.

In Chamber Details

- All participants are **required** to be on camera (unless exercising a Point of Personal Privilege).
 - Participants are defined as Students, Parliamentarian, and Scorers.
 - If there is difficulty with the on camera requirement, competitors should report issues to the Parli or directly to the Tab Staff.
- If a Chamber participant is required to go off camera:
 - **Students:** Please notify the P.O. using Robert's Rule of Order verbally or through the chat feature.
 - **Parli and Scorer:** Please use the appropriate discretion and notify each other through the chat should something come up.
- When going off camera, please mute the camera and microphone.
- When not speaking, all competitors should have their microphone muted.
- Placards - Student placards must be visible to the chamber (competitors, scorers, and Parli).
 - Tournament recommends printing a placard in black ink, all caps, in at least a 50 pt font.
 - If printing is not available, competitors can create a placard using black marker, in all caps.
- Service Outages or Equipment Issues - It is expected that all tech and logins be tested at least the week before the tournament. However, we understand that things happen. Should a speaker lose connection with the platform, the Chamber should give them a few minutes to reconnect.
 - **If the reconnect time exceeds 5 minutes**, the Chamber should move on. The Parli should notify the Tournament Staff about the issue. The Congressional Debate Tab Staff will determine on how to proceed (e.g. recoup the speech).
- Sit or stand or stand for speeches?

- There is no “required” way to deliver the speech. Competitors may choose to deliver in a traditional (standing) or commentary (seated) style.
- While there is no requirement for delivery, scorers may take this into account for the effectiveness of the delivery for scoring purposes.

Pre-Tournament Checklist (at least one week before tournament)

- Confirm competitors, parlis, and scorers can access NSDA Campus.
- Test audio and visual compatibility of electronic devices with NSDA Campus.
- Test run a speech on screen with NSDA Campus.
- Print/create placard and test visibility on screen.
- **It is strongly recommended that competitors do not wait until the day of the tournament to test their equipment.** An excessive delay in Chamber start time is a detriment to the tournament schedule.