

Public Forum Debate Rules

Round Definition

1. A Public Forum debate round consists of two Pro debaters debating against two Con debaters.
2. The Pro side will always begin the debate. The Con side will always conclude the debate.

Round Format

1. 1st Pro Speaker 4 minutes
2. 1st Con Speaker 4 minutes
3. Crossfire between First Speakers 3 minutes
4. 2nd Pro Speaker 4 minutes
5. 2nd Con Speaker 4 minutes
6. Crossfire between Second Speakers 3 minutes
7. Summary (First Pro Speaker) 3 minutes
8. Summary (First Con Speaker) 3 minutes
9. Grand Crossfire (All speakers) 3 minutes
10. Final Focus (Second Pro Speaker) 2 minute
11. Final Focus (Second Con Speaker) 2 minute
12. Each team shall have 3 minutes of preparation time

Preparation Time

1. Each team/individual may allocate this time as they/she/he see(s) fit during the round, utilizing time prior to speeches for their side.
2. Each debate team may allocate their 3 minutes of preparation time as they see fit.
3. Debaters may not use preparation time to make prefacing remarks to their speeches.
4. Debaters may not forfeit cross-examination time to gain additional preparation time.

Round Rules

1. Over the course of the tournament, each Public Forum team may be assigned to uphold either side of the resolution in any given round.
2. The Pro defends a case to support the resolution. The Con opposes the Pro case.
3. In Public Forum debate a plan is defined as a formalized, comprehensive proposal for implementation. Neither the Pro or Con side is permitted to offer a plan or counterplan; rather they should offer reasoning to support a position of advocacy. Debaters may offer generalized, practical solutions.
4. On both sides, the Summary (First Rebuttal) is given by the first Pro speaker and the Final Focus (Second Rebuttal) is given by the second Pro speaker.
5. Judges should disregard new arguments introduced during Summary and Final Focus speeches. Judges should only allow new responses during Summary and Final Focus speeches if those responses address an argument first made in the immediately preceding speech. New analysis of prior arguments is allowed in rebuttal speeches.

Cross-Fire Rules

1. The format is intended to be question and answer and comments by debaters are restricted to advancing questions or answering an opponent's question.
2. Students should conduct themselves in a civil and professional manner during the cross-fire – cross-fire is intended to help clarify the debate for the judge and is not intended to be a verbal brawl.
3. In cross-fire, the team who finished speaking receives the first question.
4. In the first two cross-fires, both participating debaters may ask and answer questions of the other. Only the speakers indicated above may participate.
5. Grand Cross-fire: All four debaters may participate. All may ask and answer questions.

Speaker Points:

- 30: Your performance in the round is likely to beat any debater in the field.
- 29: Your performance is substantially better than average - likely to beat most debaters
- 28: Your performance is above average - likely to beat the majority of debaters in the field.
- 27: Your performance is approximately average
- 26: Your performance is below average
- < 26: Rude or inappropriate behavior, total lack of preparation. Please note specifics on the ballot.