World Schools Debate

Introduction:

Schools compete in teams of 3-5 students. There are two (2) teams in every round and three (3) students from each team will give speeches in the debate. There are four sets of speeches in a WSDC round: the first speeches, the second speeches, the third speeches, and the reply speech. The first three sets of speeches are eight minutes in length and the last speech is four minutes long.

Debates center around a range of international topics. One example is the topic "This house believes that corporations cannot be trusted to make ethical decisions." Another example is "This house would ban drilling for oil in the Arctic Circle." Typically topics cover a diverse range of issues, from environmentalism to economics and foreign policy to ethics.

World Schools Debate emphasizes winning arguments with a conversational, approachable speaking style, and delivering subject matter in such a way that the average bystander can fully comprehend the subject of this debate. Because many competitors are not native English speakers and have English as their second language, worlds school debates avoid "spreading", also known as "speed talking".

Fundamentally, WS rounds are won and lost on two levels: the principle and the practical. Frequently, the ethical consequences of taking an action contradict with the pragmatic payoffs. One can imagine a scenario where a military leader mounts an aggressive and deadly offensive on a terror cell in the hopes of deterring future attacks. This may be a pragmatic way to hopefully save lives, but it is another question as to whether or not such a move is ethically sound. Conversely, there is the debate over which side will pragmatically improve the lives of humans the most. Worlds strikes a balance between these two poles and successful competitors must be skilled at navigating this balance.

Winning a Round:

World Schools debate can be a tricky format to learn. There are a variety of conventions practiced in American debate formats that don't apply in World Schools. For example, in technical debate, a dropped argument is a conceded argument. That is not the case in World Schools. In fact, **teams are *expected* to let go of points that aren't critical and instead focus on answering the most pressing points in the round**.

In addition, another major difference between American formats and Worlds is that **debaters are supposed to take their opponents at their *highest ground*. In other words, you are expected to respond to the best version of the argument that your opponents put forwards.** It is commonplace in American formats for debaters to call out inadequacies in argument construction / missing internal assumptions that weren't justified. In Worlds, however, debaters should be charitable to their opponents and imagine a better world than their opponents to respond to. Taking your opponents at their best and strategically omitting moot/minor points are both critical skills to win debates in World Schools.

Overall, to win a round in World Schools, you need to win "the comparative." This is shorthand for the comparative world that is established between the two sides in the debate. Explicit characterization of how

both sides improve the lives of humans needs to be made. This can come in a variety of ways. Some like to highlight the comparative by isolating the benefits of their world (greater freedoms, more lives saved) and subsequently comparing the harms of the other side. Others prefer to break down the comparative by impact area: who wins on economic impacts, environmental impacts, foreign-policy impacts.

Style, Content, and Strategy:

Worlds rounds are judged on a trinity of metrics: **style, content, and strategy**. One must have all three in order to attain victory in World Schools. We will go over what each metric means and how you might tap into Style, Content, and Strategy to win.

Let's begin by talking about **speaking style**. There are a variety of affects that constitute a persuasive speaker. First and foremost, speaking fluency. A speaker that has substantial fluency breaks, stutters, "uhms" or "ahs" will not maximize their persuasiveness and fluency. In addition, changing your tonality and/or slowing down your speaking pace during important parts of your speech will increase the breadth of your persuasiveness. Speaking style takes a substantial deal of practice to develop, so the best recommendation I can give to an aspiring Worlds student is to practice, practice, practice!

Next, let's discuss content. **Content is defined by what goes into your speech itself**. For example, the contents of your speech consist of the quality of reasoning behind your arguments, the empirical evidence/examples you are able to use, and the reasonability of your claims. A well-constructed argument will usually have multiple "layers of analysis" behind it.

Next, let's discuss strategy. **Strategy refers to your ability to bring only the most important arguments further into the debate**. Some arguments will get at the heart of the motion and/or answer a central question in the debate. Others have a significant impact on the real world that can be fleshed out and explained for the judge. Both of these are positive characteristics and mean that you should prioritize winning these arguments for strategy's sake. Conversely, if an argument seems tertiary to the core question of the motion, is heavily responded-to by the other team, or is unintuitive, that argument would not be a strategic choice to focus on in the debate.

Preparation:

Next, let's discuss how to prepare for a WS tournament. There are several possible avenues to go about preparing for a tournament. Each round in world schools is different: some rounds are on a "prepared" topic that is delivered to debaters. These rounds tend to go much deeper on major clash points since they can be researched in advance. Debaters are expected to prepare case materials on each side of the motion: that includes framing and substantives one through three on each side. Impromptu motions are given to debaters roughly an hour before the round. Debaters then need to fully prepare their argumentation and strategy for the upcoming round.

For a prepared motion, the first step for all debaters involved is general background research on the topic at hand. With a background, you will be able to proceed to effectively brainstorm your positions and discover the best arguments to

make in the debate. Then, the research process can begin. Take care not to over-cram your positions with statistical evidence or quotes from journals. In Worlds, evidence is used sparingly. The concept of "last name" "date" for presenting evidence does not exist. Research is most useful to a) find historical examples of your argument coming true in other instances and b) learning from experts about the conceptual underpinnings of your arguments.

First Speeches:

The first speech in Worlds sets up the rest of the round. There are several components involved in giving a killer first speech. We will break down the general mold of the first speeches and then analyze how they vary from the proposition to the opposition side. First, the intro. Traditionally, there is a 15 to 30 second intro that frames how the proposition/opposition will approach the rest of the speech. Other strong strategies for an intro include "putting a face on the motion," that is, telling the story of an affected stakeholder in the debate.

The next part of the first speech is to deliver the substantive arguments. Each substantive argument should consist of a claim, reasoning to back the claim, and implication as to why the claim in question wins you the debate. Each first speaker will deliver two substantive arguments apiece. Advanced first speakers would be wise to include a good deal of preemptive material in their speeches that can be drawn upon later in the debate. The first two substantives should be the strongest and soundest arguments you can think of. Traditionally, your first substantive should be more focused on the principle/ethics of the motion, while your second substantive should be focused on the pragmatic realities of the motion.

The following is the traditional outline for the first speeches:

Outline for Prop 1
- Intro
- Framing
- 1st Sub
- 2nd Sub

Outline for Opp 1
- Intro
- Framing responses
- Refutation
- Sub 1
- Sub 2

Second Speech:

The primary goal of this speech is to set up the subsequent speeches in the debate. Naturally, this speech will have to include **a substantial amount of refutation**, as it covers the 16 minutes of material previously delivered in this round. The second speech is most frequently structured as follows: intro, clash points, and the introduction of the third substantive at the end of the speech. The third substantive tends to be a substantive that turns the contents of the opponents' speeches. For example, on the motion "this house would end sanctions on Venezuela," a proposing team

could be expected to make arguments about the economic benefits to the Venezuelan economy of ending sanctions. A good third substantive argument might be that sanctions force the Venezuelan economy to liberalize and ease the state-control of resources in a fragile economy.

Clash points in the second speech should group common positions together and respond accordingly, covering the material presented by both sides in a certain clash point. For example, on the prior motion regarding sanctions against Venezuela, the clash points could be centered around economic growth, risk of conflict, and principle argumentation. There is a large amount of flexibility and variance in approaches that different debaters take to writing the second speeches, so feel free to experiment and try new approaches.

Third Speech:
Many rounds are won or lost based on what transpires in the third speech of the round. In most threes, a "collapse" on one or two major strategic arguments will transpire. At this point in the round, there should be a limited or nonexistent number of new arguments that will be made. Instead, the focus should be on expanding upon existing arguments, and weighing each of them such that your team comes out ahead. There is a concept known as the "opp block" that the proposition team needs to anticipate. This happens between the opp 3 and the opp reply, constituting twelve uninterrupted minutes of content from the opposing team. It is widely understood that the prop team should be affirmatively winning by the time that the opp begins.

A common structure of a third speech is as follows: a "strategic mistake" at the top followed by dividing up the rest of the debate into three questions. Let's take one example, on the motion that "this house supports space tourism." One question could be "does space tourism provide economic benefits?" Another question, "is it principally just to spend money on space tourism?" Another question, "does space tourism produce innovations that are useful on earth?" Each of these questions gets at a different vein of the debate, and therefore are complementary and useful to include.

A strong third speech should rely heavily on a narrative. What are the core ideas your side stands for? Why are they fundamental values? Answering these questions is the key to victory.

Reply Speech & "Crystallization"
Reply speeches are the only four-minute long speech in World Schools. These speeches are meant to summarize the events that had happened in the round and explain why your team won the debate. The goal in the reply is not to make any new arguments. All of the argument construction should have happened earlier in the debate. That said, the prop reply should seek to answer any new content from the opp block.

The reply speech should "write the ballot" for the judge. A good template to follow for completing the reply speech is to cover the principle debate followed by the practical debate. You can also sub-segment the two types of debate out via topic (i.e. you can cover who won the econ debate, who won the foreign policy debate, et cetera.) Overall, the reply speech should take a big-picture approach to summarizing the round, while avoiding getting into the nitty-gritty questions of the round.

Crystallization (from speechanddebate.org):

A good crystallization is based primarily in two ideas:

1. Understanding and/or winning the value/value criterion clash in the round so that you are framing your arguments using the same type of evaluation to frame the arguments that the judge will use to evaluate the round.
2. Selecting the most powerful issues that matter with respect to that criterion as it is used to evaluate the round.

Once you have chosen which issues to make your voting issues, you should then structure them appropriately. It is important that you don't merely label individual arguments you are winning as voters as this weakens the impact of your arguments.

Instead, use this structure:

1. The voting issue should begin with some short label that tags the issue that the student is asking the judge to vote on.
2. Next identify the offense you are winning and have advanced (with specific signposting to some place on the flow—in other words, refer to specific places on the flow to show you are referring to arguments made in the round).
3. You should then identify why the opponent is not winning this issue. This can be done by citing places (specifically signposting) on the flow where you are beating his/her opponent's responses about this issue or by showing how the student's arguments are more important than the opponent's arguments on the same topic. The latter is, as discussed previously, called weighing.
4. Finally, you should explain why this issue links to the value criterion and is sufficient for you to win the round.

* Notice, this structure explains why you are winning the round due to this issue (offense), why the opponent can't win the round on this issue (defense) and why this issue is relevant to winning the round.

EXAMPLE: "*My first voting issue is (insert shorthand name for the issue). I am winning this argument through the extension of the second sub point of my first contention that states (summarize the argument). My opponent makes this issue worse as I stated when I responded to their first contention by saying (summarize the argument). Although my opponent may believe s/he is winning the second contention, my argument outweighs because (insert a comparison of the arguments). This is sufficient to meet the criterion of (insert criterion) because (insert reason).*"

Points of Information, Teamwork, and Shows of Support:

Points of Information:
There is no cross examination in World Schools. However, debaters have the opportunity to give and take points of information during each of the constructive speeches. Debaters who wish to ask their opponent a question or offer a comment/statement/point of clarification can do so while their opponents are giving their constructive speeches. The first and last minute of each constructive speech is protected time, meaning that no points of information may be given. To give a point of information, debaters from the opposing side of the speaker stands, holds out a hand and says "point of information." At this point, the speaker may choose to take, or refuse the point of information. Each speaker should plan to take 2-3 points of information during their constructive speech. Debaters must wait 20 seconds after a response before asking for another point of information. Too many points of information in succession is seen as barracking and is frowned upon in World Schools debate.

Teamwork:

It is expected that teams communicate with each other during debate rounds. However, teams should not speak to each other while one of their speakers is giving a speech (they may pass notes). Teams may quietly confer with each other while their opponents give speeches.

Shows of Support:

To show support for speakers who make a good point, it is customary to tap the table lightly.

Format of the Round:

Speech	Time	Responsibility of Debater
1st Proposition	8 min	Introduce motion, define key terms, set burdens, establish mechanism or model if needed, offer substantive arguments
1st Opposition	8 min	Deal with proposed framework by proposition, clash with proposition arguments, offer own substantive arguments
2nd Proposition	8 min	Clash, offer new substantive arguments, defend 1st speaker's points
2nd Opposition	8 min	Clash, offer new substantive arguments, defend 1st speaker's points
3rd Proposition	8 min	Clash and Summarize Key Issues
3rd Opposition	8 min	Clash and Summarize Key Issues
Opposition Reply	4 min	Crystallize the round
Proposition Reply	4 min	Crystallize the round

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