



GGSA CONGRESS STATE QUALS JUDGING INSTRUCTIONS

[\(4 min video\)](#)

Technical Requirements

All judges must complete ELECTRONIC ballots

Please bring:

- a charged laptop or large device
(avoid smartphones when judging Congress)
- charging cords and bricks
- judges needing to borrow a device,
please reach out to your coaches by registration

Schedule (subject to change)

8:00 AM - Judges report to Congress Tab in Rm 401
for instructions

POs report for meeting in Room 402

8:30 AM - 10:00 AM -- Round 1

10:15 AM - 11:45 AM - Round 2

11:45 AM - 1:15 PM – Round 3

1:00 PM - Lunch

3:00 PM – Semi-Finals

How to Complete an Online Debate Ballot Using Tabroom

Thank you for volunteering to judge Congress! Our league provides complimentary continental breakfast, beverages, and lunch for our judges and coaches. (Students may purchase Concessions in the Cafeteria - cash only, please.)

Time Limits: Student Congress consists of three preliminary sessions and one semi-final round. Each session is 90 minutes long. Time begins with the start of the first speaker. Students may not end a session early if someone still wishes to speak. Presiding officers in each session will handle all of the timing.

Room Assignments in Tabroom: All judges will be expected to be available to judge for all four rounds. Your room assignments can be found on your www.Tabroom.com account.

Log into your Tabroom account, and you will find your judge round and room assignments for the day.

You will be able to access your ballot once you hit the Start button.

If you are not scheduled for a particular session, you will be considered standby and may still be used, so please stick around and keep an eye on your Tabroom account.

You will be given a hard copy of a seating chart with the names of all students in that room, and tabroom.com contains your official ballot and feedback. You should go directly to your assigned room, and take a seat in the back of the room. The students have been instructed not to begin debate on the issues until you arrive. There will be 3 judges in the prelims and 5 in the semifinals. **DO NOT CONFER ON RANKS.** Each judge must independently rank the debaters.

Starting the Round in Tabroom: Remember to press the “Start” button as soon as you receive your ballot.

Contacting Tab Staff: Most problems will get resolved in your room through the Presiding Officer. The Congress Tab Room will be in Room 401.

Presiding Officer Will Run the Congress: One student will run the Congress, leaving you free to observe and score the speakers. Halfway through the session, a new PO will take over. You will vote for the Best PO each round.

Responsibilities of Judges: Please refer to the section below *Criteria for Ranking* for what you should be looking for to rank and score the speakers. At the end of the session, you must do the following:

During the Round: Listen attentively to all speeches. During each speaker’s speech, make comments for them, and begin to consider how you would rank them as the round progresses. After each speech, the speaker will answer questions during the questioning period. As a judge, you should consider how well the speaker can defend their position. You will also score each speech on a scale of 3 - 6 NSDA points. 3 being lowest, 6 being highest. These points are based on delivery and analysis. You will find the place to enter these points at the bottom of your comment box. These points are independent of their final ranking.

Scoring the Presiding Officer: You will have the option to designate students on your ballot as Presiding Officers in the round--**don’t do that**. Keep all competitors in the round designated as speakers. Unlike other League tournaments, you will not score the PO on the regular ballot. They will not be giving speeches. At the conclusion of the round, you will choose the best presiding officer.

At the End of the Round: Rank all debaters. Please check that you have not ranked the same person twice.

Cross-Examination:

Direct Questioning: In the House and the Senate, all rounds will use direct questioning, which means that all questioning periods are broken into 30-second segments, with one questioner per segment, who may ask multiple questions of the speaker during that segment. No suspension of the rules is allowed to extend questioning. The questioner can interrupt the speaker while they are responding, but you may critique the manner in which the interruption occurs. All speeches in prelims are 3 minutes, with a 2-minute questioning period for the first affirmative or sponsorship speech and 1 minute for subsequent speeches.

Criteria for Ranking: Students should be judged on how well they debate the bills in the round. You should consider *both* delivery and analysis (use of evidence and arguments) equally. Presiding officers can also be ranked in the top 9 if they speak on legislation. Please separate your own views from those of the speaker—students do not write or choose the topics and are required to speak on both sides of a topic. When choosing the Best Presiding Officer, you should consider how efficiently they ran the session, how well they communicated with the chamber, and their overall demeanor and presence in the round. There will be two Presiding Officers in each round. You will be provided with a separate ballot to vote for the best PO in your round.

Returning Your Ballot: Please consider your rankings of students and make your comments during the round so you are ready to complete your ballot once the round has finished. At the conclusion of the round, you will rank all the debaters.

Once you submit your ballot, you will be asked to confirm. Please take the extra step of choosing “confirm,” or your ballot will not be submitted. **Return your Presiding Officer Ballot to Room 401 after the round.**

During Downtime: Please take a moment to read our [Implicit Judge Bias Policy](#) and take this free, short, online [Cultural Competence Course](#) (a helpful accompanying resource: [Cultural Competency Training Handout](#)) This course is an excerpt from [Adjudicating Speech and Debate](#), a longer online training course also available for free on the NFHS Learning Center. You may make additional comments on your ballot until the awards ceremony.