

Claremont SPAR Rules

SPAR, or SPontaneous ARgumentation, is a form of simple debate that is run during a speech round. It requires no specific knowledge, but Pop Culture information will help you a lot of the time. Some of the best topics seem a little bit silly, as the round should be both fun and run with decorum like any other speech event.

The Round - Each SPAR panel consists of a maximum of eight competitors. The judge should pair the students for their SPAR, ideally assigning them to affirmation or negation prior to the start of the round. Each pair will consider a single issue/resolution which is presented to the debaters by the judge right before they debate. After making those assignments, the judge may give the first pair their topic to begin prep. There will be one minute of preparation before the affirmative must commence speaking. (Students may make notes during prep time, but should not bring any prepared information with them to the round. The notes should not be relied on heavily, giving the competitors the opportunity to include effective gestures.) That is the only preparation time for that pair of competitors. The first affirmative speaker will give a two minute speech in favor of the resolution; immediately after that speech, the first negation speaker will refute their position in a two minute constructive speech. Following the opening statements, there will be a five minute open cross-examination. The pair should first question each other for the majority of the time, and then should be prepared to take a few questions from the audience of other competitors and judges. Those with questions should only ask one until everyone has a chance to ask something. Judges are responsible for keeping this time period orderly by calling on questioners one at a time, and audience members should wait to be acknowledged by the judge. Following the cross-examination, the Aff will immediately give a two minute rebuttal speech followed by Neg giving a two minute rebuttal speech, thus ending that SPAR. Start the next pair ASAP.

Times: Prep 1 minute; Aff constructive 2 minutes; Neg constructive 2 minutes; cross-examination 5 minutes; Aff rebuttal 2 minutes; Neg rebuttal 2 minutes. Students may time themselves, but the judge should also time to keep the round on schedule.

Judge responsibilities - Unlike judges of prepared debate, SPAR judges do not have to render decisions on which student won an argument. Rank the students like you would any other speech round. Judges score the students in terms of how they defend their side, their refutations, their speaking style, the quality of their arguments, the quality of their presentation, and their response to questions. The judge is responsible for assigning speakers to their various positions. Try not to match students from the same school to SPAR each other. Judges may use the Tabroom suggested order, but are empowered to vary those in a way that facilitates the round staying on time, provided they track the order of the speakers for ballot accuracy. For example, if a debater at the top of your ballot does not show up at the start of the round because they are double entered, that student should not be placed in the first pairing. If an odd number of students show up for the round, one student may give a repeat additional performance, but should not be ranked higher for giving the extra speech. Answers by debaters to questions from the audience during the open cross-examination period should be used in the scoring of the competitors who are SPARing then, but should not be considered relevant in the scoring of those who are asking the questions. SPAR should be judged on the basis of overall delivery, persuasion, and quality argument construction.

SPAR Theory: the affirmative should advocate a specific idea, which need only be loosely related to the topic, without being an off topic kritik. For example, the affirmative could argue that something is good or bad, true or false, morally correct or immoral, or that something should be done differently or the same. Each competitor should advocate one side of an issue and defend a clear position. No position should be truistic (it should not be an argument with which virtually everyone would agree with one side). The debate should not require specific knowledge, as resource materials are not allowed. The position should be debatable by any reasonably well informed student. Specific knowledge can be used to support a larger position, but should not be the focus of the debate. Both sides should defend their position AND refute their opponent. For example, with the topic "Cheetos or Doritos", Neg should be telling us why Doritos are the best, and why everything their opponent said about Cheetos is incorrect. An idiom like "Don't mess with Texas" should see the Aff supporting why we shouldn't mess with them, and the Neg advocating why we should mess with Texas.

Claremont Tall Tales Rules!

Tall Tales should be fun! The goal is for the competitor to create a tall tale - a story with unbelievable elements, related as if it were true and factual.

Rules for Tall Tales:

1. When it is the speaker's turn, the judge will provide the competitor with a slip of paper with three words. The speaker must incorporate all three words into their story.
2. Once the competitor has their prompts, they have six minutes to prepare and present. The time may be split between prep and speaking as the competitor sees fit. The judge should provide oral time signals during prep and hand time signals while the competitor is speaking. Once the speaker is ready, they must return the slip to the judge, and use no notes during delivery.
3. Stories should be outrageous and exaggerated, and must have a beginning, a middle, and an end.
4. Judges should reward creativity, story structure, exaggeration, and inventive use of the assigned three words.
5. No speaker who fails to incorporate all three words into the speech should be ranked ahead of a speaker who did use all three words.