

## Judging Instructions for Parliamentary Debate

Parliamentary debate is extemporaneous debating on topics that change from debate to debate. There are two speakers per team, and two teams in a debate. One team is called the proposition team. This team supports the motion for debate by making a specific case for the motion. The other team is called the opposition team. This team opposes the proposition team's case for the motion.

**Topic approach:** A different topic is used for each round of debate. Consult the parliamentary topic list.

- Value: Both sides push for their value in the topic as superior to the other team's value.
- Policy: Proposition shows there is a problem and offers a solution (plan) to the problem. Both sides debate the appropriateness and/or merits of the problem and solution asserted by the Proposition.
- Fact: Both teams try to prove under what circumstances the topic would be called a valid fact

### **Length and order of speeches:**

Prime Minister Constructive.....7 minutes  
Leader of Opposition Constructive..... 8 minutes  
Member of Government Constructive..... 8 minutes  
Member of Opposition Constructive.....8 minutes  
Leader of Opposition Rebuttal (must be given by 1<sup>st</sup> opposition)..... 4 minutes  
Prime Minister Rebuttal (must be given by 1<sup>st</sup> proposition)..... 5 minutes

**Preparation Time during the round:** Debaters have NO preparation time during the round. The next speaker must get up to speak within 20 seconds of the preceding speech. All speaking time must be timed, except BRIEF off-time roadmaps.

**Preparation Time before the round:** Prior to arriving in your room the debaters were in a "Parli preparation room". There they were given their topics for the first time and 20 minutes to prepare consulting only their partner and reference materials including the internet. The only thing they could take out of the prep room at the conclusion of the 20 minutes is the notes that they created during preparation. These are the only notes they are allowed to use in the debate. Due to Covid-19 and inability to monitor students' prep, coaching is permitted during the parliamentary prep period (but strictly prohibited during the round).

**Evidence and computer use:** The intent of Parliamentary Debate is to encourage an extemporaneous or impromptu argumentation. Reference to "outside materials" should be limited; instead, students should rely on general knowledge, common sense, and application of logic and analysis. Nevertheless, the use of "outside materials" is allowed within the following parameters:

- 1) Debaters can utilize the Internet in prep and reference published material in the speeches of the debate to support their argument claims.
- 2) During the debate, students may consult notes prepared during the preparation period, however no materials prepared outside of preparation time may be used in the debate.
- 3) Debaters may take and use notes during the debate.

**\*Students may use or access evidence on their computer during parli prep but not during the round.** Violation of this rule can result in immediate removal from the tournament.

**Heckling:** Heckling is a unique aspect of parliamentary debate. It is up to each judge to determine whether to allow heckling.

**Points of Information:** These are common practice in parliamentary debating. To make a point of information, a member of the opposing rises for recognition by the speaker. If the point is accepted, the opposing team member directs a statement or question to the speaker. The speaker is technically yielding time from his/her own speech for the point of information and the time for the point is deducted from the speaker holding the floor.

1. Points of Information are allowed in constructive speeches only.
2. Points of Information must be concise statements or questions lasting no more than fifteen seconds.
3. Debaters may or may not take points of information at their discretion. The speaker accepts a single point; the opposing speaker is not allowed to make following questions or arguments unless again recognized by the speaker holding the floor.
4. The opening and closing minute of each speech are 'protected,' i.e., no Points of Information are allowed. Points may be made after the first minute and before the last minute of each speech. The judge should tap the desktop to indicate that one minute has elapsed and points of information may commence. The judge should then tap the desktop when one minute remains in each speech to indicate that no more points may be attempted.
5. Points of order can only be made in the final two speeches. They should only be made if there are strict violations of parliamentary protocol. The judge may acknowledge the point of order on the spot or prefer to take the information into consideration.

## Evaluation & Judging

### **Selecting a winner:**

You, as the judge and adjudicator, are the Speaker of the House. Don't be surprised if the debaters refer to you as Mister or Madame Speaker. Have fun with the format; it's not often that you get to be Speaker of the House!

At the end of the round, decide which team has done the better job of debating. "Better" is, of course, subjective, but you should consider quality of argumentation, rhetorical skill, and wit. Again, try not to allow your own biases to taint your decision. Judges evaluate teams on the quality of the arguments actually made, not on their own personal beliefs. Judges should assess the bearing of each argument on the truth or falsehood of the assigned resolution. **DO NOT BASE YOUR DECISION ON ARGUMENTS THAT WERE NOT PRESENTED IN THE ROUND. DO NOT BASE YOUR DECISION ON ANY NEW ARGUMENTS BROUGHT UP DURING THE REBUTTALS.** Decide which side -- Government or Opposition -- won the round, and write that on the decision line of your ballot.

### **Ballots:**

Please fill out the online ballot completely; choose a winning team, assign speaker points and ranks. Give reasons for your decision and submit your ballot. Please write/type comments you have in the available space. You should be sure to write/type a brief reason for your decision on the ballot (for example, "The Government's argument about equality of opportunity was not refuted by the Opposition"). Further/detailed comments are appreciated.

Assign 24.0 to 30.0 speaker points to each debater based on how well they spoke in the round. Some guidelines for giving speaker points:

A judge should not award points lower than a 25.0 except in cases of poor behavior / ethical violations. The range of points awarded is typically 24.0-30.0. **Follow the scale on your ballot. Please use 10ths of points to evaluate each speaker.**

Speaker point below 25.0 should be reserved for debaters demonstrating especially obnoxious and rude behavior and 30.0s should be reserved for the best speaker you will see in your lifetime. A judge may break ties by awarding speaker points in decimals by awarding for example 27.3 and 27.4.

**\*\*\*The tabroom will NOT allow ties in points!!!!\*\*\***