

## Judges' Help Sheet for Lincoln Douglas Debate

### The Big Picture

#### A. What is Lincoln Douglas Debate?

Lincoln Douglas debate is a formal argument about a specific resolution between two debaters, one who argues for the **affirmative** side and the second who argues for the **negative** side. LD is a philosophical debate whose arguments revolve around what decision is right or wrong and why. The most common arguments are over **justice, morality, freedom, equality, or similar values**. The winner isn't the debater who has the best statistics or numerical evidence but rather is the one who convinces the judges(s) his/her **philosophical** argument is better.

#### B. The resolution for this District tournament is "Resolved: The illegal use of drugs ought to be treated as a matter of public health, not of criminal justice." Note: Very early in each constructive case the debaters will define the key words in the resolution so please pay close attention to those definitions especially the word "ought."

#### C. How is this debate organized?

Here is the order and time limits for the speeches:

Affirmative Constructive.....6 minutes

Negative Cross Examination of Affirmative. . . . . 3 minutes

Negative Constructive. . . . .7 minutes

Affirmative Cross Examination of Negative. . . . . 3 minutes

Affirmative Rebuttal. . . . . 4 minutes

Negative Rebuttal. . . . . 6 minutes

Affirmative Rebuttal. . . . . 3 minutes

Each debater has 4 minutes of prep time used before their own speaking times at their discretion. They will specifically ask for prep time. I tell them I will let them know how much time they've used in 30 second intervals. ("30 seconds". . . "1 minute". . . etc.)

The categories and times can be found on the lower right of the LD ballot.

**NOTE on Timing:** The debaters like to keep their own time on a cell or iPhone which is perfectly fine but you need to let them know from the beginning that this is ok and that you will keep time as well. The debaters are usually good with this.

I use my iPhone which will time down and make a noise at zero which is good for the debater. At zero the debater can finish his/her sentence quickly. Need a timer? See us in the Tab Room!



**Prep Time: I keep prep time on my iPhone too but I also track it on my “flow sheet.”**  
**More on the flow sheet later.**  
**More on timing later.**

### **The Details (what happens in each segment)**

LD (the traditional shortened form for Lincoln Douglas) can, but does not have to, use the following procedure. However, nearly every LD debater in the Iroquois District will use this format or something very similar.

#### **First Affirmative Constructive (6 minutes)**

- An introduction that attracts the judge’s attention and interest in the topic.
- State the resolution.
- Identify the affirmative position on the resolution: “I affirm the resolution. . . “
- Define the words in the resolution and cite a prominent source for those definitions.
- Clearly state the value and explain what it is and why it is the best value.
- Clearly state the criterion and explain why it is significant and how it relates to the value. The criterion is how the debater will prove the value. “Reducing drug use in humane ways” might be a criterion for the affirmative here.
- Identify three (sometimes two) contentions that support the criterion and prove the value.
- Conclude effectively: Connect the contentions to the criterion and state why they support the value.

#### **Cross Examination of the Affirmative by the Negative (3 minutes)**

- Clarify the opponent’s case—definitions, value, criterion, contentions, etc.
- Should have a strategy or a direction to the questioning.
- DO NOT DEBATE HERE—just ask questions and clarify points.

#### **First Negative Constructive (7 minutes)**

- Negative will follow the same pattern that Affirmative used in his/her constructive.
- Attack and show weaknesses in the Affirmative case.
- Conclude effectively.

#### **Cross Examination of the Negative by the Affirmative (3 minutes)**

- Same pattern as for the Negative’s cross ex of Affirmative.

#### **First Affirmative Rebuttal (4 minutes)**

- Respond to Negative’s points: Show how they are not as strong or as relevant as the Affirmative’s value, criterion and contentions.
- Repair any damage done to the Affirmative case by Negative.

#### **Negative Rebuttal (6 minutes)**

- Respond to the latest Affirmative arguments.



- Make the final case to the judge that the Negative case is superior.
- Convince the judge that the Affirmative has failed to prove his value and criterion.
- **NOTE:** No new evidence can be presented here.
- List the “voting issues” that Negative believes will prove his/her case superior.
- Ask the judge to agree with the Negative position.

#### Second Affirmative Rebuttal (3 minutes)

- Respond to the final negative arguments.
- Summarize the debate and show how the Affirmative position is superior.
- List the “voting issues” (those points that need to be considered to identify which side presented the better case).
- **NO NEW EVIDENCE CAN BE INTRODUCED HERE.**

#### More on Timing

Debaters will likely ask if they can keep their time. This is not a problem but you must also keep time. Unlike other tournament categories there is no “grace period” in debate. However, when you announce that time is up, they can finish their sentence. As far as prep time goes, debaters usually ask for it in 30 second intervals or you can announce that you will give it to them in 30 second intervals. You need to keep track of how much prep time each debater used. Generally, debaters are very good about remaining within time limits.

#### **\*\*\*Rebuttals\*\*\***

**\*\*Debates are won or lost in rebuttals so you will need to pay close attention to them. How well do the debaters deal with their opponent’s value, criterion and contentions? How strongly do they shore up their own position? Do they cover all the points brought up by their opponent?**

#### **\*\*Your Decision\*\***

You will need to be objective when you make your decision. Put aside any personal ideas or opinions about the resolution and base your decision on which debater presented the best case for this resolution even though you may personally disagree with it.

**DO NOT TELL THE DEBATERS YOUR DECISION. Just say it will be on the ballot when they get it. Please do not offer any oral critiques. Save them for the ballot.**

#### **The Ballot Sheet**

**The top section needs to be filled out carefully so each debater can be identified so be careful with this section.**

I often use the left side for comments (positives and minuses) for the affirmative side and the right side for the negative. I use the center bottom for the reasons for my decision. It may sound something like this: “Affirmative presented a more effectively organized case and was more effective in dealing with negative’s arguments. Specifically, affirmative’s criterion was more forceful and was organized more forcefully than his opponent’s.” Often I would include a specific reference to points made by affirmative or weaknesses in negative’s arguments.



You do not have to write a dissertation here! Debaters will get these ballots back (unlike other speakers in the tournament who will not) so they like to know how they can improve and what they did well.

**Please get your results into Tabroom as soon as possible. You can always go back to the ballot to finish your comments later. Remember, you cannot write all that you want so be concise and to the point and don't fret. Usually your first instinct is accurate.**

### **Courtesies**

LD debaters should begin each segment with "Is my opponent ready? Is the judge ready?" Sometimes, before they begin a section such as First Affirmative Rebuttal, they may give you a heads up on their framework: "I intend to cover negative's case first and then deal with my case next." Do not count this as time against the debater. It is a judge's courtesy to allow this verbal organizational plan. After all, it is for your benefit.

### **Flow Sheet**

The debaters will keep a "flow sheet" as their opponent presents his/her case. This allows them to keep track of their opponent's value, flow and arguments. As a judge I keep one as well so I can follow their arguments. I've included one here for you as well as some blank ones for you. This is difficult to do but it will help you follow their cases.

With Permission From: Tom Yonkin, Sayre High School