



# MASSACHUSETTS SPEECH & DEBATE LEAGUE

The Board of the Massachusetts Speech & Debate League invites you to the nineteenth annual

## 2025 MSDL All-Novice Tournament

Saturday, October 18, 2025

at Sharon High School, 181 Pond Street, Sharon, MA 02067

The purpose of the MSDL All-Novice Speech and Debate Meet is to give new students a chance to compete in a less intimidating, educational environment prior to the start of the regular MSDL season. While this event will be run by the MSDL Board, it is not a qualifying tournament for States.

For the purposes of this tournament, a novice competitor is defined as any student who has not competed in high school forensics in a previous school year. A student who competes in two or fewer high school tournaments while in middle school retains novice status; but if a student competes in more than two high school tournaments, that student cannot be considered a novice. This tournament is essentially for first-year high school forensic students; those returning high school forensics students, who may be eligible for novice extemp or novice debate at subsequent tournaments this season, should not plan to attend this tournament.

Students with 2 or more years of experience in high school forensics are invited to judge; however, each school with participating students **must have at least one identified responsible adult in attendance**. Extra judges are always welcome and will receive assignments.

Individuals interested in learning to judge debate may attend this tournament and shadow judges in order to learn the judging process. These individuals should not be registered as judges, but you should notify the Tab Room during registration if you have individuals in need of a debate training partner.

Individuals interested in learning to judge speech may participate in an extended judge training during the morning of the tournament. Interested parents and friends should be signed up through Tabroom under Speech Judge Training. Please note that the session will only be held if we have sufficient interest. Please note that these trainees do not count toward the school's judge requirement for this tournament.

We look forward to seeing you on October 18th!



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## General Information

Parking at Sharon High School: Parking is available in the main school lot but not the bus loop that goes around the ball field in front of the building. There is a lot directly across the street from the school, and there will be parking at the Lake Lot directly behind the school.

Because the purpose of the All-Novice event is entirely educational, students will participate in rounds of friendly competition. An exhibition round in various events by varsity students will follow. Rounds will simulate regular competition, but there will be no final round. Novices who compete will receive their ballots via Tabroom after the tournament so that they can use the feedback as they work to improve for future tournaments.

Standard MSDL events will be offered. If there are 6 or fewer entries in any event, we may combine it with a similar event. Please visit [sites.google.com/view/msdlonline](https://sites.google.com/view/msdlonline) for descriptions and rules for each event.

Competitors in memorized events (OO, DEC, DP, DUO, INFO) will not be penalized for using manuscripts at this tournament.

There will be a variety of food and drink options available to purchase near the entrance to the cafeteria throughout the day for both breakfast and lunch. Additionally, there will be a snack table throughout the day that will support the Sharon Debate Team fundraising efforts.

Standard rules of professionalism and etiquette must be abided by at all times.



# MASSACHUSETTS SPEECH & DEBATE LEAGUE

The Massachusetts Speech and Debate League fosters a culture of diversity and inclusion. We expect all members of our community to treat one another with respect and to abide by our Community Standards:

## **MSDL Community Standards**

The Massachusetts Speech and Debate League (MSDL) affirms and upholds the following values and standards and expects those who take part in our tournaments to do the same:

### **Inclusivity and Equity**

We, the MSDL community, welcome people associating with any intersection(s) of identity and uphold that all members of our community deserve respect. We are made stronger by embracing the differences of our members.

### **Dignity and Safety**

We believe that the welfare and dignity of our community members must be protected and preserved. In practice, this means that all community members (coaches, students, judges, and observers) will be mindful of the impact and consequences of their words and actions. We share responsibility to act with the intention to protect the well-being of others, even when engaging with conflicting ideas and opinions.

### **Integrity and Honesty**

All members of our MSDL community must conduct themselves honorably and must scrupulously compete within the rules of our events while promoting our community standards.

### **Collegiality and Fun**

We aim to support each other and create camaraderie even while being serious about competition.

Should you have any issues, please come to the TAB room and ask to speak with our Belonging & Inclusion team.



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## Event Specific Information

- **CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE.** Congressional Debate will operate on a separate schedule from other tournament events. The day begins with a brief exhibition round where varsity competitors demonstrate the workings of a Congressional Debate chamber for novices. This is followed by instructional time and a practice round for novice participation. After lunch, a training session on writing legislation will be held.

Legislation for the tournament will be posted on Tabroom approximately one week prior. While student-written legislation is not required, coaches may submit proposals to Joe Bowden, Chair of Congress, at [joe.bowden@gmail.com](mailto:joe.bowden@gmail.com) by October 10<sup>th</sup> for review and potential inclusion in the packet.

- **GROUP DISCUSSION.** The topic area will be: American International Policy with a focus on tariffs, the Russia-Ukrainian War, the Israel-Hamas War, and China. The first round will be a tutorial.
- **EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING.** Rounds will focus on these areas: National, International, or Economic news.
- **RADIO.** Copy will come from wire services and/or newspapers.
- **BIG QUESTIONS.**
  - **Resolved: Religious belief is a prerequisite for morality.**
- **LINCOLN-DOUGLAS.**
  - **Resolved: In a democracy, voting ought to be compulsory.**
- **PUBLIC FORUM.**
  - **Resolved: The United Kingdom should rejoin the European Union.**



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## Judging

Students with two or more years of experience in high school forensics are invited to judge, as are qualified adults. For debate, student judges should have two years of competitive debate experience and have earned at least 200 NSDA points; an adult is qualified if they debated in high school or have judged at a high school debate competition at least once before.

**Congressional Debate:** Judges will serve for the novice practice round. In addition, they will be “competitors” in the exhibition and assist with instruction.

**Debate events:** You are required to bring one judge for every two entries or fraction thereof. New programs for which this requirement poses a challenge should contact the Chair of Debate (Josh Cohen - [jcohen1964@gmail.com](mailto:jcohen1964@gmail.com)).

**Speech events:** You are required to bring one judge for every five entries or fraction thereof.

Judges in all categories should be available to judge all time slots. There will be a \$50 fine for each missing judge. This fee is not to be used in lieu of providing required judges.

Extra judges are always welcome. If we have enough judges, we will attempt to use two judges in each round instead of the usual one, so please bring extras if you have them.

*Please note that judging requirements are finalized at the time registration closes on Wednesday, October 15 at 5:00 pm. **If you have drops after registration closes, it does not change the number of judges you are required to bring.** If you register EXTRA judges, we are going to be depending upon them to come. You cannot drop them after the registration deadline.*



# MASSACHUSETTS SPEECH & DEBATE LEAGUE

## Registration Information

- The registration fee is \$10 per student. The cost for a Duo Interpretation entry or a PFD team is therefore \$20.
- Register online at [www.tabroom.com](http://www.tabroom.com) beginning on September 15, 2025. If you are having trouble with the online registration system, send an email to Joyce Albert at [jbalbert78@gmail.com](mailto:jbalbert78@gmail.com).
- **Registration Deadline:** Wednesday, October 15, 2025 at 5:00 PM.

## Drops

- Coaches may drop entries (using [Tabroom.com](http://Tabroom.com)) until Thursday, October 16, 2025 at 5:00 PM. If you need to drop an entry after that time, email Joyce Albert ([jbalbert78@gmail.com](mailto:jbalbert78@gmail.com)) and be sure to identify (1) your school, (2) the student's name, and (3) the event they are entered in.
- Drops that occur after 8:00 PM on Friday should be texted in to 508-397-5143 on Saturday morning between 7:30-8:00 AM. *Be sure that your message specifies your school, the event, and the name of the competitors who have dropped.*

## Saturday Morning Check-in

All schools must check in by texting 508-397-5143 between 7:30 and 8:00 AM on Saturday morning. **Even if you have no drops**, you must check in to verify that your team will be participating. **Be sure to specify your school in your message.** If you have any drops, please also specify (1) the student or judge you are dropping and (2) the event they were competing in or judging for. Note – MSDL rules permit imposition of a \$25 penalty fee on schools that do not contact us during the morning check-in period.



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## Tentative Schedule

7:30-8:00	Check-in Texts <b>Please text 508-397-5143. Please remember to identify your school!</b>
8:15-8:45	Registration in front of the Auditorium at the Main Entrance
8:30	Speech Judge Meeting in the Auditorium
8:30	Debate Judge Meeting in the Black Box Theatre
9:00	General Opening Meeting
9:30-2:00	Speech Rounds & Congressional Debate Session
9:15-3:15	Debate Rounds (lunch during free flight)
2:30	Exhibitions and Congressional Debate Bill Writing Session
4:00	Estimated Departure Time

**Please note that we will provide a final schedule once registration is complete.**