

Prior to hearing these debates, I side with the _____ (Aff/Neg).
Make sure to recognize your personal bias and remove it from the evaluation of the round.

Your Role

Your most important responsibility is to fill out the ballot. There are six things to fill in on the ballot: 1) The logistical tournament information at the top, including the Aff and Neg codes provided by the debaters (note: this is the only information you should fill out prior to the end of the round), 2) The best case you could make for why the affirmative wins the debate you heard and any comments. 3) The best case you could make for why the negative won the debate you heard and any comments. 4) The reason the side you chose to win did the better debating, 5) the side the winner(s) represented and their code (at the top), and 6) Your name, verifying that the debaters ran arguments about the topic.

Another task as a judge is to take the post-tournament survey. The tournament host will give you access.

During the debate, a judge should keep track of the arguments being made. Organized notes of the important points you thought were raised during the round will help you complete your ballot and may help you make a decision about who was better at debating.

Students are allowed and encouraged to time themselves, but you may also choose to time various parts of the debate, particularly the Question Segments and each student's preparation time.

Topic Primer

Our resolution asks debaters to address the relationship between two of our central beliefs: the belief that we have free will and the belief in the explanatory power of science. On the one hand, we believe that, at least much of the time, people are the authors of their own thoughts and actions. It is difficult to understand our basic beliefs about choice, responsibility, political freedom, or criminal justice without first understanding that we believe people have free will. On the other hand, we believe in the authority of scientific explanations of the world. Contemporary life is a testament to science's power to explain the universe and what occurs in it, and to the promise of harnessing that power for our own betterment. Yet, we face a dilemma: does science leave room for free will? Findings in neuroscience and social psychology, along with claims of scientific determinism, have led some to doubt that it does. Author Sam Harris recently claimed, "determinism, in every sense relevant to human behavior, is true. Unconscious neural events determine our thoughts and actions—and are themselves determined by prior causes of which we are subjectively unaware.... But for our commonsense notions of human agency and morality to hold, it seems that our actions cannot be merely lawful products of our biology, our conditioning, or anything else" (*Free Will*, 16, 27). Is Harris correct? To answer this question, debaters need to explain what "free will" means and debate whether science leaves room for its existence. As a judge, you will hear different views about what "free will" is and different assessments of the scientific evidence. You might also hear some technical terms: **Determinism** is the view that the complete physical description of the universe, combined with the complete set of the laws that govern the natural universe, determines all truths about the universe (everything that has ever happened and everything that will ever happen). **Compatibilists** maintain that determinism does not rule out the existence of free will. **Incompatibilists** believe that, if determinism is true, then free will does not exist. Some incompatibilists believe both that determinism is true and that free will does not exist. However, **libertarian** incompatibilists believe that determinism is false and that free will exists.

The Debate

Students compete as an individual or with a partner. Each round will feature between two to four students that will compete on two opposing sides: one representing the affirmative and one representing the negative. Each side gives four speeches, and there are two periods of questions. Partners will alternate speeches; individuals will give every speech. Students will attempt to prove or disprove the statement: "Resolved: Science leaves no room for free will."

Affirmative Constructive – 5 minutes

Negative Constructive – 5 minutes

Question Segment – 3 minutes

Affirmative Rebuttal – 4 minutes

Negative Rebuttal – 4 minutes

Question Segment – 3 minutes

Affirmative Consolidation – 3 minutes

Negative Consolidation – 3 minutes

Affirmative Rationale – 2 minutes

Negative Rationale – 2 minutes

Each side has 5 minutes of preparation time during the debate to be used in increments of their choice. For example, a student may elect to prepare for 2 minutes for their rebuttal speech, 2 minutes for their consolidation speech, and 1 minute for their final speech. Students may also prepare "for free" during each other's preparation time.