

CONNECTICUT MIDDLE SCHOOL DEBATE LEAGUE



Judges Instructions

Structure of a Round

Speech	Duration
1 st PROP Constructive	5 min
Prep time	1 min
1 st OPP Constructive	5 min
Prep time	1 min
2 nd PROP Constructive	5 min
Prep time	1 min
2 nd OPP Constructive	5 min
OPP Rebuttal	5 min
Prep time	1 min
PROP Rebuttal	5 min
TOTAL	34 min

Prep Time

Prep time is mandatory.

Grace Periods

Every speech has a 15 second grace period. Judges should stop flowing and cut debaters off when the grace period ends.

Room Set Up

The PROP team sits to the right of the judge in speaking order (1st farthest from Speaker, 3rd closest to Speaker). The OPP team sits to the left of the Speaker in speaking order.

Information about Debating

The CTMSDL seeks to encourage students to learn how to be persuasive in a professional, respectful way.

Public Speaking — the primary skills of public speaking include:

Non-verbal communication

- Most eye contact should be with the judge, not with the opponents.
- Gestures should be controlled but animated.
- Supportive desk slapping is encouraged — support for all speakers at the beginning and end of speeches and during a partner's speech is appropriate.

Verbal communication

- Speeches should be organized with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. It should be easy to follow speakers as they move from making arguments for their side to refuting the arguments of their opponents.
- Slightly louder than conversational volume and slightly faster than conversational pace are encouraged to demonstrate confident command of the material.
- Students should avoid reading and speaking in a monotone.
- The use of emphasis, rhetoric and wit are encouraged to highlight key ideas.

Argumentation

CTMSDL students are taught that good arguments have three components:

Claim — an unsupported assertion or opinion, usually brief and clear for easy note taking.

Warrant — Reasoning + Evidence

Reasoning is the logical support for a claim — the explanation or justification for it.

Evidence is the empirical information that verifies the reasoning. Evidence includes generalizable statistical information, research reports, specific statistical information, historical examples, contemporary examples, anecdotes, expert testimony, and hypothetical scenarios based on well-established facts.

Impact — why we should care about the claim — why it matters.

Refutation

In addition to public speaking and argumentation, debaters learn how to refute their opponents' arguments. Debaters should identify conflicts, show the judge how the two sides' arguments clash, and seek to resolve that conflict on behalf of their side of the debate. Refutation is the ability to answer the opposing side's arguments or use them to your advantage. Refutation is what distinguishes debate from other public speaking endeavors and competitions.

Debaters use direct and indirect refutation. Both approaches can be effective. Direct refutation is the disagreement with the precise argumentation of an opponent. It is based on clash with the details of an opponent's argument (challenges to its reasoning, evidence, and/or impact). Indirect refutation is new material, relevant to an opposing team's position that undermines an opponent's argument.

Checklist of Speaker Burdens

Speech	Duration	Burdens
1 st Proposition Constructive	5 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provides clear definitions of the terms of the Motion.2. May lay out a plan.3. Provides 2-4 clear arguments, each with a topic sentence, an explanation with explicit link to the Motion, reasoning, evidence & impacts.4. Speaks instead of reads5. Answers 1-3 POIs if offered.
1 st Opposition Constructive	5 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Clearly states Opp's case.2. May lay out a counter-plan.3. Provides 2-4 clear arguments, each with a topic sentence, an explanation with explicit link to the Motion, reasoning, evidence & impacts.4. Explicitly refutes all Prop arguments, including restatement of the Prop argument with a directly related refutation of it.5. Speaks instead of reads.6. Answers 1-3 POIs if offered.
2 nd Proposition Constructive	5 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. May introduce new Prop arguments.2. Rebuilds and extends 1st Prop's arguments with new analysis & examples.3. Refutes Opp's refutations.4. Explicitly refutes all Opp arguments.5. Speaks instead of reads.6. Answers 1-3 POIs if offered.

2 nd Opposition Constructive	5 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. May introduce new Opp arguments. 2. Rebuilds and extends 1st Opp's arguments with new analysis and examples. 3. Refutes Prop's refutations. 4. Explicitly refutes all Prop arguments. 5. Speaks instead of reads. 6. Answers 1-3 POIs if offered.
Opposition Rebuttal	5 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highlights most important points of the round and explains why each of these are more effectively dealt with on the Opp side. 2. Analyzes the impacts on each side of the House. 3. Crystallizes the whole round down to a central value(s) or key issue(s) and demonstrates why the Opposition wins.
Proposition Rebuttal	5 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responds to any new Opp points introduced in 2nd Opp constructive. 2. Highlights most important points of the round and explains why each of these are more effectively dealt with on the Prop side. 3. Analyzes the impacts on each side of the House. 4. Crystallizes the whole round down to a central value(s) or key issue(s) and demonstrates why the Proposition wins.
Total		Speeches: 30 minutes, Prep time: 4 minutes. Total: 34 minutes

Rules & Conventions

1. **Defining Terms & Narrowing Motions** It is the burden of the **first** Proposition speaker to define the terms of the round. This includes defining general terms like “This House” “good” and “harm” and can also include narrowing the scope of the debate. (For example, schools might be defined as public high schools in the US.) Whatever is defined by the Proposition stands unless the **first** Opposition speaker successfully argues that Prop’s definitions are either unreasonable or narrow the debate so much that Opp has no room to argue. If Opp challenges Prop’s definitions, the judge does not rule who won the definitional battle during the debate but decides at the end when determining the winner of the round. If Proposition fails to offer definitions, first Opp may offer them. However, if terms are reasonably defined and/or narrowed by the Proposition, the Opposition should argue on the grounds provided by the Proposition. They should not argue another case or argue outside the limits set by the Proposition just because they prefer their own definitions.
2. **Plans & Counter Plans** The PROP team does not have to present a plan by which they will change the status quo. If they choose to present a plan, it should be done by the first PROP speaker. Similarly, the OPP team does not have to present a counter plan but if they choose to do so, it should be presented by the first OPP speaker.
3. **Points of Clarification** If the Opposition team requires clarification of the definitions offered by the first Proposition speaker, an OPP debater should rise after definitions are presented and say “Point of Clarification” or “POC.” The first PROP speaker should then answer all of OPP’s questions about the definitions. This type of POC saves the round from becoming a long argument about what PROP’s definitions were or what they meant. OPP should not challenge definitions in a POC. If OPP wants to contest PROP’s definitions, it should do so in the first OPP speech. Debaters may not call a POC when they can’t understand their opponent, rather they should point that out in their speeches.
Time is paused when the judge hears “Point of clarification” and resumes after the point has been clarified.
4. **Points of Information** A POI is a question or statement directed to the speaker by a member of the opposing team. To offer a point of information, the debater should stand. She or he may or may not say “Point of information” or “POI” or “On that point.” The speaker holding the floor has absolute power over whether or not to take a POI. If the point is refused, the asker must sit down. If the point is accepted, the asker may ask a short question or make a short comment (longer than 15 seconds is inappropriate). The person speaking should respond to the point. Responses can take many different forms. **The clock continues to run throughout.**

POIs may be offered during the middle three minutes of the four constructive speeches but are prohibited during the last two speeches (the rebuttal speeches). Giving and taking points of information can help a debater increase their speaker points and debaters are encouraged to accept and ask points. However, doing so excessively can be distracting and detrimental. It is generally recommended that each speaker accept one to three POIs during her or his speech and offer several during the opponents’ speeches, so long as it does not become overly disruptive. Speakers should not interrupt the flow of their speeches to accept a point of information; instead, they should wait until finishing their sentence or idea before accepting. It is appropriate to wave a POI down or tell a debater “no thank you” or that you will not accept her point at this time, but will take it later in the round.

5. **Points of Order** No new arguments are allowed in rebuttal speeches unless they are made by the 3rd PROP speaker in refutation of arguments introduced by the 2nd OPP speaker. (This is PROP's first opportunity to respond, therefore it's fair.) Rebuttal speakers should offer new examples to support arguments that have already been made. If a debater thinks an opponent introduced a new argument in a Rebuttal speech, she may stand and say "Point of Order." Time stops. The challenger should explain what she thinks is a new point and the speaker should explain why she thinks it is not a new point. If you agree with the challenger, say "point well taken" and cross it off your flow. If you agree with the speaker, say "point not well taken." If you are unsure, say "I'll take it under consideration" and review your flow after the debate. Carefully check your flow when examining a possible new argument because deciding what is a new argument and what is a new example can be tricky. **Time is paused for Points of Order.**
6. **Debaters are expected to speak, not read, their speeches.** Reading is not banned but debaters who read should not do well in the Presentation category and therefore can't score highly.
7. **Whispering during Rounds.** Team members may confer during opponents' speeches and during prep time as long as they do so quietly. Partners may not communicate with their team member who is speaking.
8. **Observers are welcome to watch Rounds.**
9. **Debaters' Attire.** Judges should not comment on students' attire nor factor it into their scoring.
10. **Research.** Debaters may not conduct online research during rounds. They may do so before and between rounds. Debaters may take papers to the podium with them when they speak.
11. **Two person teams.** Judges should score every speech. The debater who speaks twice must give their side's first and last speech.

Judges' Responsibilities

1. **Make sure you're in the right room at the right time.** The schedule will have the names of the two teams, the room number and the judge's name. Proceed to your room as soon as the schedule is distributed and begin the round as soon as all of the debaters have arrived.
2. **Fill out the ballot correctly before the debate begins.** Enter your name and affiliation. Debaters probably won't speak in the order they are listed on the ballot. Make sure you enter an order of speaker number for each debater.
3. **Manage the debate. The judge has four tasks during the debate:**
 - **Keep the debate moving:** The debaters should be ready when you finish filling out the ballot. Ask the teams if they are ready and give the 1st Proposition speaker permission to begin.
 - **Keep time:** Time each speech and try to signal when students have 2 minutes, 1 minute and 30 seconds left. All speakers are given 15 seconds of grace time to finish up. When the grace period is up, stop flowing. If the speaker continues talking, say "time." Students may time themselves, but you should still keep your own time to be sure. The clock stops during Points of Clarification but not during POIs. Do not allow POIs during protected time.
 - **Keep order:** Judges should intervene as little as possible. Do not interrupt or correct a speaker unless absolutely necessary due to rude language or behavior. Do not "rule" on issues or arguments during the debate, even if asked.

- **Flow:** Write down each team's arguments and examples. Write down how each team replies to its opponent's arguments. Note who asks and who answers POIs.
- 4. **Provide an oral critique.** For each team or each speaker, try to find something praiseworthy, and something they can do to improve. Please do not tell them who won the debate.
- 5. **Decide which team won and which lost and assign speaker ranks and points.** See Judging Decisions.
- 6. **Provide a brief written critique.** You may provide comments for each speaker, or each team, or explain your decision in more detail. You may use the back of the ballot if needed. Try to praise where possible, and to offer suggestions for improvement rather than criticism.
- 7. **Get your ballot back to the tab room on time.**
Bring your ballot back to the tab room in person. Make sure someone reviews the ballot for accuracy before leaving. Do not go to lunch or to the next round without turning in your ballot.

Judge Decision Making

Ask the teams to leave and close the door before you start. You may take about ten minutes to make your decisions and write up your ballot.

Team Outcome Which team won is decided based only on the clash presented in the Round. Speaking style and quality do not factor in to the Win/Loss decision. Judges must not add up speaker scores to determine which team won the round. Every debate has a motion or topic. The Proposition team either: a. describes a problem and offers a beneficial solution; or b. tries to prove that the topic is more likely true than false. The Opposition team must prove that: a. Proposition's proposed solution is not more beneficial than the status quo (or their Counter Plan) or is counterproductive; or b. the topic is more likely false than true. By the end of the debate you may have a subjective impression as to which team's arguments were more persuasive. Check your impression by reviewing every argument and decide which team won each. Look for dropped arguments first (ones the opposing team did not respond to at all): those are won by the team making the argument. Weigh the importance of each argument. Proposition has to prove at least part of its case is true in order to win. (If Prop loses all of its own arguments, it cannot win.) If Proposition proves at least one of its arguments and that argument is worth more than the arguments Opp won, Proposition wins. If Opposition shows that Proposition's case produces more costs than benefits, or that Prop's case is entirely false, the Opposition team wins. Enter the school name of the winning team on the ballot and circle whether they were Proposition or Opposition and give a one or two sentence reason for your choice based upon the arguments you heard.

Individual Speaker Evaluation

- **Rank order the speakers from 1 to 6**, with 1 being the best, and 6 the worst. There can be no ties on speaker ranks.
- **Assign speaker points** based on the rubric below. Points should agree with the rank ordering, in that higher ranked speakers should not have lower points. Speaker points may be tied for speakers with adjacent ranks, e.g. your first and second place speakers may both receive 25 ½ points. Remember that judging is an art, not a science. For example, if a debater's arguments and refutations are 28s and her or his organization and presentation are a 25, you'll have to decide if the speaker should earn a 26 or a 27.

Low Point Wins Sometimes less polished debaters make superior arguments and the judge wants to award lower speaking points to the team that won the debate. This is fine. We ask that the judge talk to Tab about the decision so we can make sure the rubric is being applied correctly.

CTMSDL: Judging Rubric for Individual Speakers – 2018

Score	Description Applies to:	Argumentation 1 st 4 speeches	Refutation All speeches except 1 st PROP & 3 rd OPP	Rebuttal Last 2 speeches	Organization All speeches	Presentation All speeches	Points of Information Offered by all, answered by 1 st 4 speakers
29 29.5 30	Superior: Extraordinary, almost perfect; superior understanding of debate topic and techniques; Must justify to Tab	-Perfectly clear -Exciting and original analysis -Claims, warrants and impacts are always present and strong and connect clearly to the motion	-Rebuilds and extends with new analysis and examples -All points soundly and irreparably smashed	- Crystallizes to central value(s) /key issue(s) -Weighs impacts -Demonstrates why side wins -Wins new points -Not one bit repetitive -Essentially writes judge's ballot	-Structure laid out clearly at beginning -Follows structure exactly -Doesn't seem hurried	-Fluent -Wide range of vocabulary and idiom -Wit, tone, volume used well to emphasize points - Great use of eye contact & body language	Offered AND answered (if possible) with precision and wit.
27 27.5 28 28.5	Strong to accomplished: Consistently strong; fulfills all or almost every single speaker's burden	-Solid -Claim, reasoning, evidence, and impacts are present, strong & clearly connect to motion	-All points clearly addressed and most are won	- Mostly successful crystallizing central value(s)/ key issue(s) - Mostly successful analyzing and weighting impacts -Talks about why side wins -Responds to new points - Not repetitive	-Structure is clear and easy to follow -Uses time well	-Clear and fluent -Above average vocabulary -Good use of eye contact & body language	Offered AND answered (if possible) at least 1 effectively.
25 25.5 26 26.5	Solid, average to above average: Fulfills most of speaker's burdens	-Contains most elements-- claim, reasoning, evidence, impact	-Most points refuted -Some points may be unclear or inadequately addressed	- Attempts to boil debate down to key issue(s)/value(s) - Attempts to analyze and weigh impacts - Might not respond to new points - Might be mostly line-by-line refutation	-Somewhat organized -Some parts may be unclear -Time generally used well	-Clear -Middle school vocabulary - Presentation is serviceable	Offered OR answered (if possible) at least 1. They could have been more effective.
23 23.5 24 24.5	Developing: Some or most of speaker's burdens are unmet; may miss important issues, weak case or little clash	-Weak -Lacks definitions, reasoning, evidence, impacts or explicit connection to motion	-Points are dropped -Refuting arguments are weak or unclear	-May miss key points -Missing impacts or crystallization of central value(s) / key issue(s) - Impact analysis is missing, unclear or weak - May deal almost entirely with one side - May be repetitive	-Generally disorganized - Signposting may be missing - Time is over or under used	-Speech may be hard to understand -Vocabulary may be limited -General lack of effective presentation - May read instead of speaking	May have failed to ask or answer POIs. If they were offered or answered, they weren't effective.
22 22.5	Unacceptable: For foul language or bad behavior Must justify to Tab						

