Preface to the Seventh Edition

The 28 years since *Mastering Competitive Debate* first appeared have gone very quickly for us. In that time high school debate has seen dramatic changes in theory, presentation style, evidence use, and format. It has remained fundamentally the same in its basic argumentation structures, however. While the goals we set out when we first wrote this book as new high school coaches still remain, the content has been adapted and expanded over the years to reflect the times. As with the first edition, the primary goal remains to provide new and less experienced debaters with explanations of the theory and practices of competitive debate. For coaches, the book’s intent is to assist new and less experienced coaches to learn the activity and how to coach it. For experienced coaches, we want this book to make the job easier and more interesting.

Over the years we have occasionally found ourselves in a quandary over which of the new trends and strategies in contemporary competitive debate to include in each new edition. Some new developments, in our minds, are questionable in terms of advancing competitive debate. A survey of debate coaches across the country has illustrated a lack of consensus on some of these new developments. For this edition we also consulted current high school debaters in their first or second year who used the book to ask what we should and shouldn’t include. When in doubt, we have left it out.

But we also recognize that new trends and approaches help to keep debate current and relevant. With each edition we have made major revisions in sections on general theory, research, and negative strategies. In keeping with an expanded interest in new debate formats, we have also added chapters on Lincoln-Douglas, mock trials, student congress, and parliamentary debate. This edition includes information on the public forum or Ted Turner debate format that was recently added as a National Forensic League activity. We also recognize the impact of the Internet on debate research with a chapter on electronic research and include other references to the World Wide Web throughout. A new set of activities to strengthen students’ use of the Web as a research tool ends each chapter.

We have kept in mind that novices and less experienced debaters—the text’s main audiences—can only absorb so much during the course of one debate season. Thus, we limited discussion of advanced theories. We suggest those debaters who have mastered the material in this book consult *Advancing in Debate*, published by Clark Publishing through Perfection Learning Corporation.

No book, including this one, can teach the debater everything or replace the guidance of a coach. The teacher guide that accompanies the book includes practical advice for coaches, additional activities, and lists of additional resources. We hope that the seventh edition of *Mastering Competitive Debate* opens a new world of possibilities for you as the texts we used as students did for us.
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Chapter 1

Introduction to Competitive Debate

After completing this chapter debaters will be able to:

1. Define competitive debate.
2. Explain the history of competitive debate.
3. Identify the types of resolutions debated.
4. Apply standards for each type of resolution to write resolutions of fact, value, policy, and problem.
5. Describe the types of debate tournaments and what happens at them.
6. Explain who judges at tournaments and what awards can be won.
7. Explain what subjects are debated and what each speaker does.
8. Explain the advantages of participating in competitive debate.

New Words and Phrases

affirmative  negative position  resolution
constructive speech  parliamentary debate  round
cross-examination debate  policy debate  solvency
disadvantage  power match  standard debate
disadvantage shell  preparation time  stock issues
division of labor  proposition of fact  team debate
individual events  proposition of policy  topicality
inherency  proposition of problem  voting issues
Lincoln-Douglas debate  proposition of value  rebuttal speech
negative  public forum debate  refutation

Our purpose in debating is to learn, not to win, or rather, learning is the only way of winning that makes any sense.

~ Arnold J. Toynbee
Introduction
If you are reading this, then you have made a decision to become a debater. You may be wondering if you can really get up in front of strangers, disagree with them, and convince others you did it well. It is natural to be apprehensive about a new activity. Since debate is less familiar than sports, starting out can definitely be intimidating. It doesn’t have to be that way, however, if you simply take it one step at a time. Just as you could not envision how soccer or tennis are played simply by reading the rules, you have to do more than read this book to be a debater. Learning how to debate requires much practice and patience because debating involves learning a new vocabulary and developing new skills. The concepts introduced in this chapter are developed throughout the book. Use this chapter as a reference and be prepared to reread sections.

What Is Competitive Debate?
Competitive debate is a cocurricular or extracurricular activity in many secondary schools and universities. Competitive debate takes many forms: policy, or team, debate; Lincoln-Douglas, or individual, debate; student congress; mock trials; and parliamentary debate. The purpose of competitive debate is to provide students with an opportunity to discuss some of today’s most important social, political, and religious issues in a contest setting while developing critical thinking skills that will be important throughout their lives.

What Do Debaters Debate About?
Competitive debate involves two teams. One team argues in favor of a resolution or topic (the affirmative), and the other team argues against it (the negative). Resolutions, or propositions, for debate are of three types: fact, value, and policy. A fourth type of resolution, that of problem, is usually associated with discussion. In the forensic progression discussed in the Introduction, it was noted that the progression begins with discussion. Thus, our examination of the four types of propositions begins there as well.

Proposition of Problem
Discussion is a strategy used to address a controversial issue and generate solutions. A discussion centers on a problem statement or proposition. The proposition of problem is worded as a question. For example, “What should be the federal role in public education?”

There are four standards for evaluating a proposition of problem. First, the proposition should be current. Second, it should contain no loaded language; it should be a neutral statement. Compare the following two topics for neutrality: (1) How can government best control money-grubbing utility companies that charge consumers exorbitant rates? and (2) How can governments best address the issue of rising utility rates? The words money-grubbing and exorbitant would limit open discussion because they disallow the possibility that the rate increases are justified. Since a discussion is intended to explore all aspects of a problem to seek the most reliable facts and make an informed decision, neutrality in wording is essential.

The third standard for a proposition of problem is that it be open-ended. You will notice in the discussion of the three types of debate topics that follow that many of them support a particular viewpoint on an issue. A discussion question should allow for introduction of a multitude of views and potential solutions.
The final standard is that the proposition should not require the group to agree on a moral question. To reach a decision on any problem, most of us consider our values or moral beliefs. Moral beliefs are formed as a result of our religious backgrounds and cultural and family values. A proposition such as “Is capital punishment immoral?” is likely to result in no consensus and no real discussion of a problem. Individuals hold strong beliefs on both sides of the issue. If a question immediately pits one set of beliefs against another, debate rather than discussion ensues. There is little room for compromise.

Competitive discussion exists in very few schools today. It is important, however, to be aware of the structure of propositions of problem that form the basis for discussion. Discussion of such propositions leads us to discover debatable topics that can take one of the forms discussed below.

**Proposition of Fact**

A proposition of fact makes a statement about something that can be proven true or false. If you were to argue with a friend the proposition of fact “That the New York Yankees won the World Series in 1999,” you would rely on your memory as a starting place. You would settle the “debate” easily by consulting an almanac. However, many debates over facts are not as easily resolved. An example of a proposition of fact that is more complex is found in a public forum topic: “The United States is losing the war on terrorism.” If you were to debate this, you might define the word *win* and then use a series of facts to conclude that the United States is not winning.

A court of law operates on seeking truth and justice. The proposition of fact in a trial deals with a person’s guilt. Evidence is supplied by both sides to establish the facts in the case. A jury then weighs the evidence to decide on the ultimate proposition. Chapter 28 on Mock Trials discusses the role of facts in more detail.

The standards for a proposition of fact are somewhat obvious. The proposition should be worded to suggest a truth that can be established or denied through evidence. Propositions of fact are most commonly debated as arguments within policy and value debates rather than as separate topics. They are more likely to appear as separate topics in public forum (see chapter 31) and in parliamentary debate (see chapter 30). The relationship among the three types of propositions is discussed later in this chapter and throughout the text.

**Proposition of Value**

A proposition of value suggests that one belief or idea is preferable to another. A value is an idea, an object, or an action that is viewed as important to or cherished by an individual or a society. As such, values are neither right nor wrong. In debating about values, arguments center on the relative worth of one value over another and the consequences of placing one value over another. Debaters do not deny that the other side supports a value. The argument revolves around the ordering of values when they come into conflict.

Value debates are common in society, politics, and religion. Some debates over policies or practices in society are deeply rooted in values. The issue of assisted suicide is one that is argued by religious groups, medical ethicists, lawyers, and policy makers. An example of a proposition of value from academic debate is “National security is more important than
government honesty.” In this resolution, the values being debated are “national security” and “honesty.”

In the national security example, an affirmative could argue that keeping the development of the atomic bomb a secret was crucial to United States security and ultimately to world peace (another value). In making a decision about which side, affirmative or negative, had the stronger reasons for accepting their respective value positions, the judges would consider the strength of examples or facts.

Value topics are structured to force debaters to compare and prioritize values. As such, value propositions follow certain standards. Each proposition will contain an object to be evaluated and an evaluative term or terms. Consider the topic “Resolved: That the insanity plea is unjust.” “Insanity plea” is the object being evaluated; “unjust” is the evaluative term.

Topics force either an explicit or suggested comparison between values. The national security topic is an explicit comparison between the values of national security and honesty. The insanity plea is not being compared to another policy. The word unjust however, suggests the opposite value of just.

Some value topics also include a context. Consider this topic for example: “When in conflict, the safety of others is of greater value than the right to privacy for those with infectious diseases.” In this example, the rights of the majority are considered to be of greater value than individual privacy within the context of infectious diseases. Discussions within other contexts would not apply in this debate.

Lincoln-Douglas topics are almost exclusively propositions of value. (See chapters 26 and 27 and Appendix B for a thorough discussion of Lincoln-Douglas debate.) Parliamentary debates can be value debates such as with the topic “Professionalization of certain college sports is desirable”; however, as you will see in the next section, many parliamentary debates are policy oriented.

**Proposition of Policy**

The fourth type of proposition is one of policy. Propositions of policy are usually broad, complex, and concern current problems facing our country or the world. An example of a proposition of policy is “Resolved: That the United States federal government should establish a foreign policy substantially increasing its support of United Nations’ peacekeeping operations.” A proposition of policy calls for a change in an established program, law, or rule. Propositions of policy use both facts and values for support. On the UN topic, an affirmative might argue that the Bush administration’s “go it alone” approach to foreign policy has alienated many long-term allies and increased antagonism toward the United States by countries that previously posed threats. Thus, the United States needs to become more involved in UN activities to improve its relationship with the rest of the world. The negative, on the other hand, could argue that the UN’s record as a peacekeeper does not merit increased support and that the U.S. accomplishes more working either alone or with allies such as Great Britain.

Ziegelmueller, Harris, and Bloomingdale cite four standards for wording a proposition of policy. First, the resolution should address a controversial issue with sufficient information on both sides. Second, the resolution should be worded to take a position on the controversy. This makes the distinction between affirmative
and negative positions clear. Resolutions begin with “Resolved: That” to indicate a commitment to a change from the current policies. Another common trait of a policy topic’s wording is the use of significantly or substantially paired with increase or decrease to show a direction for the policy change. Topics may call for “comprehensive” programs, such as “Resolved: That the federal government should guarantee comprehensive national health insurance to all United States citizens. Third, the resolution should address one central idea. In the health insurance topic, there is one major issue around which debate is to occur. If the topic also included a phrase about early childhood education as well, then the debate would not focus on a single controversy. Mixing controversies creates unmanageable and confusing debates. The final standard is that the wording should be neutral. While a policy proposition advocates a side, it does so without criticizing the other side.

The high school debate topic for traditional cross-examination team debate is a proposition of policy. With the exception of Unit V, this book discusses policy debate. In policy debate, debaters argue the advantages and disadvantages of a particular course of action. Each August, representatives of debate coaches meet to select five topics. These appear on a national ballot. In the fall, debate coaches are asked to select three topics. These votes are tallied. After the list of topics is narrowed, each state votes among the three resolutions to determine the national topic. The topic for the following year is announced in early January.

Parliamentary debate can use propositions of policy as well as fact and value. While a public forum topic was used to illustrate a proposition of fact, most of the public forum topics have been worded as policy topics. The Ted Turner debates, which have been dominated by policy topics, are changed each month in an attempt to create a narrow focus for debates, reduce the amount of research needed, and focus on argumentation and delivery. For example, the following topics were used in 2002–2003:

- The federal government should authorize oil exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve.
- The death penalty should be abolished in America.
- Affirmative action should not be practiced in college and university admissions.
- Awards for pain and suffering in medical malpractice cases should be limited to $250,000.
- The United States should assume primary responsibility for the rebuilding of Iraq.

While there is a separate chapter in this book dedicated to the public forum debate format, much of what is explained throughout the book in terms of research, organizational patterns for speeches, argumentation, rebuttal, cross-examination skills, and delivery also apply to public forum debate.

Examine the topics listed in Appendix B to get an idea of the type of domestic and international policy topics you are likely to encounter in traditional policy debate. General background reading is necessary to understand all issues relevant to the topic. Debaters use one topic the entire year, so the topic must have depth. Otherwise debates would become boring and repetitious after a few months. Debaters should not be discouraged if the topic
and its issues are not totally familiar to them. Everyone must do research to understand.

**Structure of Policy Debate**

In policy debate there are two persons per team, and each person delivers two speeches—a constructive speech and a rebuttal. The speeches are timed, and each has a maximum time limit. At the end of the entire round, a judge decides which team has done the better job of debating. Policy debate uses a cross-examination format. In traditional policy debate each debater will get an opportunity to cross-examine one debater on the opposite team during the questioning period between each of the four constructive speeches. The person being questioned cannot ask questions. In public forum debate, the approach to cross-examination is different. The first questioning period occurs after the first two speeches and a second after the third and fourth. The first question is asked by the opposite team that has completed speaking but afterwards both speakers can question and answer. There is also a period in which all four debaters can question and answer at will.

**What Happens at Debate Tournaments?**

Interschool competitive debate takes place at debate tournaments. Tournaments involve a number of teams from different schools competing against one another. Teams may be from the same state or represent several states. Most high schools with active debate programs host one tournament per year. Debate tournaments can be very small with six or seven teams present, structured as a round-robin tournament where each team meets every other team. Tournaments also can be quite large with a hundred teams or more where each team meets five or six teams in preliminary rounds. The host school determines the size and type of tournament and invites schools to attend.

Each school attending a tournament can enter a limited number of individual teams. The host school generally does not enter its own tournament except to fill in for late cancellations. Most tournaments are held on Friday and Saturday or Saturday only. Parents, teachers, and debate coaches provide transportation and sponsor the teams. Many two-day tournaments are located at distances that require an overnight stay. Friday rounds are over late, and Saturday rounds begin early. It is much easier to remain close to the tournament. Many debate programs travel nationally as well as within a state or region. The National Forensic League national tournament takes place over an entire week of competition; the National Catholic Forensic League tournament is held on a single weekend.

**Tournament Preliminary and Elimination Rounds**

Each debate team usually debates five or six preliminary rounds (but there can be more or fewer). At their conclusion, awards are presented to the most successful teams, or elimination rounds are held. Elimination rounds involve the top teams (determined by preliminary records) meeting one another until only one team remains undefeated in elimination rounds. Tournaments may select the top sixteen teams for octafinals, or eight teams for quarterfinals, or just the top four teams for semifinals. The winners of octafinals advance to quarterfinals. The winners of quarterfinals advance to semifinals. The winners of quarterfinals advance to semifinals. Semifinal winners advance to finals. The losers accept third place.
The loser of finals receives second place honors, and the winner receives first place.

**What Side of the Resolution Is Debated?**

Teams alternate sides each preliminary round. In a six-preliminary-round tournament, each team debates three affirmative and three negative rounds. In a five-round tournament, each team debates three rounds on one side of the resolution and two on the other. Most tournaments structure alternating affirmative and negative rounds. Occasionally, a tournament allows or requires schools to enter four-person teams. A four-person team is composed of two two-person teams. One team debates affirmative every round; the other debates negative. At the conclusion, records are combined to determine the total team record. Two-person teams are more common than four-person teams.

A team can use the same affirmative case for each affirmative round. Many teams prepare only one case that is revised and refined after each tournament. More experienced teams usually have more cases from which to choose. Each negative team prepares to meet the common affirmative cases. Detailed information about cases is provided in Unit II. It is important to note here that even though each team debates five or six complete rounds, each round does not consist of totally new material or cases.

**Scheduling**

Each team is given a code letter and number. A code sheet is distributed to explain which schools and which teams are represented by the number and letter. At some tournaments the school name is used in place of a code number; however, most tournaments use a code so that judges will not know who they are judging.

In addition to alternating sides each round, the schedule is constructed to prevent two teams from meeting more than once in preliminary rounds. It is also designed so that teams from the same school will not meet. A sample schedule follows. Assume your school number is 8 and your team letter is B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rd. I</th>
<th>Rd. II</th>
<th>Rd. III</th>
<th>Rd. IV</th>
<th>Rd. V</th>
<th>Rd. VI</th>
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<tr>
<td>11A</td>
<td>2A</td>
<td>6C</td>
<td>21D</td>
<td>12B</td>
<td>7C</td>
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The sample schedule is called “pre-set,” meaning that regardless of the outcome of the first few rounds, the team continues debating this schedule. Most tournaments “power-match” and randomly pair the first or first few rounds. After all pre-set rounds, the tournament is scheduled round by round. Each team meets a team with a similar record. A power-matched tournament tries to guarantee equal competition for every team.

Sides for elimination rounds are usually determined by a flip of the coin or by the preference of the two teams. If they have met in preliminary rounds, they automatically switch sides. A team could win quarterfinals, semifinals, and finals by debating only the affirmative or negative, or by switching sides. The side for each round is decided individually.

**Are There Different Types of Tournaments?**

A tournament may have different divisions. The most common divisions are novice, open, junior varsity, varsity, and championship.
Novice divisions are for first-year debaters. Junior varsity is for experienced novice and second-year debaters. Open divisions are for debaters of all experience levels. Championship and varsity divisions are for the best and most experienced debaters. Most tournaments do not apply rigid rules regarding entries, and beginning debaters may enter open or championship divisions as well. In most states, there are not enough novice divisions to allow all first-year debaters to debate only at novice tournaments. Beginners may, therefore, enter junior varsity, open, or varsity divisions frequently during their first year. They often learn more by participating with experienced debaters. In some states, novices debate as part of a four-person team. This provides them with an opportunity to learn one side of the topic before having to learn the other. Each host school organizes its tournament using one, two, or all three divisions. If no division is specified, all teams are treated as one group. Any debater may enter regardless of experience. Individual events, such as original oration, are often held along with debate tournaments in most states. Students have the option of entering individual speaking events along with the debate rounds.

As a result, many judges have little or no training in debate theory and may know little about the topic. It is difficult to give specific rules to appeal to all judges, but the safest rule is that you must make a sincere effort to adapt to different types of judges. If the judge is a coach, college debater, or experienced judge, you may explain in less detail, speak more quickly, and lodge more arguments. If, on the other hand, the judge is obviously less familiar with debating, you must slow down and explain.

After each round is completed, judges fill out ballots. Most ballots require the judge to:

1. Determine which team has done the better job of debating (the affirmative or negative).

2. Rank and/or rate each speaker (rank from 1 to 4 with 1 being the best speaker, or rate on a scale, usually 1–30).

3. Give reasons for the decision.

In addition to the sample ballot in this chapter, a variety of ballots is provided in Appendix C and in the teacher guide.

When the ballot is completed, it is returned to the tabulation room for recording purposes. Students participating in the tournament may or may not know results round by round. The ballots are distributed after preliminary rounds are over.

There may on occasion be instances in which the judge chooses to critique the debate orally after the round. Oral critiques can be very valuable in helping debaters prepare for future debates and can be a very positive learning experience.

Who Judges at Tournaments and How Are Winners Determined?

Debaters are judged by debate coaches, interested community members, parents, college students, and college debaters. Large tournaments require many judges and often recruit anyone willing to devote a couple of hours. Some tournaments pay judges and can be more selective. Most do not pay, however. Even if tournaments do pay, the number of judges needed often requires tournaments to allow anyone to judge regardless of experience or training.
The image contains a blank NFHS Debate Ballot form. The form is used to rate speakers and determine the outcome of a debate round. It includes sections for rating each team and their speakers, as well as a space for the judge's reasoning and signature. The form is designed to be filled out by judges to decide the winner of a debate round.

The text on the form is as follows:

**NFHS DEBATE BALLOT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIVISION</th>
<th>ROUND</th>
<th>ROOM</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOURNAMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUDGE</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Rate all speakers using the following scale:

- **SUPERIOR**
  - 30
- **EXCELLENT**
  - 29
  - 28
  - 27
  - 26
- **AVERAGE**
  - 25
  - 24
  - 23
  - 22
  - 21
- **FAIR**
  - 20
  - 19
  - 18
  - 17
  - 16
  - 15
  - 14
  - 13
  - 12
  - 11

Rate each team by totaling each speaker’s points (60 points per team) and rank each debater 1, 2, 3 or 4.

**AFF. TEAM**

<table>
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<th>RANK</th>
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<td>1st. AFF.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd. AFF.</td>
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**NEG. TEAM**

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd. NEG.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Team Total Rating

1st. AFF. | 1st. NEG.

2nd. AFF. | 2nd. NEG.

**REASON FOR DECISION:**

---

**THE TEAM WINNING THIS ROUND WAS TEAM #_______**

**REPRESENTING THE ______________ SIDE.**

Judge’s Signature

School

---

**NATIONAL FEDERATION**

**OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**

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**Judges’ ballot**
Voting Issues

Because of the variety of judges, it is difficult to know what makes a judge decide to vote for a particular team. Some judges vote on speaking style and pay little attention to content of arguments. Other judges ignore delivery and concentrate on issues and how they are argued. Usually, it is a combination of these two factors. Content is important. How well arguments are structured and supported makes a difference. However, persuasiveness and speaking style make a tremendous difference, too. Judges who place the focus on content and arguments often apply a judging paradigm or model for examining an issue. There are numerous paradigms that are discussed in later chapters in the book. The most common paradigm, and the one that most beginning debaters learn, is the legal model that centers on stock issues. In the legal model, the affirmative takes the role of the prosecution, accusing present policies of being guilty of creating problems. The affirmative has the burden to prove its claims with evidence. The negative has the presumption of innocence, meaning that a judge should assume the present policies are adequate unless the affirmative successfully indicts them.

Debaters must learn to “read” judges and try to determine which factors are the most meaningful to each judge. Some tournaments supply a brief “biography” of the judges that includes a statement of judging philosophy and paradigm preference. By having such information, debaters can adapt argument structures to the judge’s preference.

Regardless of who the judge is, what the qualifications are, and the reasons for decision, the judge’s decision is final and legitimate. Many debaters blame the judge when they lose a round. “The judge was dumb.” “He didn’t know anything about debate.” “She didn’t understand my case.” These are common complaints. The most important thing to remember is that debate is an activity based on the ability to communicate with the judge. If the judge doesn’t understand the case, you failed to communicate it! You must accept this responsibility and should react to losses accordingly. Many factors, small ones as well as major ones, affect a debater’s ability to communicate. Learn from all ballots—good ones as well as bad ones. Because factors other than debate arguments affect judges’ decisions, debaters should dress appropriately and be courteous to opposing teams and judges. All actions create impressions. Chapter 9 gives suggestions for judge adaptation.

What Type of Awards Are Given at Tournaments?

Most tournaments give a sweepstakes award to the school with the best record, as determined by totaling all individual team records from each school, and awards for teams participating in elimination rounds. Tournaments not having elimination rounds give awards to the top three or four teams based on preliminary rounds.

Awards are usually medals, trophies, plaques, or silver trays. They belong to the school a team represents and are usually displayed at the school. In addition to sweepstakes and team awards, medals are occasionally given to top speakers as determined by speakers’ ratings or rankings from preliminary rounds. Medals may also be given to individual teams qualifying for elimination rounds or for team awards. If individual events are held, medals or trophies are given to winners of those events also.
What Does Each Debater Do in a Debate?

In policy debate—both traditional and public forum—there are two persons per team, and each person delivers a constructive speech and a rebuttal. In public forum debate, as discussed in chapter 31, the term rebuttal is not used for the second set of speeches for each debater. In Lincoln-Douglas debate, there is one person on each team and each gives construction and rebuttal speeches. The speaker order, time limits, and basic rules for the Lincoln-Douglas and public forum debate are given in the chapters devoted specifically to those formats. For traditional policy debate, the constructive speeches introduce the arguments and positions of each speaker. The rebuttals review and extend the constructive issues. The order of speeches and time limits for cross-examination debate follows. The order of speeches and time limits are known as the format.

CROSS-EXAMINATION DEBATE

1st Aff. Constructive . . . . . 8 min. (Cross-examination by neg.—3 min.)
1st Neg. Constructive . . . . . 8 min. (Cross-examination by aff.—3 min.)
2nd Aff. Constructive . . . . . 8 min. (Cross-examination by neg.—3 min.)
2nd Neg. Constructive . . . . . 8 min. (Cross-examination by aff.—3 min.)
1st Neg. Rebuttal . . . . . . . 5 min.
1st Aff. Rebuttal . . . . . . . 5 min.
2nd Neg. Rebuttal . . . . . . . 5 min.
2nd Aff. Rebuttal . . . . . . . 5 min.

Most tournaments use five-minute rebuttals, and the National Forensic League and the National Catholic Forensic League have both adopted five-minute rebuttals. However, there may be some states or individual tournaments that use the traditional four-minute rebuttal, especially for novices. You will be told what the time limits are before you attend the tournament.

These time limits represent the maximum. You may speak under the limit. It is much better to state your case and sit down rather than repeat yourself to fill time. However, a three-minute constructive speech is unacceptable. You should make an effort to use all of the time wisely.

Most tournaments provide timekeepers to keep track of the minutes. Timekeepers hold up cards so the speaker can be aware of the remaining minutes. If timekeepers are not available, colleagues time for each other, or the judge keeps time. Regardless of who is keeping time, when the stop card is raised, finish the sentence and sit down. Many judges become irritated if debaters continue and will often disregard what is said in overtime. During cross-examination, in most parts of the country, the moment the time runs out, the timekeeper says “stop.” You should stop immediately.

Most tournaments have a maximum amount of time that can be taken between speeches. This is known as preparation (prep) time. This prevents long delays between speeches and helps keep the tournament on time. Some tournaments allow maximum limits after each speech, others allow a maximum amount of time to be used by each team with the team members deciding how to allocate time between each speech. Preparation times are explained before the competition begins. The timekeeper usually announces the passage of each minute or half-minute.
The following outline briefly states what each speaker traditionally does in each speech. Subsequent chapters explain these responsibilities in detail, including, especially for the negative, different patterns of dividing arguments.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Affirmative Constructive</th>
<th>First Negative Rebuttal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. State the resolution.</td>
<td>1. Extend basic negative position.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Define terms of resolution.</td>
<td>2. Extend on first negative constructive arguments not covered by second negative constructive.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Present affirmative reasons for change.</td>
<td>3. Review affirmative reasons for change and why they are insufficient.</td>
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<td>4. Present proof for reasons for change.</td>
<td>4. Extend topicality argument if it is still an issue.</td>
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<td>5. Present affirmative plan.</td>
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<th>First Negative Constructive</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Explain basic negative position and approach.</td>
<td>1. Answer second negative attacks on plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Prove affirmative reasons for change are not significant.</td>
<td>3. Cover all “living” issues in the debate. This is the most difficult and most rapidly delivered speech in the debate.</td>
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<td>4. Prove status quo can achieve affirmative reason for change without affirmative plan (inherency).</td>
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<td>5. Present disadvantage shells (optional).</td>
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<th>Second Affirmative Constructive</th>
<th>Second Negative Rebuttal</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Attack negative position.</td>
<td>1. Review negative attacks on reasons for change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Rebuild affirmative reasons for change.</td>
<td>2. Return to plan attacks—show how plan lacks solvency and workability and is disadvantageous in light of first affirmative rebuttal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Answer all first negative attacks.</td>
<td>3. Crystallize the debate and emphasize the key and winning negative issues.</td>
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<td>4. Develop advantages further.</td>
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<th>Second Negative Constructive</th>
<th>Second Affirmative Rebuttal</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Extend negative position.</td>
<td>1. Answer attacks on affirmative plan by proving it workable and desirable.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Explain that the plan cannot solve the needs or gain the advantages (solvency).</td>
<td>2. Return to case and emphasize reasons for change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Attack affirmative plan as unworkable (workability).</td>
<td>3. Crystallize and win the key affirmative issues in the debate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Explain and develop disadvantages.</td>
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All speeches should start with attention-getting introductions, have good organization, and include effective transitions. All should conclude with brief, persuasive summaries.

**Why Debate?**

This question is probably the best one. If you haven’t asked it yet, you probably will before your career is over! To debate well requires much research, practice, and patience. Many students devote more time to it than to all other classes combined! Debate has important advantages for you. Debate squads are often close, and debating provides a unique opportunity for establishing friendships. Debaters also have the opportunity to travel throughout their state and neighboring states and have the chance to make friends from other schools.

Academically, debate is invaluable. It teaches research, organization of materials and ideas, and how to improve communication skills. Note-taking skills, listening techniques, and critical thinking skills benefit any debate participant. Many teachers believe that debate is the best possible preparation for college. The materials researched for a topic are often relevant to another course. (We can’t imagine the number of term papers that have been researched right out of debate files!) Since the topics are current, you will become more aware of national and international issues, problems, and policies. Debate not only prepares you for future courses and general knowledge, it also enables you to pursue any one of a number of interesting careers.

**Debate and Your Future**

Debate is an academic activity that happens to be fun at the same time. Yet debate’s impact on your life is not limited to the educational and social dimensions. Any job that requires good critical thinking skills—from engineering to business management to the arts—can be helped by a background in debate. The limits of debate’s influence on your life are restricted only by your own creativity and your desire to apply what you learn.

**A Final Word of Advice**

Be patient and don’t panic if you don’t understand what’s going on right away. Until put into actual practice, much of the material in this book isn’t easily understood. After experiencing a few debate rounds, everything will begin falling in place. Remember, your initial confusion and fears were and are experienced by everyone who ever debated. With just a little perseverance, debate will become an enjoyable and rewarding activity. Have fun debating, and devote only the amount of time that you decide is reasonable with other activities. Strive to win, but never forget that the primary reason for debate is to learn!

**Notes**

Activities

Starting Out
1. Interview a classmate and prepare a short speech to introduce him or her to the entire class. Include why your partner enrolled in debate class as well as typical information such as hobbies or other activities, what type of neighborhood or community he or she grew up in, etc.

2. As a class, brainstorm professions or jobs in which a person would directly benefit from having experience in competitive debate. Interview a former debater in your community who holds one of the jobs and ask how debate prepared the person for the position.

3. Using the subject “identity fraud,” write four debate topics. One topic should be a proposition of fact, one a proposition of value, one a proposition of policy, and one a proposition of problem. Explain how each topic meets the appropriate standards.

4. Interview a member of your debate team who was a novice last year. Ask how debate helped in school and in other activities. Ask what advice the person would give you as a beginning debater. Share what you learned from the interview with your classmates and compare findings.

5. Watch a Congressional debate on C-SPAN, obtain a copy of the Congressional Record, or watch a city council meeting on your local access cable channel. Develop propositions of problem, fact, value, and policy from one of the debates you observed or read.

6. Identify the major social, political, and religious issues being discussed in your community or state. Prepare propositions of problem, fact, value, and policy for each.

Experience Counts
1. Review the flowsheets from your past tournaments and compare what you did in your speeches to the suggested duties for your speaker position as outlined in this chapter. What did you do that was on the list? What did you neglect to do? For those areas that you weren’t able to address, write an outline of what you would do now if you could give the speech again.

2. Working with your colleague, review the flowsheets from past tournaments and determine what voting issues you stressed in rebuttal speeches. Were these the best? What issues might you consider in future rounds if you encounter similar arguments against your affirmative or similar cases when you are negative?

Web Savvy
1. Locate the Web sites for the National Forensic League, the National Catholic Forensic League, and your state’s association that oversees debate. What are the rules for policy debate listed by each? Are there any differences?

2. One of your friends questions why you have decided to debate and wants you to find proof that it will help you later in life. Using the Internet, find evidence that debate has value outside of the classroom. What key words did you use for your search? Which produced the best sources? Summarize your findings.