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# Introduction to Competitive Debate

— Oct 6, 2024 —  
2-3pm EST

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Zoom link



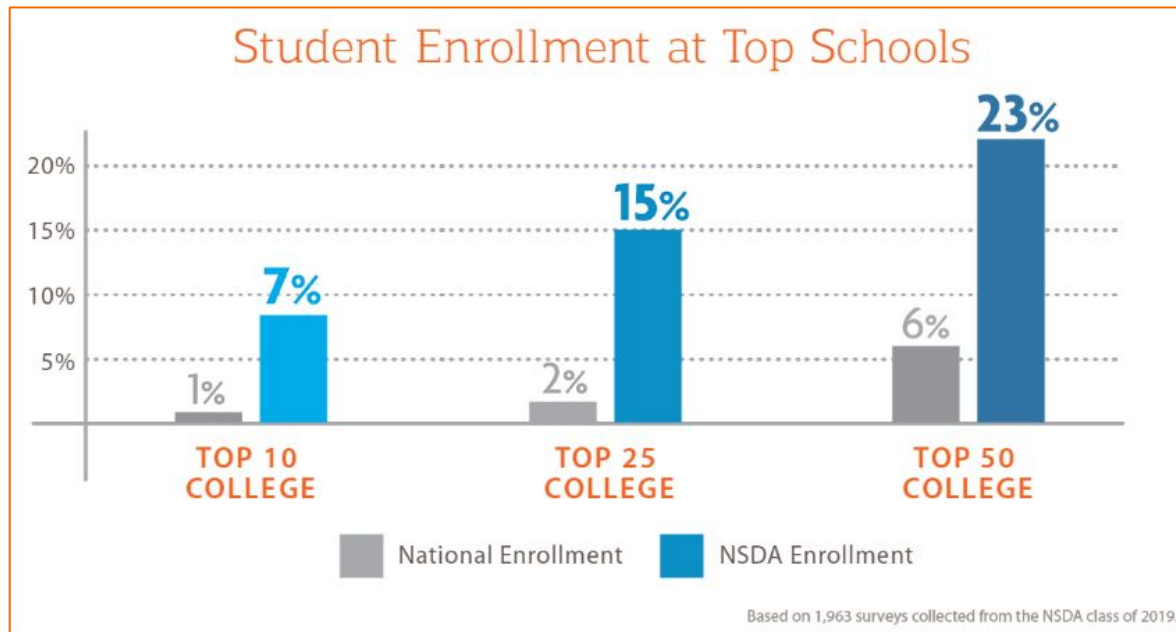
## Closing the Educational Opportunity Gap



# Agenda

1. Why debate?
2. Introduction: Who are we?
3. **Debate events: PF, LD, Cong, CX, WSD**
4. Q&A

# Why Debate?



36%

INCREASE IN READING TEST SCORES

87%

INCREASE IN ANALYTICAL SKILLS

15%

HIGHER SELF-ESTEEM

# Our Speakers

# Chris

Granger, IN

NSDA World Schools Debate National Top 4

NSDA 2X District Champion / national qualifier &  
State 3rd in US Extemporaneous Speaking

Lincoln-Douglas Debate State Quarter-finalist

3 years of middle school debate coaching experience  
(after school program and summer camp)



# Henry

I live in Houston Texas

Experience: I have been debating for 3 years

2X NSDA Nats qual

State Quarterfinalist CX

Trad Debate/Progressive Policy

# Emily

I live in Flower Mound, Texas!

Experience: been doing debate since 6th grade – 4 years Congress, 1 year US Extemp, 1 year World Schools Debate; 5 years in total

Current main events: US Extemp, Congress

- 2024 TFA State US Extemp Semifinalist
- Made quarterfinals at the Longhorn Classic (UT Austin's tournament)

I currently also teach middle schoolers extemp (started in January 2024)



# Kaiyi

Granger IN

2 Years of World Schools Debate

International Extemporaneous Speaking

State Speech Quarter Finalist for IX

I will teach middle schoolers World Schools this year and I have taught world schools over the summer

PUBLIC FORUM

# What is Public Forum (PF)?

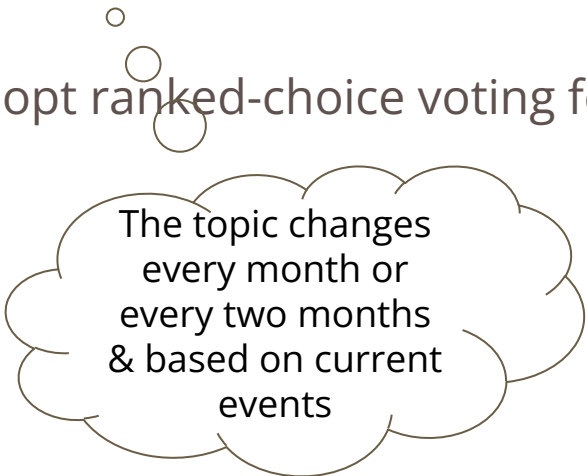
- Originally called Ted Turner debate
- Simplistic **2v2**
- Speakers alternate for every speech
- Very beginner-friendly
- Arguing for or against a resolution
- **Current events** relating to public policy

**Use evidence & impacts to outweigh the benefits & harms of the opposing side**



# How does Public Forum work?

- Resolution; one side supporting / one side against (Pro vs Con)
  - **Resolved:** The United States federal government should legalize all illicit drugs.
  - **Resolved:** The United States should adopt ranked-choice voting for its federal elections.
- Debate has four stages:
  - Constructives
  - Rebuttals
  - Summary
  - Final Focus
  - Crossfire (bonus)



The topic changes  
every month or  
every two months  
& based on current  
events

# Speaking Times

- Alternating format
- Each debate is only 35 minutes
  - 3 min prep time
- Side and order determined by coin toss

Constructive

Rebuttal

Summary

Final Focus

| Speech                          | Time Limit | Purpose  |
|---------------------------------|------------|--|
| Team A Speaker 1 – Constructive | 4 minutes  | Present the team's case  |
| Team B Speaker 1 – Constructive | 4 minutes  | Present the team's case  |
| Crossfire                       | 3 minutes  | Speaker 1 from Team A & B alternate asking and answering questions |
| Team A Speaker 2 – Rebuttal     | 4 minutes  | Refute the opposing side's arguments                               |
| Team B Speaker 2 – Rebuttal     | 4 minutes  | Refute the opposing side's arguments                               |
| Crossfire                       | 3 minutes  | Speaker 2 from Team A & B alternate asking and answering questions |
| Team A Speaker 1 – Summary      | 2 minutes  | Begin crystallizing the main issues in the round                   |
| Team B Speaker 1 – Summary      | 2 minutes  | Begin crystallizing the main issues in the round                   |
| Grand Crossfire                 | 3 minutes  | All four debaters involved in a crossfire at once                  |
| Team A Speaker 2 – Final Focus  | 2 minutes  | Explain reasons that you win the round                             |
| Team B Speaker 2 – Final Focus  | 2 minutes  | Explain reasons that you win the round                             |

# Who does this event fit?

PF emphasizes the following:

- **\*Efficiency\***
- **Persuasive speaking**
- Research
- Logic
- **Crystallization**

# Who does this event fit?

## Advantages:

- Beginner-friendly; intuitive
- More even work distribution
- Judge-accessible
- Focuses on current issues
- Balances research and delivery

## Disadvantages

- Limited depth of argumentation
- Many inaccurate decisions
- Difficult to master

## Neutral

- Frequent topic changes
- Less philosophical, more straightforward

CONGRESS



# Congress

- You are **roleplaying congressional representatives** and debating over whether or not we should **pass or fail certain legislation (bills/resolutions)**
  - An average Congress room has around **10 or more people** in it
  - You address everyone as **“Representative [Last Name]”**
- You can **pick** if you want to pass or fail a bill (*or aff/neg; aff = pass, neg = fail*)
  - A docket with bills written by other schools is sent out by the state’s official website every 18 weeks (so there is a fall docket, which tournaments use from August to December, and spring docket, which tournaments use from January to the end of the season)
- Each speech is a **max of 3 minutes long** and the entire debate consists of aff-neg cycles, starting with an aff speech called the “sponsor”
  - 1 cycle = 1 aff followed by 1 neg
  - “Breaking cycle” – when there aren’t enough speeches on one side, we will sometimes do “aff-neg-neg” instead of “aff-neg-aff” (not good!)

# Other Congress things

- **NOTE:** Each speech will be slightly different (early round-constructives / mid-round-half constructives, half rebuttals / late round-summarizing the round, mostly rebuttals, “crystals”)
- There are **questioning blocks** after each speech
  - The first two speeches (the first aff and the first neg) will get four 30-second questioning blocks, the other speeches afterwards will get two 30-second questioning blocks
- There will be a **“presiding officer”** or a “PO” out of one of the competitors who keeps track of who has done what for equity
- Each round usually lasts anywhere from **2 hours to 3 hours**
  - One bill in a typical room will take around 1-1:30 hours to debate

# Bills v.s. Resolutions



## Item 11 - A Bill to Mandate Ship Checkups to Combat Invasive Species

BE IT ENACTED BY THE CONGRESS HERE ASSEMBLED THAT:

- 1 **SECTION 1.** The US Fish and Wildlife Organization shall enact a mandatory ballast sweep of  
2 boats throughout all major US-owned shipping points and entry points into the  
3 US. Invasive species spread through unclean international boats, and routine  
4 cleanings are necessary to stop the spread.
- 5 **SECTION 2.** An invasive species is defined as a non-native species with the potential to  
6 outcompete native species, as defined by the National Invasive Species Council.
- 7 **SECTION 3.** The US Coast Guard will work in coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife  
8 Organization to regulate the act.  
9 A. Any vessel that refuses to conduct ballast sweeps will be fined \$20,000 for  
10 each instance of noncompliance.  
11 B. Checkpoints will be at every US regulated trading center.
- 12 **SECTION 4.** This bill will be effective immediately upon passing.
- 13 **SECTION 5.** All laws in conflict with this legislation are hereby declared null and void.
- 14 *Introduced for Congressional Debate by Plano East Senior High School.*

## Bills: (above)

- It **WILL happen** (stated in Section 1), and the different sections outline the **policy/ies** we will enact
- If you see "SECTION 1", it's a bill



## Item 3 - A Resolution to Advocate for Elimination of Conditional Lending by the International Monetary Fund to Promote Economic Stability and Social Welfare

- 1 **WHEREAS,** When a country borrows from the International Monetary Fund, the loan is  
2 conditional on the government adjusting its economic policies to overcome the  
3 problems that led it to seek financial assistance in the first place; and
- 4 **WHEREAS,** The conditional lending policies placed by the IMF on borrowing nations, often  
5 result in implementation of economic policies that harm the disadvantaged,  
6 exacerbate inequality and jeopardize social change; and
- 7 **WHEREAS,** IMF conditionality is particularly harmful to developing nations, reducing public  
8 investment, and stalling plans for improving key public sectors like  
9 infrastructure, education, and healthcare; and
- 10 **WHEREAS,** The inability of governments in developing nations to bring change breeds  
11 political dissatisfaction, decreasing political and economic stability; and
- 12 **WHEREAS,** The United States is a dominant force in the governance of the IMF, placing it in  
13 a unique position to influence IMF policy changes; now, therefore, be it
- 14 **RESOLVED,** That the Congress here assembled that the United States should advocate for  
15 elimination of conditional lending practices by the IMF.

*Introduced for Congressional Debate by Jack C. Hays High School*

## Resolutions: (above)

- We **WANT it to happen** (stated in the "resolved" section at the bottom); it's **an idea rather than a policy**
- If you see "WHEREAS" and "RESOLVED", it's a resolution

# Pros and Cons

## PROS:

- A wide variety of topics
- Forces you to think on your feet because you don't always get the speech...
- You're by yourself but also not
- Lets you look at both sides of the coin (you sometimes have to flip...)

## CONS:

- The sessions last for hours
- There is a preset "docket" for what pieces of legislation you MUST prepare/debate on
- It's easy to overthink
- You can get screwed over

## NEUTRAL:

- Networking

LINCOLN DOUGLAS

# What is LD?

- Originated with Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas
- 1v1 format
- More philosophical debate
  - Framework
  - Contentions
- Arguing for or against a resolution



# Where does the philosophy come in?

- LD operates with a system of values and value criterions
  - Value: What you think is the most important thing in a round
    - Ex. Justice, Liberty, Security, Quality of Life, Life
  - Value Criterion: How to measure your value
    - Ex. Utilitarianism, minimizing harm, mitigating structural violence
- Resolved: Parents ought to put cameras in their children's study spaces
  - Aff Value: Quality of Life; More supervision -> Better Time-Management -> Better life
  - Neg Value: Privacy; Supervision principle violates privacy which is immoral

# Speech Times

- **Constructive speech**
  - Aff
  - Neg
- **Cross-examination**
- **Rebuttals**
  - Includes refutation and crystallization

| Speech                        | Time Limit | Purpose  |
|-------------------------------|------------|--|
| Affirmative Constructive      | 6 minutes  | Present the affirmative case   |
| Negative Cross-Examination    | 3 minutes  | Negative asks questions of the affirmative   |
| Negative Constructive         | 7 minutes  | Present the negative case and refute the affirmative case  |
| Affirmative Cross-Examination | 3 minutes  | Affirmative asks questions of the negative   |
| First Affirmative Rebuttal    | 4 minutes  | Refute the negative case and rebuild the affirmative case  |
| Negative Rebuttal             | 6 minutes  | Refute the affirmative case, rebuild the negative case, and offer reasons that negative should win the round, commonly referred to as voting issues. |
| 2nd Affirmative Rebuttal      | 3 minutes  | Address negative voting issues and offer reasons for why the affirmative should win.   |

\*Each debater is also entitled to four minutes of prep time during the round.



# Traditional vs Progressive

Traditional ([Video](#) if you're interested in learning more)

- What a normal person thinks when they think “debate”
- Balance substance and delivery

Progressive ([Video](#) if you're interested in learning more)

- Debate is a game; you can do whatever
- Spreading - sometimes means giving 10 contentions
- Lots of weird arguments not seen in traditional (i.e. Kritiks, Theory, etc.) - more flexible but also complicated

# Advantages vs Disadvantages

## Good:

- You can do it without a partner (makes you better)
- Shorter than Policy
- Lots of options and creativity

## Bad:

- You have to do it without a partner (more work)
- Different styles may scare the living daylights out of you

## Who is it for?

- Loners
- People who like to debate morals as well as specifics
- Everyone with good taste

WORLD SCHOOLS

# World Schools

- Motions - They all start with "This House"
  - Ex. This House would fine individuals who do not recycle at home.
- 3 on 3 with teams up to 5
- Each side is called **Proposition** and **Opposition**
- There is a **Reply** speech
- There are **impromptu topics** where you get 45/60 minutes to prep from scratch
- There is no cross-ex, instead there are **points** you can make during the opponent's speech
  - There is protected time on the 1st and last minutes
- No prep Time
- No computers during the round

# World Schools

- Special “Opp Block”, two opp speeches in a row
- There are multiple resolutions that you need to write
- Reply can be the 1st or 2nd speaker
- 
- Sample Topic from last Year
  - This House Believes that Ai is good for Education

| Speech            | Time  | Responsibility of Debater  |
|-------------------|-------|--|
| 1st Proposition   | 8 min | Introduce motion, define key terms, set burdens, establish mechanism or model if needed, offer substantive arguments |
| 1st Opposition    | 8 min | Deal with proposed framework by proposition, clash with proposition arguments, offer own substantive arguments       |
| 2nd Proposition   | 8 min | Clash, offer new substantive arguments, defend 1st speaker's points  |
| 2nd Opposition    | 8 min | Clash, offer new substantive arguments, defend 1st speaker's points  |
| 3rd Proposition   | 8 min | Clash and Summarize Key Issues   |
| 3rd Opposition    | 8 min | Clash and Summarize Key Issues   |
| Opposition Reply  | 4 min | Crystallize the round  |
| Proposition Reply | 4 min | Crystallize the round  |

# Impromptu

- Impromptu is a form of World schools debate where you make up your case on the spot
  - No computers
  - Dictionary, Almanac, Encyclopedia
- All 5 team members discuss to make your case written on paper
- They give you your side before you start
- Requires Background knowledge and is fun for creative people
- Topics are generally more universal so everyone knows more about it
  - This House would fine individuals who do not recycle at home.
- Almost always one impromptu round at every tournament

# World Schools - Pros and Cons

## Pros:

- 5 person team
- 3 people talk
- More creative style

## Cons:

- Less speaking time than individual events
- No computers during round
- No prep time
- A lot of case writing
- Printing cases

POLICY



# Policy

- 2 on 2 format
- Is more focused on the “policy” implementation of the resolution
- Is the longest debate format - each round takes about 1:40
- 2 sides - aff and neg
- Each team has 2 constructives and 2 rebuttals
- Each constructive is 8 mins and each rebuttals 5 mins
- Each team gets 8 minutes of preparation time to prepare for speeches

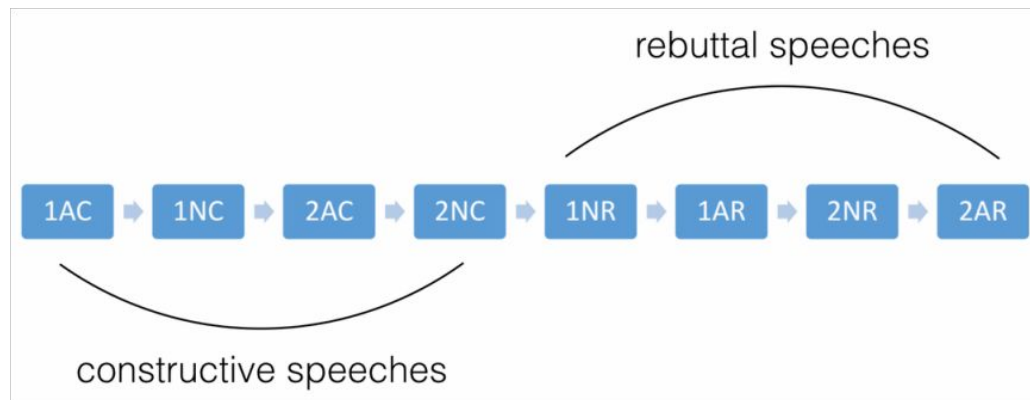


## The Structure of a CX Debate

- **Constructive Speeches**
  - 1AC: 8 Minutes
    - Cross-Examined by 2NC: 3 Minutes
  - 1NC: 8 Minutes
    - Cross-Examined by 1AC: 3 Minutes
  - 2AC: 8 Minutes
    - Cross-Examined by 1NC: 3 Minutes
  - 2NC: 8 Minutes
    - Cross-Examined by 2AC: 3 Minutes
- **Rebuttal Speeches**
  - 1NR: 5 Minutes
  - 1AR: 5 Minutes
  - 2NR: 5 Minutes
  - 2AR: 5 Minutes

# How does policy work?

- There are 2 sides - aff and neg
- The affirmative comes up with a way to support the resolution chosen for the year, the negatives job is to disprove the affirmative



- Constructive speeches are to introduce new arguments
- Rebuttal speeches are to respond to the arguments your opponents make and extend your own arguments

# Pros and Cons vs other events

## Pros:

- 1 topic throughout the year so you can research it in depth and don't have to worry about restarting all your work
- Has both philosophical and technical arguments and more policy oriented arguments

## Cons:

- 1 topic might make you get burnt out
- Rounds are long and tournaments can be tiring

## Other reasons to choose policy

- Policy teaches you about the indepth research of various topics and issues
- Can be good for bonding since it's a partnered event that is very reliant on communication
- It builds speaking skills and quick thinking since many quick decisions determine rounds
- Open Ev

# Q&A

[tsos@thesoundofsunshine.org](mailto:tsos@thesoundofsunshine.org)

# Resources

Introduction to Public Forum & Congressional debate

<https://www.speechanddebate.org/wp-content/uploads/Public-Forum-and-Congressional-Debate-Textbook.pdf>

CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE: Guide

<https://www.speechanddebate.org/wp-content/uploads/2017-Congressional-Debate-Guide.pdf>

Policy Debate - genuinely really good resource with good in depth explanations

<https://thedebugguru.weebly.com/cross-examination.html>

[Interest Form](#)