



# 2025-2026 Handbook

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# What's New This Year

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## Speech Events

- Prepared speech time limit is ten minutes. ([page 16](#))
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## Debate Events

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# Mission Statement

American Speech and Debate Association's mission is to prepare the next generation of leaders by providing competitive speech and debate events where youth learn to communicate their ideas, beliefs and values effectively while maintaining respect for differing views.

To accomplish this mission, ASDA:

- Embraces those values found in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution such as freedom of speech and religion.
- Cultivates an atmosphere of collaboration and congeniality where freedom of conscience in all religious beliefs and political stances is honored.
- Welcomes youth from all learning environments.

# Core Values and Conduct

ASDA agrees with the Declaration of Independence in claiming that "all men are created equal." We expect our competitors, judges, coaches, staff, adults and visitors to treat all people with respect and honor and to commit to the following statement of values and tournament conduct.

"In my relationship with ASDA, whether as a competitor, judge, coach, staff, adult or visitor, I commit to upholding our shared core values of being conversational, collaborative, and kind as I honor each person's free exercise of conscience. Communication is here meant to include mutual understanding as well as peaceably hearing or presenting material that has the ability to generate strong opinions."

## Core Values

**Conversational:** "In refining my skills of effective communication, I employ a conversational rate of speaking and style of presentation. I am willing to hear opinions that differ from my own regarding religion, money, health, politics, etc. Competitors, judges, and audience observers listening with an unbiased preconception will be shown that I value being conversational."

**Collaborative:** "I will work peaceably with others to accomplish the mission of American Speech and Debate Association. I will help prepare the next generation of leaders as I attempt to communicate my ideas, beliefs and values effectively while maintaining respect for differing views. I will do my best to help others."

**Kind:** "I will be kind and polite in all my words to and about other people, whether or not they are present and whether or not I agree with them."



## Tournament Code of Conduct

"I will treat others with courtesy and kindness, in and out of competition rounds, including refraining from ad hominem attacks and name calling. Ad hominem attacks are arguments directed at a person rather than the position they are maintaining. Name calling refers to any type of insult, label, or definition other than the other person's actual name (or approved nickname) or position in the round.

"I will exercise integrity, tell the truth, and be honest.

"I will give credit where credit is due and never commit plagiarism.

"I will follow all speech and debate rules and admit mistakes when rules are broken.

"I will honor the decisions and requests of staff members, judges and other adults.

"I will respect the property of others and never steal or harm another's property.

"I will avoid vulgarity and crude or rude humor, in words or in actions, either in rounds or at any other time when participating with ASDA.

"I will report any unsafe situation to tournament staff immediately.

"I will refrain from public displays of affection.

"I will never use, retrieve, share, save or display any hate-based, discriminatory or sexually explicit material.

"I will not use or possess alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, illegal drugs, pornography or any other generally unacceptable items.

"I will not possess dangerous items like knives, lighters or other weapons."

## Appropriateness of Material

All material presented in speech and debate events is prepared by the competitor. See general and specific event rules below for information about each event. All material presented at ASDA events must meet the following appropriateness standards. If you are unsure whether your topic is appropriate, you are encouraged to get approval before the tournament by emailing the league at least two weeks prior to the tournament to [info@americanspeech.org](mailto:info@americanspeech.org). If adjudicated during the tournament, the Tournament Coordinator should err on the side of discretion and the protection of our youngest competitors. The ultimate decision of what is appropriate is determined by a committee appointed by the board of ASDA.

## Mature Topics

Mature topics are not allowed. Mature topics are those topics that include or require research or discussion of events hypothetical or actual that are sexually oriented, profane, or contain realistic violence that is either extreme or persistent. Mature topics are not appropriate for our competitor age range and therefore will not be allowed. If discovery or presentation of a topic would be inappropriate for children aged 17 and younger, the topic is too mature for ASDA, and the speech or debate case will be disqualified. For example, debate cases or speeches regarding transgender issues, prostitution, rape, late term abortion, or other similar subjects will be disqualified. We recognize that these topics are important and should be discussed in society, just not with the age of our competitors.

## Sensitive Topics

Sensitive topics are permitted but must be addressed appropriately at ASDA competitions. Sensitive topics are those topics that include or require research or discussion of events hypothetical or actual that are disturbing or emotional, but not necessarily ruled out by the mature topics rule. Sensitive topics may be presented in a speech event only after inviting young competitors or children to leave the room. Presentation of content that a reasonable person would find to be overly graphic or disturbing to an audience of younger varsity competitors is not permitted in debate events.

# Safety

## Open Door Unless 3 or More

In order to protect the safety of competitors, parents, volunteers and others at ASDA events, American Speech and Debate Association follows an “open door unless 3 or more” rule. This rule states that there must be 3 or more people in a room before a door is closed. All doors should be propped open between rounds and whenever there are fewer than 3 people in a room. No one should be alone with another person in a room, whether physical or virtual. In online tournaments, when there are fewer than three people in a room, all participants should keep their video and microphones turned off until the third person enters the room.

We recognize that the “open door unless 3 or more” rule does not eliminate the possibility of danger. However, it is our hope that adherence to this rule will reduce the chances for unsafe conditions to exist. All competitors, parents, volunteers or others should report any unsafe situation to tournament staff immediately even if this rule has been followed.

## Adult Representative

Adults at tournaments serve a variety of purposes. They are chaperones, coaches, judges, staff, and emergency contacts for competitors. For this reason, it is essential that each competitor submit the name and contact information of their Adult Representative(s) when they register for each tournament.

Parents are the preferred Adult Representative. Parents can fill all the above roles for their competitors. When parents are at the tournament with their competitors, they should expect to judge more than half the rounds, assist with compliance concerns, and serve on staff.

When a parent is not available to serve as the Adult Representative, they must designate a different chaperone by filling out a release waiver that is signed by both the parent and the new designated adult **and** they must recruit one or more additional adults willing to judge more than half the rounds at the tournament. Coaches or other adults may serve as the designated adult representative for a maximum of four students. Designated Adult Representatives must be aware who they represent. This is recorded by their signature on the release waiver form.

Only a parent or Legal Guardian may be the designated Adult Representative for Junior competitors. They may not delegate that responsibility. The parent or designated Adult Representative must stay at the ASDA tournament or event when their competitor is at the tournament or event. If the Adult Representative leaves without their competitor, even if just to wait in their car, the competitor will be at risk of disqualification. Competitors will not be allowed to participate without a designated adult representative onsite the entire time the student is at the ASDA tournament or event.

## Handbook Adherence

Competitors, coaches, judges, parents, and all other participants in ASDA league events including tournaments and any other ASDA event or activity agree to adhere to all aspects of this handbook including mission, values, event rules, etc. Competitors may incur penalties ranging from instruction on the handbook to tournament rank reductions to loss of affiliation or other if they disregard any aspect of this handbook. ASDA reserves the right to include or exclude competitors, judges, parents or other adults or observers based on their adherence to the values and instructions herein.

## Compliance

Questions about rule violation or any other violation of this handbook may be reported by competitors, adults, staff, judges or others to the compliance staff at the tournament. The compliance staff under the direction of ASDA's executive director and board of directors will review the report and determine the consequences. Consequences may include education, rank reduction, speaker point reduction, forfeiture of the round, tournament disqualification, loss of affiliation, or other, if necessary, to ensure the honest and unbiased application of this handbook.



## Eligibility

To be eligible for competition during the 2025-2026 season, a competitor must affiliate with ASDA, read and abide by this handbook, and meet all three of these age and educational criteria:

1. Age no younger than 11 years old on September 1, 2025, and in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade
2. Age no older than 18 years old on September 1, 2025
3. Not have graduated from high school

For competitors who are too young to compete, some tournaments offer a Juniors Tournament concurrently with the regular tournament. Competitors wanting to compete in the Juniors Tournament should consult the Juniors Handbook for rules and eligibility.

## Eligibility FAQs

- **I am younger or older than the eligibility requirements, but I am eager to compete. Will American Speech and Debate Association make an exception?**

No. Younger competitors may participate in Juniors Tournaments. Competitors who have already graduated from high school or who are too old to compete may be eligible to judge.

- **I have graduated from high school. Am I eligible to compete?**

No. Competitors who have received a high school diploma or who are too old to compete are not eligible for competition, but they may be eligible to judge.

- **I have special needs or a learning disability. Am I allowed to compete?**

Yes. Competitors with special needs or learning disabilities are encouraged to compete. Accommodations for competitors with special needs or learning disabilities are provided at the discretion of league or tournament leadership. Any adaptation of event rules must be approved by league leadership in advance of any competition. Email [info@americanspeech.org](mailto:info@americanspeech.org) with requests.

- **I have physical limitations. Can I compete?**

Yes. Competitors with physical limitations are eligible to compete. American Speech and Debate Association will make accommodations when practical. Accommodations may vary from tournament to tournament. Requests for special arrangements that may affect competition

must be made in advance by sending a detailed explanation of the situation to American Speech and Debate Association. Email [info@americanspeech.org](mailto:info@americanspeech.org) with requests.

- **I compete in a college forensics league. Can I also compete in American Speech and Debate Association tournaments?**

No. A competitor who competes in forensics at the collegiate level is ineligible to compete in American Speech and Debate Association tournaments. However, taking a college course while in high school on a dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment basis does not make a competitor ineligible for ASDA competition, even if that course includes forensics instruction.

- **I compete in another high school forensic league. Can I also compete in American Speech and Debate Association tournaments?**

Yes. Any competitor who meets our eligibility requirements is encouraged to compete.

- **I am homeschooled. Can I compete?**

Yes. Competitors from any educational background are welcome to compete.

- **I attend a public or private school that does not have an ASDA speech or debate team. Can I compete?**

Yes. Competitors may register for tournaments as individuals. A school team or competition club is not required for participation.

## Prepare to Compete

### Curriculum

American Speech and Debate Association allows competitors to prepare for competition using any curriculum they choose so long as they follow competition rules at tournaments. Some competitors choose to use the excellent curriculum and resources available from our partners. Partner information can be found on our website [www.americanspeech.org](http://www.americanspeech.org). We encourage our affiliates to enhance their preparation by using partner services.

### Clubs

Some competitors gather in clubs for preparation throughout the year in order to have larger practice opportunities, however, it is not required for ASDA competitors to belong to a club. Competitors may prepare for competition in whatever way works for them so long as they follow the guidelines of this handbook.

Some of the advantages of meeting in a club might include:

- **Shared resources for coaching.** By combining talents and money, clubs can find premises, teachers and curriculum that they can share. For more information about how to form a club in your area, please reach out to ASDA at [info@americanspeech.org](mailto:info@americanspeech.org). We have partners and staff members who can help.
- **Parent involvement.** Some clubs meet in the evening or on weekends so they can invite parents who would otherwise be uninvolved in their child's education to participate. Parents recognize the opportunities for growth in a competitive environment. They offer a unique perspective that is valued in ASDA.
- **Virtual practice.** Some clubs meet virtually through online platforms. This flexibility allows competitors in remote areas to experience the benefits of preparing with a club. For more information about how to locate a virtual club or to form your own virtual club, please reach out to ASDA at [info@americanspeech.org](mailto:info@americanspeech.org).
- **School Speech and Debate Club.** Schools with speech and debate teams are treated as clubs in ASDA. Competitors may register for tournaments through their school, or they may register individually with their families. If a school would like to register their competitors, please reach out to [info@americanspeech.org](mailto:info@americanspeech.org) for the school registration form.
- **Host tournament.** Schools and clubs are invited to host tournaments in their area and invite others in the league to participate. This creates opportunities that are convenient for local competitors. Please contact ASDA's league leadership at [info@americanspeech.org](mailto:info@americanspeech.org) for more information.

## Coaching

Coaches for ASDA do not need advanced training. Many coaches are just interested parents. Some coaches prepare their own materials based on the ASDA Handbook. Others may use commercially available curriculum. For more information about resources available to help new coaches prepare their competitors, please reach out to ASDA at [info@americanspeech.org](mailto:info@americanspeech.org).

Sometimes competitors choose to hire a private professional coach to help them prepare. It is in the sole discretion of the competitor and the competitor's family whether to seek private coaching. Many of our partners listed on our website [www.americanspeech.org](http://www.americanspeech.org) offer private coaching resources. Please reach out to ASDA at [info@americanspeech.org](mailto:info@americanspeech.org) for more information.

## Tournaments

### Judge Recruitment

It is the responsibility of every competitor and coach to recruit judges for each tournament the competitor attends. Although judge recruitment may not cost money, it is part of the price of



participation in ASDA. Every tournament needs judges in order to run. Competitors need judges in order to get feedback and have the opportunity to compete. Much of the judge responsibility can be filled by parents or adult representatives, but there is always a need for additional community judges. From the time a competitor affiliates, they should begin talking to family, friends, teachers, pastors and other adults in their life about this activity.

Competitors should expect to invite and fill several judge spots at each tournament through their own networks of support. For reference, judging one round typically takes 2-3 hours. It is a rewarding experience for the adults who are invited. Judges routinely thank ASDA students for inviting them. It gives them hope for the future when they meet articulate, polite and thoughtful competitors at tournaments.

## Judge Training

Judges should watch the following training videos before entering a round to judge. They may watch these videos at any time during the season prior to the round being judged.

Speech Training video [https://youtu.be/WYy6MTI\\_8Oc](https://youtu.be/WYy6MTI_8Oc) (12:19)

Debate Training video <https://youtu.be/gj17tEUmiOU> (10:58)

## Tournament Competitor Instructions

### Debate Registration Restrictions

A competitor or team may register for one debate event per tournament. This means that an individual competitor may register for Lincoln-Douglas Debate or a team of two competitors may register for Team Policy Debate. An individual competitor will be disqualified from competing in Team Policy Debate if they have no registered teammate competing with them. If a competitor or team registers in a debate event at a tournament, they must compete in only that debate type, and in all rounds for which they qualify. Competitors may register for the other debate event at a different tournament within the same school year.

### Speech Registration Restrictions

A competitor or team may register for up to three speech types per tournament. An individual competitor will be disqualified from competing in Duo Interpretation if they have no registered teammate competing with them. If a competitor or team registers for one or more speech events at a tournament, they must compete in only those speech types, and in all rounds for which they qualify. They may register for different speech events at a different tournament within the same school year.

## Dress Code

- A business suit with dress shoes is the most appropriate choice.
- Other formal business attire may also be worn.

Just as a lawyer or elected official would dress in formal business attire in a courtroom, congress or boardroom, competitors in ASDA should also wear formal business attire. A neat appearance in well-fitted clothing demonstrates commitment to the activity.

ASDA judges are allowed to take appearance into account when ranking speakers and debaters and are asked to inform tournament staff of any flagrant abuses of the dress code. Competitors should avoid any clothing or grooming choices that may distract the judges from hearing what they are presenting.

Very casual clothing such as T-shirts, jeans and athletic wear are never appropriate when presenting a speech or debate. Clothing with a logo, emblem or symbol, such as a school uniform or military uniform is not formal business attire and therefore, not appropriate. Likewise, very formal dress attire such as tuxedos and prom dresses are not appropriate. Competitors who are not appropriately attired will be taught what is appropriate and asked to amend their dress.

Business casual clothing is acceptable attire when between rounds or when observing speeches or debates. Graphics on clothing must be in line with the ASDA code of conduct. Anyone wearing clothing that includes foul language, inappropriate graphics, or hate speech will be asked to change clothing immediately or leave the tournament facility.

## Tournament Host Instructions

We invite anyone, club leader or other, to host a tournament. Please contact [info@americanspeech.org](mailto:info@americanspeech.org) for more information. An invitation to attend the tournament must go out league-wide early enough that interested competitors have time to sign up.

As much as possible, qualifying tournaments should protect the impartiality of the judges by prohibiting parents from judging their own competitors and preferring (as much as possible) that parents and coaches refrain from judging someone they do life with or that they have coached in that event. Conflicts will be resolved by the tournament leadership at time of event depending on judge need. Community judges should always be given priority over parents and coaches when assigning ballots.

## Tournament Judge Instructions

Judges must:

1. Be an adult not qualified to compete as a competitor.
2. Read the league mission and the event-specific rules that pertain to judging.
3. Fill out the ballot as quickly as possible after the round.
4. Refrain from speaking about the round until after the tournament is over.

## ASDA National Tournament

At each tournament, competitors compete for ASDA National Tournament points. Competitors earn National Tournament points in events based on the criteria in the ASDA Tabulation Handbook. Additional National Tournament points may be awarded at-large to fill available space.

1. Competitors may only receive a maximum of one point per event at any given tournament.
2. Competitors may only register to compete at the National Tournament in events for which they received a qualifying number of Nationals points over the course of the competition season whether earned at a tournament or at-large.
3. Competitors may compete at the National Tournament in multiple events up to the limit imposed by the tournament, provided they have received a qualifying number of Nationals points in each of those events.
4. Any prepared speech qualifying to compete at the National Tournament must retain 70% or more of the original qualifying material.

## Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The American Speech and Debate Association recognizes the growing role of artificial intelligence (AI) in academic research and speechwriting. To maintain academic integrity and transparency, the following guidelines apply to the use of AI-generated content in all ASDA tournaments.

### Permitted Use

For scripted speech events and debate, competitors are allowed to use AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, CoPilot, Gemini) for research and idea generation. AI-generated content must be treated as a source and is subject to the same citation standards as other research materials.

Please note that the use of AI in limited preparation speech events is prohibited.

### Citation Requirements

Any AI-generated content used in a speech or debate must be cited verbally and in writing. The citation must include the name of the AI tool used, the exact prompt used to generate the content, and the date accessed.

Example of a verbal citation: “According to a response generated by CoPilot on September 4, 2025, using the prompt ‘Explain the reasons to amend the 26<sup>th</sup> amendment of the United States constitution’...”



For scripted speech events, directly quoted AI generated text must be limited to the quoted word limit for the specific speech type. Please see the specific speech event rules for additional information.

## Credibility Statement

The American Speech and Debate Association does not consider AI-content to be a credible or primary source. AI may be used to supplement research, but should not replace peer-reviewed, expert, or primary sources in argumentation.

## Accountability

Failure to properly cite AI-generated content may be considered plagiarism and subject to penalties under ASDA rules. Judges are encouraged to ask for source documentation if AI use is suspected but not cited.

# Competition Speech Events

ASDA offers competitors the opportunity to compete in up to three speech events at any given tournament. Each speech event is governed by the general and specific speech rules. The speech events for the 2025-2026 school year are:

- Belief & Values Limited Prep
- Digital Presentation
- Duo Interpretation
- Extemporaneous Speaking (not available at all tournaments)
- Impromptu Speaking
- Open Interpretation
- Original Oratory

## General Speech Instructions

ASDA tournaments offer competitors the opportunity to deliver their speeches multiple times before different judges.

Each tournament will have a minimum of two preliminary speech rounds. Competitors are expected to compete in all preliminary speech rounds. Failure to appear for a scheduled round will result in a forfeit and may lead to disqualification.

For a sample of tournament timing, please refer to Supplemental Materials 2: Sample Tournament Schedule.

## General Speech Rules

1. General speech rules apply to all speech events.
2. The speech must be the original work of the competitor.
3. A speech may be presented in only one event at a given tournament. Competitors are permitted to revise and adapt their speech for use in a different event within the same competition season. However, speeches—regardless of modifications—may not be reused in any future competition years. All sources must be acknowledged verbally in the speech.
4. For prepared speeches, all sources must be acknowledged on scripts with both parenthetical citations and with a Works Cited page at the end of the script. An academic style guide such as MLA, APA or Chicago should be used to determine how to properly acknowledge sources in scripts.
5. Any Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated text such as might be generated by ChatGPT or other is considered a source and must be acknowledged properly the same as any other source. Directly quoted AI generated text must be limited to the quoted word limit for the specific speech type.



6. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Use of others' words, theories, ideas or stories without proper acknowledgement constitutes plagiarism, whether the source material is directly quoted or paraphrased. Common knowledge, meaning information that the average person can be expected to know, does not need to be cited. ASDA reserves the right to examine speeches for plagiarism and disqualify any that do not meet these standards.
7. All work must be prepared for a single school year. Competitors may use a speech script to compete in other leagues in addition to ASDA competition as long as they occur during the same school year. Speeches performed competitively in ASDA or in other leagues in previous school years may not be used.
8. Competitors are responsible for their timers in the competition room. Before speaking, the competitor will show a timer set to zero. The head judge will acknowledge that the timer is set properly. Then the competitor will start the timer when they begin speaking and stop it when they finish, showing the final time to the judges while verbally announcing the final time. The timer should be placed within view of the speaker.
9. Only feet may touch the floor when a speech is presented.
10. Presentation of any material related to the speech, whether verbal or non-verbal, before the timer is activated or after the timer is stopped is called a pre-show and will not be allowed. Competitors may give a brief introduction of their name and the speech type being performed as well as any other discussion necessary to confirm that judges are ready.
11. Audience participation is not allowed. Competitors may not request interaction from the judges or the spectators in the room. Audience members may not prompt the speaker.
12. No vulgarity will be permitted, including profanity, crude gestures, and other inappropriate content. See [Appropriateness of Material](#) above. Profanity refers to offensive words or actions used to intensify language or insult.
13. Unless allowed in individual speech rules, no visual aids or props may be used.
14. Competitor must stand to deliver their speech unless physically unable to do so (even in online events).
15. Use of AI in limited preparation speech events is prohibited.

## General Script Submission Instructions

All prepared speeches will require submission of scripts prior to the tournament. Some speeches also require submission of visual support or preparation of source material. Specific instructions are included for every speech type.

## Belief & Values Limited Prep

The purpose of the Belief & Values Limited Prep speech type is to give students a safe place to express their own beliefs and values in answer to a variety of questions pertaining to philosophy, religion, American values, or the human condition. Competitors are given two possible topics and two minutes to prepare a 5-minute speech. During the preparation time, competitors may use physical note cards they have prepared in advance. The topics will be randomly chosen from a pre-published bank of questions. In their speech, competitors should cite specific sources to support their position.

### Belief & Values Limited Prep Rules

1. Competitors may bring their pre-prepared note cards and a writing utensil into competition rooms. They may not use any other written or electronic resources once they have entered the competition room. Note cards may be 4x6 size or smaller.
2. The topic card and any notecards may be held by the competitor while delivering the speech.
3. Sources of support referenced on the note cards and in the speech may include (but are not limited to) scripture, authoritative commentary on scripture, religious dogma, philosophers, personal stories and notes, etc.
4. Sources of support must follow the general speech rules regarding plagiarism.
5. Any sources cited in the speech must be acknowledged verbally during the speech and if not commonly known should be noted on the card. Any note card used in the speech should be kept by the competitor through the end of the tournament.
6. Competitors are allowed and encouraged to present ideas and beliefs that may differ from those of the judges. Judges will be instructed to evaluate the speech based on the objective measures found on the ballot rather than personal bias.
7. The tone of the speech should foster respect among differing beliefs. Speeches should not be derogatory to other beliefs.
8. Competitors may speak for up to 5 minutes. There are 15 seconds of grace time. Competitors who go over the 15 seconds of grace time will receive time penalties.
9. Any use of characterization, singing or dancing should be minimal and make sense with the topic and thesis of the speech. It is not allowed to share a complete speech in characterization other than that of the competitor.
10. Competitors must show their note card to the judges before speaking.
11. Notecard must be in view during the speech.
12. Competitors may not read from a screen, paper, or other script. The only thing they may reference during the speech is the notecard.
13. The camera must remain on during the preparation period for online tournaments.

## Belief & Values Topic Bank

1. Why do some people prevail in the face of adversity while others fail?
2. How do your beliefs about an afterlife affect the way you live?
3. What does the American Dream mean to you?
4. How does art affect your life?
5. Why do bad things happen in the world?
6. What is beauty?
7. How can you honor a diversity of beliefs?
8. How do you put your beliefs into practice?
9. What is a community's responsibility to the individual?
10. What is an individual's responsibility to their community?
11. How does diversity benefit society?
12. What is the proper relation between faith and reason?
13. What does it mean to be free?
14. How are freedom and responsibility related?
15. Should freedom be sacrificed in the interest of security?
16. Why is freedom of speech important?
17. How do your friends affect your beliefs and your values?
18. How does a belief in a higher power affect the way you live your life?
19. What does it mean to live a good life?
20. How can you become a better person?
21. What is goodness?
22. What is the proper relationship between religious belief and democratic government?
23. What is the best way to attain happiness?
24. How do people grow through hardship?
25. What is a hero?
26. Which natural human rights are the most important?
27. If you could teach everyone in the world one concept, what concept would have the biggest positive impact on humanity?
28. Are humans inherently good or evil?
29. How can you live with integrity?
30. By what standards do you judge yourself?
31. Is liberty and justice for all attainable?
32. How does the media influence people's beliefs and values?
33. What is the relationship between justice and mercy?
34. When does a positive personality trait become a tragic flaw?
35. How does perspective shape or alter truth?
36. What is our responsibility to our planet?
37. What role should prayer or meditation have in your life?
38. Why does the right to property matter?
39. What is the purpose of life?
40. What are some aspects of a healthy relationship?
41. Why do you treat others the way you do?
42. How does freedom of religion benefit society?
43. What role should service have in our lives?
44. How do we use stories to understand our experiences?
45. What is truth?
46. Why are certain truths considered universal?
47. Is war ever justifiable?
48. Where does your personal worth come from?

## Digital Presentation Rules

Digital Presentation is a platform speech. It is a visually supported speech written, memorized and presented by the competitor. Digital Presentation may include visual support from a device. PowerPoint, Prezi, Google Slides or other presentation software may be used to create the visual portion of the speech. Visual support should begin with an opening slide and end with a blank slide and should include five or more slides total.

### Digital Presentation Speech Rules

1. All general speech rules must be followed.
2. Competitors may speak for up to ten minutes. There are 15 seconds of grace time. Competitors who go over the 15 seconds of grace time will receive time penalties.
3. A competitor may directly quote a maximum of 350 words total in the speech. Directly quoted words may be sprinkled throughout the speech as long as they are verbally attributed and cited properly.
4. Images used in visual support must be credited on the slide.

### Digital Presentation Script Submission

1. Digital Presentation requires a full script to be submitted prior to the tournament. Online submission instructions will be distributed before the submission deadline.
2. Scripts should be in black, 12-point font and double spaced. Hyperlinks may be in blue.
3. Scripts must include the name of the competitor and the title of the speech.
4. A Works Cited page must be included if the script includes any words, theories, ideas or stories that were created by someone other than the competitor. Every source must be included on the Works Cited page, whether the information is directly quoted or paraphrased in the script.
5. Every source must also be acknowledged parenthetically after each mention in the script, according to the rules of the style guide chosen by the competitor. MLA, APA and Chicago are recommended options for style guides.
6. The script submitted must be the script performed by the competitor.
7. Visual support (slides) must be submitted in the form of an image that can be opened by anyone regardless of whether they have the specific presentation software.

## Duo Interpretation Rules

Duo Interpretation is a literary interpretation event in which two competitors choose a published or self-authored piece of literature, cut the work into a presentation, act out all the roles, and direct all the action. Duo Interpretation provides substantial freedom of imagination to competitors. Without sets, props or costumes available, competitors use body language, facial expressions, and voice to create rich characters and settings. Duo Interpretation gives competitors the opportunity to present classic literature and works with high literary merit in a dynamic, entertaining way. Duo Interpretation speeches may be dramatic or humorous in tone.

### Duo Interpretation Speech Rules

1. All general speech rules must be followed.
2. Competitors may speak for up to ten minutes. There are 15 seconds of grace time. Competitors who go over the 15 seconds of grace time will receive time penalties.
3. Self-authored works may draw inspiration from characters, settings, or plot elements found in published pieces of literature.
4. If competitors choose to include singing, it should be motivated by the original source. Up to 150 words may be sung in total in the speech.
5. Dancing should be limited in nature and make sense with the original source material.
6. Sound effects are allowed.
7. One published or self-authored work must be used as the source material for each speech.
8. An introduction must be presented. It must be delivered at the beginning of the speech and may be after a short teaser section.
9. The introduction must include the title and author of the literature selection.
10. A conclusion may also be used. If used, the conclusion must be the final words of the speech.
11. The introduction and conclusion combined may be up to 150 original words, not including the title and author of the literature selection.
12. The introduction and conclusion must be written by the competitor(s). Any sources referenced in the introduction or conclusion must be acknowledged verbally, cited parenthetically, and listed in the Works Cited. This includes the literature selection.
13. The two competitors must be the same two competitors for an entire tournament.
14. The two competitors must not intentionally touch or make eye contact with each other.
15. Other than the 150 original words in the introduction and conclusion, all other words in the speech must come from the self-authored or published source for the speech.

### Duo Interpretation Literature Cutting Rules

1. The original source may be cut to fit the time limit.
2. It is permissible to cut phrases from several sentences and string them together, but it is not permissible to string together individual words from separate sentences to create original sentences. Single words may only be used for transitions or character identification.

3. Repeating an author's words is permitted even when the repetition does not occur in the original text.
4. Lines may be reassigned to any other existing character in the work. If that necessitates changing an author's words for pronoun substitution, verb tense, or subject-verb agreement, those changes are allowed.

## Duo Interpretation Script Submission

1. Duo Interpretation requires a full script to be submitted prior to the tournament. Online submission instructions will be distributed before the submission deadline.
2. Scripts should be in black, 12-point font and double spaced. Hyperlinks may be in blue.
3. Scripts must include the name of the competitor(s) and the title of the speech.
4. Interpretation scripts should not include stage directions. They may be written in a play format, with each line listed according to which character says it, or they may be written in prose format with unspoken names and attributions removed.
5. A Works Cited page must be included.
6. The Works Cited must include the source of the literature selection. If the original words include any words, theories, ideas or stories that were created by someone other than the competitor(s), those sources must also be included in the Works Cited. Every source must be included on the Works Cited page, whether the information is directly quoted or paraphrased in the script.
7. If a self-authored work incorporates elements from published literature, those sources must be properly cited in the Works Cited page.
8. Every source in the original words must also be acknowledged verbally in the speech and parenthetically in the script after each mention in the script, according to the rules of the style guide chosen by the competitor(s). MLA, APA and Chicago are recommended options for style guides.
9. The script submitted must be the script performed by the competitor(s).
10. Original source material must be available to tournament staff if requested. The original source material may be in print or digital copy, and the text used in the competitor's script must be marked.

## Extemporaneous Speaking Rules

Extemporaneous Speaking is a limited preparation event. Topics are drawn from current events. The topics focus on any topic in domestic, international or business news. Competitors choose from the topics given, then they have a short time to prepare before presenting their speech. During the preparation time, competitors may use any physical or digital news clippings they have brought. Extemporaneous Speeches are supported with verbal citations.

### Extemporaneous Speech Rules

1. Competitors will be assigned a draw time for each extemporaneous speaking round. At the draw time, competitors will present themselves at the Extemp Prep Room. They will show the room monitor a timer set to 20 minutes. Upon drawing their topics, the competitor will begin the timer counting down and begin their preparation time. Competitors will be given 2 topics to choose from. The topics will come from current events in the category of domestic, international or business topics.
2. During preparation time, competitors may use any printed resources they have brought with them. They may use electronically clipped resources that are downloaded on the competitor's device. Sources should come from reputable news sources. Competitors may not use the internet during preparation time. Only previously saved resources may be used. Competitors also may not use any documents that are not publicly printed. No speech materials prepared by the competitor before the competition rounds begin may be used.
3. Competitors must provide a 3x5 index card and a writing utensil. Any sources cited in the speech must be acknowledged verbally during the speech and noted on the card. The card will be held by the competitor when presenting the speech and should be kept by the competitor through the end of the tournament.
4. At the end of the 20-minute preparation time, an ASDA staff member will escort the competitor to the competition room.
5. Competitors may speak for up to seven minutes. There are 15 seconds of grace time. Competitors who go over the 15 seconds of grace time will receive time penalties.
6. Any use of characterization, singing or dancing should be minimal and make sense with the topic and thesis of the speech. It is not allowed to share a complete speech in characterization other than that of the competitor.
7. In online tournaments, competitors must leave their camera on so they can be seen by the preparation room host.
8. Competitors must show their index card to the judges before speaking.
9. Notecards must be in view of the judges during the speech.
10. Competitors may not read from a screen, paper, or other script. The only thing they may reference during the speech is the notecard.

## Impromptu Speaking Rules

Impromptu Speaking is a limited preparation event. Competitors choose from the topics given, then they have a short time to prepare before presenting an informative or persuasive speech. Topics may be single words, phrases, quotes or questions.

### Impromptu Speech Rules

1. Competitors may bring a blank sheet of paper and a writing utensil into competition rooms. They may not use any written or electronic resources once they have entered the competition room.
2. Competitors may use their blank sheet of paper to make notes during preparation time, however they may not hold or view any notes during delivery of their speech. Competitors may not write on the topic card given to them during the round. The topic card may be held by the competitor while delivering the speech.
3. After introducing themselves and making sure the judges are ready, competitors will show a timer to the judges. The timer should be set to two minutes, counting down.
4. The head judge will provide a topic card for the competitor that has two possible topics on it. Upon picking up and looking at the topic card, the competitor will begin the timer.
5. When the timer goes off or if the competitor is ready earlier, the competitor must complete preparation time and present their speech.
6. Competitors may speak for up to five minutes. There are 15 seconds of grace time. Competitors who go over the 15 seconds of grace time will receive time penalties.
7. Any use of characterization, singing or dancing should be minimal and make sense with the topic and thesis of the speech. It is not allowed to share a complete speech in characterization other than that of the competitor.
8. Competitors may not read from a screen, paper, or other script. The only thing they may reference during the speech is the topic card.
9. Cameras must remain on during the preparation period for online tournaments.



## Open Interpretation Rules

Open Interpretation is a literary interpretation event in which the competitor chooses a published or self-authored piece of literature, cuts the work into a presentation, acts out all the roles, and directs all the action. Open Interpretation provides substantial freedom of imagination to competitors. Without sets, props or costumes available, competitors use body language, facial expressions, and voice to create rich characters and settings. Open Interpretation gives competitors the opportunity to present classic literature and works with high literary merit in a dynamic, entertaining way. Open Interpretation Speeches may be dramatic or humorous in tone.

### Open Interpretation Speech Rules

1. All general speech rules must be followed.
2. Competitors may speak for up to ten minutes. There are 15 seconds of grace time. Competitors who go over the 15 seconds of grace time will receive time penalties.
3. Self-authored works may draw inspiration from characters, settings, or plot elements found in published pieces of literature.
4. If competitors choose to include singing, it should be motivated by the original source. Up to 150 words may be sung in total in the speech.
5. Dancing should be limited in nature and make sense with the original source material.
6. Sound effects are allowed.
7. One published or self-authored work must be used as the source material for each speech.
8. An introduction must be presented. It must be delivered at the beginning of the speech and may be after a short teaser section.
9. The introduction must include the title and author of the literature selection.
10. A conclusion may also be used. If used, the conclusion must be the final words of the speech.
11. The introduction and conclusion combined may be up to 150 words, not including the title and author of the literature selection.
12. The introduction and conclusion must be written by the competitor(s). Any sources referenced in the introduction or conclusion must be acknowledged verbally, cited parenthetically, and listed in the Works Cited. This includes the literature selection.
13. Other than the 150 original words in the introduction and conclusion, all other words in the speech must come from the self-authored or published source for the speech.

### Open Interpretation Literature Cutting Rules

1. The original source may be cut to fit the time limit.
2. It is permissible to cut phrases from several sentences and string them together, but it is not permissible to string together individual words from separate sentences to create original sentences. Single words may only be used for transitions or character identification.
3. Repeating an author's words is permitted even when the author does not do so.

4. Lines may be reassigned to any other existing character in the work. If that necessitates changing an author's words for pronoun substitution, verb tense, or subject-verb agreement, those changes are allowed.

## Open Interpretation Script Submission

1. Open Interpretation requires a full script to be submitted prior to the tournament. Online submission instructions will be distributed before the submission deadline.
2. Scripts should be in black, 12-point font and double spaced. Hyperlinks may be in blue.
3. Scripts must include the name of the competitor and the title of the speech.
4. Interpretation scripts should not include stage directions. They may be written in a play format, with each line listed according to which character says it or they may be written in prose format with unspoken names and attributions removed.
5. A Works Cited page must be included.
6. The Works Cited must include the source of the literature selection. If the original words include any words, theories, ideas or stories that were created by someone other than the competitor(s), those sources must also be included in the Works Cited. Every source must be included on the Works Cited page, whether the information is directly quoted or paraphrased in the script.
7. If a self-authored work incorporates elements from published literature, those sources must be properly cited in the Works Cited page.
8. Every source in the original words must also be acknowledged verbally in the speech and parenthetically in the script after each mention in the script, according to the rules of the style guide chosen by the competitor(s). MLA, APA and Chicago are recommended options for style guides.
9. The script submitted must be the script performed by the competitor(s).
10. Original source material must be available to tournament staff if requested. The original source material may be in print or digital copy, and the text used in the competitor's script must be marked.

## Original Oratory Rules

Original Oratory is a platform speech. It is a speech written, memorized, and presented by the competitor. Because competitors prepare their Original Oratory speech scripts throughout the season, they are able to present topics they care deeply about and have researched well. The topic is entirely of the competitor's choosing. The speech may seek to inform, inspire or persuade the judges. It may be serious or humorous in tone.

### Original Oratory Speech Rules

1. All general speech rules must be followed.
2. Competitors may speak for up to ten minutes. There are 15 seconds of grace time. Competitors who go over the 15 seconds of grace time will receive time penalties.
3. A competitor may directly quote a maximum of 350 words total in the speech. Directly quoted words may be sprinkled throughout the speech as long as they are verbally attributed and cited properly.

### Original Oratory Script Submission Rules

1. Original Oratory requires a full script to be submitted prior to the tournament. Online submission instructions will be distributed before the submission deadline.
2. Scripts should be in black, 12-point font and double spaced. Hyperlinks may be in blue.
3. Scripts must include the name of the competitor and the title of the speech.
4. A Works Cited page must be included if the script includes any words, theories, ideas or stories that were created by someone other than the competitor. Every source must be included on the Works Cited page, whether the information is directly quoted or paraphrased in the script.
5. Every source must also be acknowledged parenthetically after each mention in the script, according to the rules of the style guide chosen by the competitor. MLA, APA and Chicago are recommended options for style guides.
6. The script submitted must be the script performed by the competitor.

# Competition Debate Events

ASDA offers competitors the opportunity to compete in one of two available debate events. The debate events are Lincoln-Douglas debate and Team Policy debate.

## Traditional Debate Style

ASDA invites students to compete in debate using traditional, or conversational, techniques. Progressive debate techniques such as spreading, kritiking, incorporating personal narratives and poetry as sources, and other non-traditional debate techniques are contrary to ASDA mission and values and will be cause for disciplinary action. Debaters should assume the debatibility of the resolution and form their cases in a manner that affirms or negates the resolution. Judges are instructed to prefer debaters that fulfill their affirmative or negative duty over debaters that attempt to argue that there are problems with the resolution itself.

Note:

- Spreading is speaking at an extremely fast pace during a debate.
- Kritiking focuses on critiquing the underlying assumptions and ideologies of the opponent's case or the resolution rather than directly advocating for or against a specific policy.

## General Debate Instructions

The ASDA Debate Expectations should be read aloud at the beginning of every debate round. See Supplemental Materials 1 ASDA Debate Instructions.

During in person tournaments, debaters are prohibited from using an electronic device (laptop, tablet, phone, watch, etc) during a debate round (with the exception of using phone as a timer).

All competitors are expected to come prepared with their materials printed.

Likewise, in online tournaments, competitors are prohibited from accessing the internet during a debate round. All competitors are expected to come prepared with their materials pre-formatted and printed twice for sharing.

## Lincoln-Douglas Debate

Lincoln-Douglas debate is also known as Values Debate. A single debater on each side affirms or negates the resolution using logic, philosophy, and real-life examples to support their side of the debate. A single debate round takes approximately 40 minutes.

**2025-2026 ASDA Lincoln-Douglas Debate Resolution: A federal system of government is superior to a unitary system of government.**

## Lincoln-Douglas Purpose: Values Debate

A Lincoln-Douglas debate is a philosophical debate. Competitors participating in this debate type will examine and compare competing value systems to best answer a philosophical question (the resolution). This type of debate is meant to help competitors develop enhanced critical thinking skills and be able to apply those skills to questions of competing values they encounter in their lives.

## Lincoln-Douglas Affirmative and Negative Responsibilities: Values Debate

The responsibility of the affirmative debater is to produce a compelling argument in favor of the resolution. The responsibility of the negative debater is to produce a compelling argument negating the resolution. The judge should suspend any previous bias and vote for the debater who has better upheld their burden to affirm or negate the resolution.

## Lincoln-Douglas Round Format

Speech	Time
Affirmative Constructive .....	6 minutes
Negative Cross-Examination of the Affirmative .....	3 minutes
Negative Constructive .....	7 minutes
Affirmative Cross-Examination of the Negative .....	3 minutes
First Affirmative Rebuttal .....	4 minutes
Negative Rebuttal .....	6 minutes
Second Affirmative Rebuttal .....	3 minutes
Each side is allowed 3 minutes of preparation time.	

## Lincoln-Douglas Debate Speeches

1. **Affirmative Constructive:** This speech is the affirmative team's time to establish their claim regarding the resolution. During this speech, the debater may introduce new arguments and illustrations into the round to support their side.
2. **Negative Constructive:** This speech is the negative team's time to establish their claim regarding the resolution and refute the affirmative claim. During this speech, the debater may introduce new arguments and illustrations into the round to support their side.
3. **Rebuttals:** In these speeches, the debaters respond to arguments made in constructive speeches and strengthen their claims in the round. In the final Affirmative Rebuttal of the round, debaters may not introduce new arguments into the round. If new arguments are introduced in the final affirmative rebuttal speech, the judge should disregard these arguments when making their final decision.

## Lincoln-Douglas Cross-Examination

The purpose of cross-examination is to allow the competitors to interact directly and is the only time the debaters should interact directly other than when evidence is being exchanged. During cross-examination, the debaters face the judge, not each other. One side is questioning, and the other is responding. The responder may not ask questions while being cross-examined unless they need to ask for clarification. Conversely, the questioner cannot make statements while cross-examining.

## Lincoln-Douglas Timing

Debaters will be responsible for timing their own speeches, cross-examinations, and preparation time. Debaters will be responsible for providing their own time pieces.

The time should be set to count down and should begin as soon as the debater begins speaking. The timepiece should be set to beep audibly when the time is up. A debater may finish their current sentence after their time is up but should not begin a new thought. The timepiece must be allowed to continue beeping until the debater finishes speaking.

During cross-examinations, the questioning debater will be responsible for timing.

## Lincoln-Douglas Prep Time

Debaters will start and end their own preparation timer and report used and remaining times to the judge before speaking. Competitors should have their timers counting down during preparation time.

## Lincoln-Douglas Evidence Standards

Though sources are not a requirement of Lincoln-Douglas Debate, competitors who wish to quote and paraphrase sources to strengthen their arguments should adhere to the same standards as for Team Policy Debate as follows:

### LD Debate Sources: Publicly Available

Sources of evidence may be found in print or online but must be publicly available. Personal communications between a competitor and an author are not admissible as evidence.

### LD Debate Sources: Electronic Devices

Evidence referenced in a round must be physically present in the round. The use of phones, tablets, computers, or other electronic devices to produce evidence into a round will not be admissible for in-person rounds. If the debate round is being held online, evidence may be considered to be physically present in the round if it can be exchanged electronically and exists in the format of an editable document or non-editable image which is cut, credited, and formatted properly. Sharing a website,

journal article, or other document in its original format (uncut, uncredited and unformatted) is not allowed.

### LD Debate Sources: Written Standards

A piece of evidence read into the round must include the authors' names (first and last) and the URL. In cases where there is no author, the publisher's name must be included. If the evidence is from a print source that does not have a URL, other relevant information such as title of book or article, publisher, and date of publication may replace the URL. The date of publication (or of access, if no publication date is available) and the publisher may be included for any evidence, but it is not required. Competitors may include credentials of the author and/or publisher if they wish to enhance the credibility of the source, but this is not necessary.

### LD Debate Sources: Oral Standards

When reading evidence into the round, a competitor must identify the author of a piece of evidence. All other information mentioned above may be included but is not necessary. In cases where there is no author, the publisher must be mentioned verbally.

### LD Debate Sources: Fabricating or Distorting Evidence

Reading only part of a piece of evidence, using ellipses, or adding brackets will be considered distortion of evidence and will constitute a rule violation if it alters the original meaning of the author's words.

Creating evidence that does not exist in the public domain, changing the author's original intent, or purposefully misquoting a piece of evidence will not be permitted. Competitors found to have fabricated or distorted evidence will be subject to a speaker point reduction or forfeiture of the round in which the violation occurred.

### LD Debate Sources: Paraphrased Sources

If a source is too lengthy to be used in full during the debate round, competitors may summarize stories, examples, or contextual information to aid in the understanding of direct quotations. However, direct quotations must be reproduced exactly as stated, without alteration or redaction. Competitors should ensure the integrity of the original source and maintain accuracy in representation.

## Lincoln-Douglas Communication with Opponent(s) or Judge(s)

Competitors are expected to communicate conversationally. All speeches and cross-examinations should use a conversational tone and rhythm while using language that anyone can understand.

Consistent with the Tournament Code of Conduct above, competitors and judges agree to treat others with courtesy and kindness, in and out of competition rounds, including refraining from ad hominem attacks and name calling.

Debaters may ask for their opponent's evidence during cross-examination or preparation time. If such a request is made, a physical copy of the evidence read in the round complying with the written standards should be supplied to the opposing debater. For online tournaments, competitors should be able to send their evidence to the opposing debater via email or direct messaging within the conferencing platform.

If a judge wishes to review a piece of evidence, they should wait until after the round and ask a staff member who will get the physical evidence from the debater. This will allow the judge to maintain a bias-free ruling of the round.

Debaters may not interact with the judge directly unless their timer is on. The only exception is to briefly introduce their name and position and ask for the experience or judging philosophy before the round and thank the judge after the round is over.

Debaters should face the judges while speaking, including during cross-examination.

Debaters are prohibited from giving a judge their constructive speech or any other evidence.

## Lincoln-Douglas Judge Responsibilities

It is the judge's responsibility to consider the round in an unbiased way and make a fair decision based on argumentation presented in the round. A judge should make their decision based on evidence and arguments presented in the round rather than the judge's own personal leaning on the topic. Ultimately, the judge's role is to determine which team best upheld their burden to affirm or negate the resolution.

A judge should maintain a bias-free ruling by refraining from discussing the round or their decision with any debaters or fellow judges until after the tournament has ended.

When possible, upon conclusion of the round, the judge should promptly exit the competition room and complete their ballot elsewhere such as in the judge room so that the competitors and staff may quickly transition to the next event.

## Lincoln-Douglas Audience

Audience members may not assist the debaters in any way during the round. If it is clear that a debater is receiving solicited help from an audience member, that debater may be subject to forfeiture of the round or other disciplinary action.

## Lincoln-Douglas Rule Violations

In all cases of rule violations, competitors may be subject to education, speaker point reductions, forfeitures or other disciplinary action.



## Team Policy Debate

Team Policy Debate is also known as CX Debate. A team of two debaters on each side debates a question of policy change. The affirmative team proposes a change in policy that fits within the assigned resolution, and the negative team presents potential problems with the specific policy change. A single debate round takes approximately 60 minutes. Teams must have two competitors, and the same two competitors must remain in the same team for the entire tournament.

**2025-2026 ASDA Team Policy Debate Resolution: The United States should significantly amend the Constitution.**

### Team Policy Purpose: Policy Debate

A Team Policy debate is a hypothetical debate. Competitors participating in this debate type will examine and compare competing policy systems to best answer a political question (the resolution). This type of debate is meant to help competitors develop enhanced critical thinking and research skills.

### Team Policy Affirmative and Negative Responsibilities: Policy Debate

The responsibility of the affirmative team is to produce a specific plan for a policy change within the scope of the resolution that is preferred over the status quo. The responsibility of the negative team is to produce compelling arguments showing that the status quo is preferred above the affirmative team's plan or that the affirmative's plan has flaws or brings about disadvantages that are worse than their proposed benefits. Many debaters use stock issues such as topicality, inherency, solvency, significance and advantages/ disadvantages to strengthen their positions. If the judge is convinced that the change proposed by the resolution is warranted by the affirmative team's plan, then the affirmative team should win. Otherwise, the negative team should win.

### Team Policy Round Format

Speech	Time
First Affirmative Constructive .....	8 minutes
Second Negative Speaker's Cross-Examination of the First Affirmative Speaker .....	2 minutes
First Negative Constructive .....	8 minutes
First Affirmative Speaker's Cross-Examination of the First Negative Speaker .....	2 minutes
Second Affirmative Constructive .....	8 minutes
First Negative Speaker's Cross-Examination of the Second Affirmative Speaker .....	2 minutes
Second Negative Constructive .....	8 minutes
Second Affirmative Speaker's Cross-Examination of the Second Negative Speaker .....	2 minutes
First Negative Rebuttal .....	3 minutes
First Affirmative Rebuttal .....	3 minutes
Second Negative Rebuttal .....	3 minutes
Second Affirmative Rebuttal .....	3 minutes

Each side is allowed 4 minutes of preparation time.

## Team Policy Debate Speeches

1. **Affirmative Constructives:** These speeches are the affirmative team's time to establish their case regarding the resolution. During these speeches, the debaters may introduce new arguments and evidence into the round to support their side.
2. **Negative Constructives:** These speeches are the negative team's time to establish their claims regarding the effectiveness of the affirmative arguments. During these speeches, the debaters may introduce new arguments and evidence into the round to support their side.
3. **Rebuttals:** In these speeches, the teams respond to arguments made in constructive speeches and strengthen their claims in the round. In the final Affirmative Rebuttal of the round, debaters may not introduce new arguments into the round. If new arguments are introduced in the final affirmative rebuttal speech, the judge should disregard these arguments when making their final decision.
4. Teams are not permitted to switch speaker positions midway through the round. For example, the person who delivers the first affirmative constructive must deliver the first affirmative rebuttal and the corresponding cross-examination.

## Team Policy Cross-Examination

The purpose of cross-examination is to allow the competitors to interact directly and is the only time the debaters should interact directly other than when evidence is being exchanged. During cross-examination, the debaters face the judge, not each other. One side is questioning, and the other is responding. The responder may not ask questions while being cross-examined unless they need to ask for clarification. Conversely, the questioner cannot make statements while cross-examining.

## Team Policy Timing

Debaters will be responsible for timing their own speeches, cross-examinations, and preparation time. Debaters will be responsible for providing their own time pieces.

The time should be set to count down and should begin as soon as the debater begins speaking. The timepiece should be set to beep audibly when their time is up. A debater may finish their current sentence after their time is up but should not begin a new thought. The timepiece must be allowed to continue beeping until the debater finishes speaking.

During cross-examinations, the questioning debater will be responsible for timing.

## Team Policy Prep Time

Debaters will start and end their own preparation timer and report used and remaining times to the judge before speaking. Competitors should have their timers counting down during preparation time.

## Team Policy Evidence Standards

Directly quoted evidence and advocacy are an essential part of a compelling team policy case. Competitors who wish to quote sources to strengthen their arguments should adhere to the following standards:

### TP Debate Sources: Publicly Available

Sources of evidence may be found in print or online but must be publicly available. Personal communications between a competitor and an author are not admissible as evidence.

### TP Debate Sources: Electronic Devices

Evidence referenced in a round must be physically present in the round. The use of phones, tablets, computers, or other electronic devices to produce evidence into a round will not be admissible for in-person rounds. If the debate round is being held online, evidence may be considered to be physically present in the round if it can be exchanged electronically and exists in the format of an editable document or non-editable image which is cut, credited, and formatted properly. Sharing a website, journal article, or other document in its original format (uncut, uncredited and unformatted) is not allowed.

### TP Debate Sources: Written Standards

A piece of evidence read into the round must include all of the available following parts: the authors' names (first and last), the date of publication (or of access, if no publication date is available), the publisher, and the URL. Competitors may include credentials of the author and/or publisher if they wish to enhance the credibility of the source, but this is not necessary. A dictionary definition may be listed only by publisher name if desired.

All evidence must be directly quoted. Paraphrased evidence is prohibited.

### TP Debate Sources: Oral Standards

When reading evidence into the round, a competitor must identify the author and date of a piece of evidence. All other information mentioned above may be included but is not necessary. In cases where there is no author, the publisher and date must be provided orally. A dictionary definition may be verbally acknowledged only by publisher name if desired.

### TP Debate Sources: Fabricating or Distorting Evidence

Reading only part of a piece of evidence, using ellipses, or adding brackets will be considered distortion of evidence and will constitute a rule violation if it alters the original meaning of the author's words.

Creating evidence that does not exist in the public domain, changing the authors' original intent, or purposefully misquoting a piece of evidence will not be permitted. Competitors found to have fabricated or distorted evidence will be subject to a speaker point reduction or forfeiture of the round in which the violation occurred.

### TP Debate Sources: Paraphrased Sources

Paraphrased evidence is prohibited. All evidence must be directly quoted. Competitors may provide contextual information to aid in the understanding of the directly quoted evidence. However, direct quotations must be reproduced exactly as stated, without alteration or redaction. Competitors should ensure the integrity of the original source and maintain accuracy in representation.

### Team Policy Communication with Opponent(s) or Judge(s)

Competitors are expected to communicate conversationally. All speeches and cross-examinations should use a conversational tone and rhythm while using language that anyone can understand.

Consistent with the Tournament Code of Conduct above, competitors and judges agree to treat others with courtesy and kindness in and out of competition rounds, including refraining from ad hominem attacks and name calling.

Debaters may ask for the opposing team's evidence during cross-examination or preparation time. If such a request is made, a physical copy of the evidence read in the round complying with the written standards should be supplied to the opposing debater. For online tournaments, competitors should be able to send their evidence to the opposing debater via email or direct messaging within the conferencing platform.

If a judge wishes to review a piece of evidence, they should wait until after the round and ask a staff member who will get the physical evidence from the debater. This will allow the judge to maintain a bias-free ruling of the round.

Debaters may not interact with the judge directly unless their timer is on. The only exception is to briefly introduce their name and position and ask for the experience or judging philosophy before the round and thank the judge after the round is over.

Debaters should face the judges while speaking, including during cross-examination.

Debaters are prohibited from giving a judge their constructive speech or any other evidence.

### Team Policy Judge Responsibilities

It is the judge's responsibility to consider the round in an unbiased way and make a fair decision based on argumentation presented in the round. A judge should make their decision based on evidence and arguments presented in the round rather than the judge's own opinion of the topic. The judge's ruling

should be limited to what is presented in the round. Ultimately, the judge's role is to vote for the affirmative team or negative team based only upon facts presented on the round.

A judge should maintain a bias-free ruling by refraining from discussing the round or their decision with any debaters or fellow judges until after the tournament has ended.

When possible, upon conclusion of the round, the judge should promptly exit the competition room and complete their ballot elsewhere such as in the judge room so that the competitors and staff may quickly transition to the next event.

## Team Policy Audience

Audience members may not assist the debaters in any way during the round. If it is clear that a debater is receiving solicited help from an audience member, that debater may be subject to forfeiture of that round.

## Team Policy Rule Violations

In all cases of rule violations, competitors may be subject to education, speaker point reductions, forfeitures or other disciplinary action.

# Supplemental Materials 1: ASDA Debate Instructions

## Debate Style

ASDA invites students to compete in debate using traditional, or conversational, techniques. Progressive debate techniques such as spreading, kritiking, incorporating personal narratives and poetry as sources, and other non-traditional debate techniques are contrary to ASDA mission and values and will be cause for disciplinary action. Debaters should assume the debatibility of the resolution and form their cases in a manner that affirms or negates the resolution. Judges are instructed to prefer debaters that fulfill their affirmative or negative duty over debaters that attempt to argue that there are problems with the resolution itself.

## Rebuttal Speeches

In the rebuttal speeches, the debaters respond to arguments made in constructive speeches and strengthen their claims in the round. In the final Affirmative Rebuttal of the round, debaters may not introduce new arguments into the round. If new arguments are introduced in the final affirmative rebuttal speech, the judge should disregard these arguments when making their final decision.

## Cross-Examination

The purpose of cross-examination is to allow the competitors to interact directly and is the only time the debaters should interact directly other than when evidence is being exchanged. During cross-examination, the debaters face the judge, not each other. One side is questioning, and the other is responding. The responder may not ask questions while being cross-examined unless they need to ask for clarification. Conversely, the questioner cannot make statements while cross-examining.

## Timing Speeches & Preparation Time

Debaters will be responsible for timing their own speeches, cross-examinations, and preparation time. Debaters will be responsible for providing their own time pieces.

The time should be set to count down and should begin as soon as the debater begins speaking. The timepiece should be set to beep audibly when the time is up. A debater may finish their current sentence after their time is up but should not begin a new thought. The timepiece must be allowed to continue beeping until the debater finishes speaking.

During cross-examinations, the questioning debater will be responsible for timing.

Debaters will start and end their own preparation timer and report used and remaining times to the judge before speaking. Competitors should have their timers counting down during preparation time.

## Communication with Opponent(s) or Judge(s)

Debaters may ask for their opponent's evidence or 1AC during cross-examination or preparation time. If such a request is made, a physical copy of the evidence read in the round complying with the written standards should be supplied to the opposing debater.

Debaters should face the judges while speaking, including during cross-examinations.

Debaters may not interact with the judge directly unless their timer is on. The only exception is to briefly introduce their name and position and ask for the experience or judging philosophy before the round and thank the judge after the round is over.

Debaters are prohibited from giving a judge their 1AC or any other evidence.

If a judge wishes to review a piece of evidence, they should wait until after the round and ask a staff member who will get the physical evidence from the debater. This will allow the judge to maintain a bias-free ruling of the round.

## Be Respectful

Consistent with the Tournament Code of Conduct, competitors and judges agree to treat others with courtesy and kindness in and out of competition rounds, including refraining from ad hominem attacks and name calling. Ad hominem attacks are arguments directed at a person rather than the position they are maintaining. Name calling refers to any type of insult, label, or definition other than the other person's actual name (or approved nickname) or position in the round.

## Be Conversational

Competitors are expected to present their debate at a conversational tone and rhythm while using language that anyone can understand.

## Supplemental Materials 2: Sample Tournament Schedule

### Friday

4:30 pm	Check-in
5:00 pm	Announcements
5:30 pm	Debate Round 1
7:00 pm	Debate Round 2

### Saturday

7:30 am	Check-in
8:00 am	Announcements
8:30 am	Debate Round 3
10:00 am	Speech Round 1
11:30 am	Debate Round 4
1:00 pm	Lunch
1:30 pm	Speech Round 2
2:30 pm	Junior Competitor Check-in
3:00 pm	Debate Semifinals & Junior Speech Competition
4:30 pm	Speech Round 3 / Finals
6:00 pm	Debate Finals
8:00 pm	Awards Ceremony



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# Addendum 2026.1.1 General Speech Rules

## General Script Submission Instructions

All prepared speeches will require submission of scripts prior to the tournament. Some speeches also require submission of visual support or preparation of source material. Specific instructions are included for every speech type.

ASDA requires all scripted speeches to be submitted 7 days prior to the start of the tournament. All speech scripts will be reviewed by ASDA's Script Committee to ensure that all scripts follow ASDA's script requirements. If the committee finds an issue, the competitor will be notified via the email listed in tournament registration. The competitor will have 48 hours or by 8 PM Central the night before the tournament, whichever comes first, to correct the error and resubmit their script. Any competitor that fails to meet ASDA's script submission requirements will not be permitted to compete.

While reviewing submitted scripts, ASDA reserves the right to run scripts through an AI and/or plagiarism checker and to request earlier drafts, outlines, or brainstorming work for a script that is flagged for AI use or plagiarism.

## Digital Presentation Rules

### Digital Presentation Script Submission

8. All quoted words included in the speech must be bolded on the script.

## Duo Interpretation Rules

### Duo Interpretation Script Submission

11. All original words written by the competitor for the introduction and the conclusion must be bolded on the script.

## Extemporaneous Speaking Rules

### Extemporaneous Speech Rules

11. After the presentation of their speech, competitors must turn in their index card with their name on it to the judges.

12. For online tournaments, competitors must send photos of both sides of their index card with their name on it.

## Open Interpretation Rules

### Open Interpretation Script Submission

11. All original words written by the competitor for the introduction and the conclusion must be bolded on the script.

## Original Oratory Rules

### Original Oratory Script Submission

7. All quoted words included in the speech must be bolded on the script.