



2026-2027
Handbook

What's New This Year

General

- The [Statement of Community](#) defines roles of ASDA community members.
- [Core Values](#): Conversational, Collaborative, Congenial, Community
- ASDA's [sensitive topics statement](#) should be read prior to presenting a speech containing a sensitive topic.
- [Eligible adult participants](#) affirm that they have not been convicted of a sexually related crime involving a minor or that they are not required to be on a sex offender registry.
- [Tournament boundaries](#) designate where competitors may go in tournament venues.
- [No additional contact](#) is allowed to be shared between adults and competitors or other minors.
- [Photography and videography](#) prohibited without written consent from a minor's parent or legal guardian. ASDA's media release waiver only applies to photographers and videographers designated by league leadership.
- [Safety Policies](#) are shared to ensure the safety of all participants.
- Information on how to [affiliate](#) with ASDA
- [ASDA National Tournament](#) points are contingent upon a parent or other adults fulfilling judging and/or staffing obligations at qualifying tournaments.
- [ASDA National Tournament](#) points required in each event to receive an invitation to ASDA's National Championship.
- The [speech reference guide](#) and [debate speaker point rubric](#) have been updated.

Speech Events

- Phones may not be used as [timers](#).
- [General script submission rules](#) detail the script submission process.
- [Digital Presentation](#) audio files should not exceed 30 seconds.
- [Digital Presentation](#) video files should not exceed 30 seconds.
- The original word count in [Duo Interpretation](#) has increased to 200 words.
- [Extemporaneous](#) will only be offered at select tournaments and may not be available at the National Championship.
- [Extemporaneous](#) notecards must be submitted to ASDA after the speech is presented.
- The original word count in [Open Interpretation](#) has increased to 200 words.

Debate Events

- Expectations for debaters at [in-person tournaments](#).
- Expectations for debaters at [online tournaments](#).
- Definition of a new argument in final [rebuttal speeches](#).



- Phones may not be used as [timers](#).
- [Prep time](#) must not be taken by either debater before cross-examination or during a speech
- Affirmative debaters may only take [prep time](#) before an affirmative speech. Negative debaters may only take prep time before a negative speech.
- Competitors are prohibited from demanding or instructing a [judge](#) to have evidence reviewed.
- All team policy debaters are required to join the [Team Policy Case List](#) for each tournament.
- [Template for formatting evidence](#) is included in the supplemental materials.

Debate Resolutions

- [2026-2027 Lincoln-Douglas Debate Resolution](#)
- [2026-2027 Team Policy Debate Resolution](#)

Table of Contents

Mission Statement	7
Statement of Community	7
Core Values	8
Conduct	9
Tournament Code of Conduct	9
Appropriateness of Material	9
Mature Topics	10
Sensitive Topics	10
Safety	11
Open Door Unless 3 or More	11
Adult Representative	11
Eligible Adult Participants	12
Tournament Boundaries	12
Identification	12
No Additional Contact	12
Photography and Videography	12
Conduct	13
Safety Policies	13
Handbook Adherence	13
Compliance	13
Eligibility	14
Eligibility FAQs	14
Preparing to Compete	15
Affiliate	15

Curriculum.....	16
Clubs.....	16
Coaching.....	16
Tournaments.....	17
ASDA Qualifier Tournaments	17
Tournament Competitor Instructions.....	17
Tournament Host Instructions.....	19
Tournament Judges.....	19
ASDA National Tournament.....	20
Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)	21
Permitted Use	21
Citation Requirements	22
Credibility Statement	22
Accountability	22
Competition Speech Events	23
General Speech Instructions	23
General Speech Rules	23
Additional General Speech Rules for Online Tournaments	24
General Script Submission Rules.....	25
Belief & Values Limited Prep.....	26
Digital Presentation	29
Duo Interpretation Rules	31
Extemporaneous Speaking Rules.....	34
Open Interpretation Rules	37
Original Oratory Rules.....	39

Competition Debate Events	40
General Debate Instructions	40
Lincoln-Douglas Debate	41
Team Policy Debate	46
Supplemental Materials 1: ASDA Debate Instructions	53
Supplemental Materials 2: Sample Tournament Schedule	55
Supplemental Materials 3: Written Evidence Template.....	56
Supplemental Materials 4: Speech Reference Guides.....	58
Belief & Values Limited Prep Reference Guide.....	59
Digital Presentation Reference Guide.....	60
Duo Interpretation Reference Guide	61
Extemporaneous Reference Guide	62
Impromptu Reference Guide	63
Open Interpretation Reference Guide.....	64
Original Oratory Reference Guide	65
Supplemental Materials 5: Speech Ballots	66
Belief & Values Limited Prep Ballot	67
Digital Presentation Ballot	68
Duo Interpretation Ballot.....	69
Extemporaneous Ballot.....	70
Impromptu Ballot.....	71
Open Interpretation Ballot.....	72
Original Oratory Ballot	73
Supplemental Materials 6: Debate Speaker Points Rubric	74
Debate Speaker Points Rubric.....	75

Supplemental Materials 7: Debate Ballots	76
Lincoln-Douglas Ballot.....	77
Team Policy Debate	78
Index.....	80

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.

Statement of Community

As a valued member of American Speech and Debate Association's community – including competitors, parents, judges, coaches, staff, and visitors – I commit to fostering a community rooted in respect, integrity, and collaborative growth.

Competitors: I will compete with honesty, integrity, and respect for others by following ASDA's rules, core values and standards. I will accept feedback and tournament results graciously and support my fellow competitors through encouragement and positive conduct. I commit to not participating in adversarial behavior.

Parents: I will actively support ASDA events by judging and staffing at tournaments. I will encourage and model respectful interaction with all community members by supporting all participants by being impartial and by providing constructive feedback when judging.

Judges: I will evaluate presentations objectively, consistently and fairly. I will encourage all participants by providing constructive feedback. Additionally, I will uphold confidentiality of results until the official release.

Coaches: I will prepare competitors with integrity and fair guidance. I will foster collaboration, respect and encouragement among participants. I will lead by example in behavior, communication and sportsmanship.

Staff: I will ensure smooth functioning of tournaments by completing my staffing assignment for the full duration of the assignment. I will communicate clearly with all community members. I will monitor compliance with participation expectations and report any concerns promptly.

Visitors: I will treat all members of the community with courtesy and respect. I will observe community rules and expectations for the duration of my visit. I will refrain from any disruptive behavior and will maintain a positive presence.

Core Values

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, congenial and a community member 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.”

Congenial: “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.”

Community: “I understand that ASDA is a volunteer run organization that relies on the community spirit and service of all of the adults and youth participants. We are preparing the next generation of leaders and commit to working together to build a safe, collaborative, conversational and friendly culture where all participants can feel welcome and grow.”

Conduct

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 info@americanspeech.org at least two weeks prior to the tournament. 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.

Sensitive Topics Statement

Competitors must read the following statement prior to beginning their speech if their speech contains sensitive topics.

Before I begin, I would like to provide a brief advisory. The content of my speech includes topics that fall within ASDA's sensitive topics policy, and it may not be suitable for younger children. The speech contains [insert a topic that is specific enough to understand but not detailed enough to impact younger audience members. Some examples are difficult emotional experiences, social issues, a discussion on the Holocaust, etc.] My script has been reviewed and meets ASDA competition guidelines with the reading of this statement.

I encourage young children as well as any audience members who may feel uncomfortable with this subject matter to exit the room before I begin.

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 submits 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. Children under the age of 12 years old must be supervised by their parent or designated adult when they are not participating in junior activities or junior competition events. Junior staff members must be notified when a junior competitor is left in their care, and the parent or legal guardian must leave a contact phone number.

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 waiting 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.

Eligible Adult Participants

All adults attending an ASDA tournament or event must affirm that they have not been convicted of a sexually related crime involving a minor or that they are not required to be on a sex offender registry. Anyone that is unable to affirm these requirements is prohibited from participating in ASDA tournaments or events.

Tournament Boundaries

Competitors must remain in the designated areas of the tournament venues.

Identification

All tournament participants including, but not limited to, competitors, parents, staff, judges and additional family members, must wear an ASDA name tag while onsite with the name they normally use. Aliases will not be permitted.

Adults are required to check in by showing a valid form of photo ID immediately upon arrival at in-person tournaments.

No Additional Contact

Adults are prohibited from sharing or soliciting contact information, such as a phone number, email, website or address, with competitors or other minors present.

Photography and Videography

All participants are prohibited from taking photos or recording minors. No photographs, video, or audio recordings of minors shall be taken, stored, shared or published without prior written consent from the minor's parent or legal guardian. Minors may provide input regarding the use of their image, but consent must legally come from the parent or guardian. Consent must be obtained before any photography or filming activity occurs.

ASDA's Media Release Waiver only applies to photographers and videographers designated by league leadership.

Any individual found taking photos or videos of minors without proper consent will be subject to disciplinary action. Suspected misuse of images must be reported to league leadership promptly by calling 214-799-0998 or emailing info@americanspeech.org.

Conduct

ASDA competitors are expected to treat all participants with courtesy and kindness in and out of competition rounds. Any behavior that places the health and safety of any participant in jeopardy will not be permitted. This includes, but is not limited to, bullying, discrimination, physical or verbal abuse, or intimidation.

See the [Conduct](#) section above for additional information.

Safety Policies

All participants at ASDA tournaments will receive training on safety policies. It is the responsibility of all tournament participants to be vigilant to ensure the safety of all participants.

If an unsafe situation arises, immediate action should be taken to remove minors from harm. Any safety concerns should be immediately reported to ASDA leadership or tournament staff members. For online tournaments, reports may be submitted through a call to 214-799-0998 or by emailing info@americanspeech.org.

ASDA reserves the right to remove any attendee for violating ASDA's safety policies.

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 2026-2027 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, 2026, and in the 6th grade
2. Age no older than 18 years old on September 1, 2026
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.

Note: Competitors born between January 1 and August 31, 2015 and in the 6th grade, are eligible to compete in either varsity or junior tournaments. Competitors in this group may participate in either the varsity or junior events at a tournament. The selection of varsity or junior events occurs per tournament and is not set for the entirety of the competition season.

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 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 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. Competitors from other leagues are encouraged to thoroughly read ASDA's rules and policies prior to the tournament.

- **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.

Preparing to Compete

Affiliate

All competitors must affiliate annually with American Speech and Debate Association to participate in a tournament. Competitors may affiliate through a family affiliation or a school affiliation. A family affiliation includes all children in a family that meet ASDA's eligibility requirements. School affiliation includes all listed eligible participants at a school. School affiliation forms may be requested by emailing info@americanspeech.org. For additional information on how to affiliate, please see [ASDA's website](#).

Affiliations for the current competition season will expire on June 1.



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. 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. 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.
- **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 for the school registration form.
- **Host tournament.** Schools and clubs are invited to discuss hosting tournaments in their area with ASDA's league leadership. They should 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 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.

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 offer private coaching resources. Please reach out to ASDA at info@americanspeech.org for more information.

Tournaments

ASDA Qualifier Tournaments

ASDA offers tournaments in locations where there are affiliated competitors. The requirements dictating where to host a tournament and determining if a tournament is a qualifier tournament are set by ASDA's board of directors.

In geographies where there are not enough competitors, ASDA encourages competitors to participate in online qualifiers.

Competitors earn national points in events at qualifying tournaments. Competitors must earn national points to receive an invitation to compete at ASDA's National Championship. National points are awarded according to ASDA's Tabulation manual and in accordance with the directions from ASDA's board of directors.

ASDA's board of directors sets the required number of national points needed to receive an invitation to compete in an event at the National Championship.

Tournament Schedule

For a sample of tournament timing, please refer to [Supplemental Materials 2: Sample Tournament Schedule](#).

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.

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. Every competitor is expected to recruit judges and/or volunteers for each tournament that they participate in. A competitor's national points are contingent upon a parent or other adults fulfilling one of the following roles at a tournament:

1. Judge 4 or more rounds at a qualifier tournament.
2. Volunteer and fill a tournament staff role at a qualifier tournament.

An adult must fulfill this requirement for each tournament that a competitor participates in. If an adult is unable to judge 4 rounds at a tournament, the adult may attend another tournament to complete the judging requirement.

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, leggings, sneakers, 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.

Award Ceremony

Every tournament concludes with an award ceremony. This is an opportunity to recognize competitor accomplishments and to engage in ASDA's community.

Competitors are expected to attend the award ceremony. Any competitor not in attendance for the award ceremony at a qualifying tournament forfeits their awards and/or national points.

Tournament Host Instructions

We invite anyone, club leader or other, to host a tournament. Please contact 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.

Tournament Judges

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.

Additionally, to maintain the integrity of the competition, ASDA requests that parents and coaches refrain from sharing detailed notes or holding coaching sessions mid-tournament. For instance, a parent or other judge sharing detailed information about potential opponents debate cases is inappropriate.

Judge Requirements

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.
5. Judge a variety of events to help increase tournament accuracy and a diversity of perspectives.
6. Immediately report any concerns regarding the rounds observed to a tournament staff member.

Judge Training

ASDA provides judge training materials. Judges should review the materials at any time during the season prior to judging at a tournament.

Training materials will be emailed to all judges registered to judge a tournament. The training materials may also be found on ASDA's website on the [Judge Resources](#) page.

ASDA National Tournament

At each qualifier 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. All national points are contingent upon a parent or other adults fulfilling judging and/or staffing obligations at a qualifying tournament.
3. Competitors may only register to compete at the National Tournament in events for which they receive a qualifying number of Nationals points over the course of the competition season whether earned at a tournament or at-large.
4. 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.
5. Any prepared speech qualifying to compete at the National Tournament must retain 70% or more of the original qualifying material.

For the 2026-2027 competition season, competitors must obtain the following number of national points in an event to receive an invitation to compete in the event at the National Championship.

Event	National Tournament Points Required for an Invitation
Belief & Values Limited Prep	1
Digital Presentation	1
Duo Interpretation	1
Extemporaneous	1
Impromptu	2
Open Interpretation	1
Original Oratory	2
Lincoln-Douglas Debate	1
Team Policy Debate	1

For optimal preparation for the National Championship, ASDA strongly encourages participants to continue competing after receiving national points.

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. Competitors are responsible for checking the veracity of any material generated using AI.

AI may be used to identify grammatical, spelling and structural errors; however, any changes to the script must be done by the competitor. If a competitor writes a script and then runs it through AI to improve it through rewriting, it is no longer the original work of the competitor. Scripts that are completely rewritten by AI will be considered AI-generated content and will be subject to review and penalties.

ASDA strongly discourages the use of AI tools to summarize debate evidence.

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 26th 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. Judges are encouraged to report concerns to a staff member 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 2026-2027 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.

Please see the [Supplemental Materials 4: Speech Reference Guides](#) and [Supplemental Materials 5: Speech Ballots](#) to review the judging guidelines provided to judges.

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 modification – may not be reused in any future competition years.
4. All sources must be acknowledged verbally in the speech.
5. 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.
6. 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. See [Use of Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#) above for additional citation information.

7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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. Phones are not allowed as timers.
10. Only feet may touch the floor when a speech is presented. Competitors should not kneel, sit, lay down or perform any acrobatics during their speech.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. Unless allowed in individual speech rules, no visual aids or props may be used.
15. Competitors must stand to deliver their speech unless physically unable to do so (even in online events).
16. Use of AI in limited preparation speech events is prohibited.

Additional General Speech Rules for Online Tournaments

1. Competitors must state if they will be using a script.
2. Competitors must remain in view of the camera for the duration of the speech.

General Script Submission Rules

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.

All scripted speeches must complete script review and receive a notification from ASDA's Script Review Committee that their script is approved for competition prior to competing at a tournament.

Competitors are expected to adhere to the script submission deadlines. Competitors that fail to submit their scripts by the published deadlines will be dropped from the event requiring a script.

ASDA requires all scripted speeches to be submitted 10 days prior to the start of the tournament. All speech scripts will be reviewed by ASDA's Script Review 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 3 days 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.

The script submitted must be the speech presented at the tournament. The speech presented must be materially identical to the script submitted. Omissions or minor alterations due to memorization errors are permissible. Content may not be added.

Competitors must submit a full script. A full script is the complete, word-for-word transcription of the speech. Bullet, outline, annotated or any other shortened form of a script will not satisfy ASDA's script submission requirement.

If the script review committee allows a competitor to compete on the contingency that a small error be corrected, the correction must be submitted within 10 days of the completion of the tournament.

Failure to complete the correction in a timely manner will cause the competitor to forfeit any national points earned at the tournament.

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 note cards 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 less than 30 seconds 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 may not read from a screen, paper or other script. The only thing they may reference during the speech is the topic card and their note cards.

Additional Rules for Online Tournaments

1. Competitors must show their note cards to the judges before speaking.
2. Note cards must be in view during the speech.
3. Competitors may not read from a screen, paper or other script. The only thing they may reference during the speech is the note cards.

4. The camera must remain on during the preparation period

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

Digital Presentation is a platform speech. It is a visually supported speech written, memorized and presented by the competitor. Digital Presentation includes visual support from a device. PowerPoint, Prezi, Google Slides or other presentation software may be used to create the visual portion of the speech.

Digital Presentation 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 in total in the speech. Directly quoted words may be sprinkled throughout the speech.
4. Every source, whether directly quoted or paraphrased, must be verbally attributed in the speech.
5. Visual support should include five or more slides in total.
6. Audio files should not exceed 30 seconds.
7. Video files should not exceed 30 seconds.
8. Visual support should begin with an opening slide and end with a blank slide followed by a Works Cited slide. Competitors may end their presentation on the blank slide.
9. The opening slide may only contain the title of the speech and the competitor's name.
10. The final slide must be labeled Works Cited and contain full, properly formatted entries for all audio and visual content used in the presentation.

Additional Rules for Online Tournaments

1. Competitors should share their screen so that the judges may view the visual support for the presentation.

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, whether directly quoted or paraphrased, 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. All quoted words included in the speech must be bolded on the script.
7. The script submitted must be the script performed by the competitor.
8. 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. Please note that the script review committee is unable to preview transitions, audio or video files when the visual support is submitted in PDF format.
9. Images used in visual support must be credited on the final slide using the rules of the style guide chosen by the competitor.
10. Audio and video files must be credited.

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. One published or self-authored work must be used as the source material for each speech. A self-authored work is a speech text that the speaker has originally written and structured themselves. Self-authored works may incorporate elements from published works, but they must be presented in a manner significantly different from the original published work.
4. Self-authored works may draw inspiration from characters, settings, or plot elements found in published pieces of literature.
5. 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.
6. Dancing should be limited in nature and make sense with the original source material.
7. Vocally or physically generated sound effects are allowed.
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 200 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. Only feet may touch the floor when a speech is presented. Competitors should not kneel, sit, lay down, or perform any acrobatics during their speech.
16. Other than the 200 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.

Additional Rules for Online Tournaments

1. Although preferable, competitors do not have to be in the same physical location.
2. Both competitors must be in view of the camera during 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. Both duo competitors must submit a script for review and the scripts submitted by the competitors must be identical.
5. 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.
6. A Works Cited page must be included.
7. 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.
8. If a self-authored work incorporates elements from published literature, those sources must be properly cited in the Works Cited page.
9. 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.
10. All original words written by the competitor for the introduction and the conclusion must be bolded on the script.

11. The script submitted must be the script performed by the competitor(s).
12. 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.

For the 2026-2027 season, Extemporaneous Speaking will only be offered at select tournaments and may not be available at the National Championship.

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. Competitors may not read from a screen, paper, or other script. The only thing they may reference during the speech is the notecard.
8. After the presentation of their speech, competitors must turn in their index card with their name on it to the judges.

Additional Rules for Online Tournaments

1. In online tournaments, competitors must leave their camera on so they can be seen by the preparation room host.
2. Competitors must show their index card to the judges before speaking.
3. Notecards must be in view of the judges during the speech.
4. Competitors may not read from a screen, paper, or other script. The only thing they may reference during the speech is the notecard.
5. For online tournaments, after the presentation of their speech, competitors must send photos of both sides of their index card with their name on it.

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. Immediately before picking up and looking at the topic card, the competitor will begin the timer.
5. The topic card provided to the competitor is the one that the competitor must use. Competitors are prohibited from discarding and redrawing topic cards.
6. When the timer goes off or if the competitor is ready earlier, the competitor must complete preparation time and present their speech.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. Competitors may not read from a screen, paper, or other script. The only thing they may reference during the speech is the topic card.

Additional Impromptu Speech Rules for Online Tournaments

1. After confirming that the competitor's timer is set to count down from 2 minutes, the head judge will send a direct message with two prompts to the competitor. Upon receipt of the prompts, the competitor will promptly begin the timer.
2. Competitors may not read from a screen, paper, or other script.
3. The camera must remain on during the preparation period.

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. One published or self-authored work must be used as the source material for each speech. A self-authored work is a speech text that the speaker has originally written and structured themselves. Self-authored works may incorporate elements from published works, but they must be presented in a manner significantly different from the original published work.
4. Self-authored works may draw inspiration from characters, settings, or plot elements found in published pieces of literature.
5. 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.
6. Dancing should be limited in nature and make sense with the original source material.
7. Sound effects are allowed.
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 200 words, not including the title and author of the literature selection.
12. The introduction and conclusion must be written by the competitor. 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. Only feet may touch the floor when a speech is presented. Competitors should not kneel, sit, lay down, or perform any acrobatics during their speech.
14. Other than the 200 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. All original words written by the competitor for the introduction and the conclusion must be bolded on the script.
10. The script submitted must be the script performed by the competitor(s).
11. 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 in total in the speech. Directly quoted words may be sprinkled throughout the speech.
4. Every source, whether directly quoted or paraphrased, must be verbally attributed in the speech.
5. While storytelling may be an element of an original oratory speech, the speech should not be comprised solely of a story. Speeches comprised entirely of stories are best fit to compete in open interpretation or duo interpretation.

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, whether directly quoted or paraphrased, 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. All quoted words included in the speech must be bolded on the script.
7. 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.

General Debate Instructions

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's mission and values and will be cause for disciplinary action. 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.

Debaters should assume the debatability 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.

To ensure that all participants understand ASDA's expectations for debate, the ASDA Debate Instructions should be read aloud at the beginning of every tournament and copies should be available for adults in the judge room. See [Supplemental Materials 1 ASDA Debate Instructions](#).

In Person Tournaments

During in person tournaments, debaters are prohibited from using an electronic device (laptop, tablet, phone, watch, etc) during a debate round. Phones are not allowed to be used as timers.

All competitors are expected to come prepared with their materials pre-formatted and printed twice for sharing. ASDA recommends that competitors place their name at the top of their debate materials.

Online Tournaments

In online tournaments, competitors are prohibited from accessing the internet during a debate round. Competitors may only use their electronic device during a debate round to mute or unmute their microphone or to share evidence with the opposing team. All other device usage is prohibited.

The camera must remain on throughout the duration of a debate round including during prep time.

All competitors are expected to come prepared with their speeches and evidence pre-formatted and printed prior to the start of the debate round. Competitors should read from their printed copies.

Competitors are prohibited from reading from their screen other than any necessary communication to exchange evidence or when reading from an opponent's evidence.

Additionally, competitors should have all of their materials prepared and properly formatted for sharing. Competitors should share the materials requested in a PDF file format that can be opened by anyone.

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.

2026-2027 Lincoln-Douglas Debate Resolution

Resolved: When in conflict, our obligations to future generations ought to be valued above our obligations to our own generation.

Lincoln-Douglas Purpose

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

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	Maximum 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. Competitors will not withhold arguments until the Affirmative Rebuttal to get an unfair advantage. A fair debate requires that the opponent has the opportunity to respond to every argument. Presenting new arguments during the Affirmative Rebuttal violates the spirit of fairness because the negative team does not have an opportunity to respond. The Affirmative Rebuttal should be used to respond to the Negative Rebuttal, reiterate arguments provided during the round and present the reasons why the affirmative arguments outweigh the negative arguments.

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 it is the only time the debaters should interact directly other than when evidence is being exchanged.

During the 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 timers. Phones are not allowed to be used as timers.

The timer should be set to count down and should begin as soon as the debater begins speaking. The timer 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 timer 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

Each debater is allowed 3 minutes of prep time. Debaters may use this time to prepare during the debate by gathering their thoughts, analyzing arguments, or drafting their speech. Debaters may use the entirety of their prep time at once or may break it into smaller portions to use throughout the debate round.

Affirmative teams must only take prep time before an affirmative speech. Negative teams must only take prep time prior to a negative speech. Debaters are prohibited from taking prep time before cross-examination or during any speech.

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. If a competitor has used a portion of their prep time, they must set their timer to count down from the amount of remaining prep 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 communication 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 the debater has a physical copy of it, 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.

See [Supplemental Materials 3: Written Evidence Template](#) for a sample template to use to format evidence.

LD 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 citation information mentioned above may be included but is not necessary. In cases where there is no author, the publisher and date must be provided verbally. A dictionary definition may be verbally acknowledged only by publisher name if desired.

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 penalties.

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.

Competitors are prohibited from sharing physical copies of their speeches or evidence during or after the debate round with judges. If a judge suspects fabricated or distorted evidence, the judge may request that a staff member review the evidence. Competitors may call suspicious evidence into question during a debate round using logic or any of their own evidence, but competitors must not demand or instruct a judge to have the evidence reviewed.

Debaters may not interact with the judge directly unless their timer is on. The only exceptions are to briefly introduce their name and position, to ask for the experience or judging philosophy of the judge before the round, to ask if judges and the opponent are ready before giving a speech and to thank the judge after the round is over.

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

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.

2026-2027 Team Policy Debate Resolution

Resolved: The United States Federal Government should significantly reform one or more of the following entitlement programs: Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, or TANF.

Team Policy Purpose

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 policy 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

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. Debaters may use stock issues to help construct their arguments, but they are encouraged to explain their arguments in a manner that anyone may understand.

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 Competitors

Teams must have two competitors, and the same two competitors must remain in the same team for the entire tournament. One competitor on the affirmative team will be the first affirmative speaker and the other will be the second affirmative speaker. Likewise, one competitor on the negative team will be the first negative speaker and the other will be second negative speaker.

Competitors 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 Round Format

Speech	Speaker	Maximum Time
First Affirmative Constructive (1AC)	First Affirmative Speaker	8 minutes
Cross-Examination (CX)	Second Negative Speaker Questioning First Affirmative Speaker	2 minutes
First Negative Constructive (1NC)	First Negative Speaker	8 minutes
Cross-Examination (CX)	First Affirmative Speaker Questioning First Negative Speaker	2 minutes
Second Affirmative Constructive (2AC)	Second Affirmative Speaker	8 minutes
Cross-Examination (CX)	First Negative Speaker Questioning Second Affirmative Speaker	2 minutes
Second Negative Constructive	Second Negative Speaker	8 minutes
Cross-Examination (CX)	Second Affirmative Speaker Questioning Second Negative Speaker	2 minutes
First Negative Rebuttal (1NR)	First Negative Speaker	3 minutes
First Affirmative Rebuttal (1AR)	First Affirmative Speaker	3 minutes
Second Negative Rebuttal (2NR)	Second Negative Speaker	3 minutes
Second Affirmative Rebuttal (2AR)	Second Affirmative Speaker	3 minutes

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. The affirmative team must present their entire plan during the First Affirmative Constructive.
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. Competitors will not withhold arguments until the Second Affirmative Rebuttal to get an unfair advantage. A fair debate requires that the opponent has the opportunity to respond to every argument. Presenting new arguments during the Second Affirmative Rebuttal violates the spirit of fairness because the negative team does not have an opportunity to respond. The Second Affirmative Rebuttal should be used to respond to the Second Negative Rebuttal, reiterate arguments provided during the round and present the reasons why the affirmative arguments outweigh the negative arguments.

If new arguments are introduced in the final affirmative rebuttal speech, the judge should disregard these arguments when making their final decision.

Team Policy Cross-Examination

The purpose of cross-examination is to allow the competitors to interact directly, and it 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.

If a debater plans to ask for any evidence verbally read into the round, they are encouraged to request it during their cross-examination. The negative team may also request a copy of the First Affirmative Constructive (1AC).

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 timers. Phones are not allowed to be used as timers.

The timer should be set to count down and should begin as soon as the debater begins speaking. The timer 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 timer 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

Each team is allowed 4 minutes of prep time. Debaters may use this time to prepare during the debate by gathering their thoughts, analyzing arguments, or drafting their speech. Debaters may use the entirety of their prep time at once or may break it into smaller portions to use throughout the debate round.

Affirmative teams must only take prep time before an affirmative speech. Negative teams must only take prep time prior to a negative speech. Teams are prohibited from taking prep time before cross-examination or during any speech.

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 prep time. If a competitor has used a portion of their prep time, they must set their timer to count down from the amount of remaining prep time left.

Team Policy Case List

All team policy debate competitors are required to join the Team Policy Case List. There is a case list for each ASDA tournament; therefore, team policy competitors must submit their case for each tournament. The case list does not carry over between tournaments.

Teams will join the case list by submitting the title of their case and the case details including the plan. The title of their case, case details, and plan must be specific enough that another team understands the topic of your case and can research it. See Supplemental Materials 7: Sample Team Policy Case List Submission for sample submissions.

All case list submissions are reviewed by ASDA's Case List Committee. If the committee does not believe that enough information has been provided, the team's submission will be rejected with a request to resubmit with additional information. Teams have 24 hours to resubmit with the requested additional information. Teams will receive an email with a link to the case list after their submission is approved.

The case list will be finalized two weeks before the tournament to allow competitors sufficient time to complete negative research. Any team that has not submitted their cases to the case list or that has not been approved by the Case List Committee will be removed from competing in team policy at the tournament.

Competitors may request clarifications on a case name, case details, or the plan. Teams must respond when asked for clarifications on their case. Teams are not required to share their 1AC, but they must share enough information so that another team may effectively research the case.

You must be registered for the tournament to participate in that tournament's case list. Any team not registered for the tournament will be denied access to the case list.

Teams may list a maximum of two cases. One or both cases must be run at the tournament. Once the case list has closed, teams may not change their cases. The plan presented must be materially the same as the plan submitted to the case list. Any team that does not run a case from the case list will be subject to speaker point reductions, forfeitures or other disciplinary action.

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 communication 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 debater has a physical copy of it, 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.

See [Supplemental Materials 3: Written Evidence Template](#) for a sample template to use to format evidence.

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 citation 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 penalties.

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.

Competitors are prohibited from sharing physical copies of their speeches or evidence during or after the debate round with judges. If a judge suspects fabricated or distorted evidence, the judge may request that a staff member review the evidence. Competitors may call suspicious evidence into question during a debate round using logic or any of their own evidence, but competitors must not demand or instruct a judge to have the evidence reviewed.

Debaters may not interact with the judge directly unless their timer is on. The only exceptions are to briefly introduce their name and position, to ask for the experience or judging philosophy of the judge before the round, to ask if judges and opponents are ready before giving a speech and to thank the judge after the round is over.

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

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 debatability 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 it 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

Supplemental Materials 3: Written Evidence Template

Written Evidence Template

Competitors may copy the sample template below and edit for their sources.

<Tagline>

By <Author> (Author Credentials) Published on <Publisher Name> (Publisher Credentials) on <Date>

<Date accessed> <Sources URL> <Article Name>

"Super impactful quote from the source that strengthens your case goes here."

Additional information about each component of the template is included below. For simplicity, the template is broken into 4 components: the tagline, line 1, line 2, and line 3. When the template is completed, each line may take more than one line to provide all the necessary information.

Tagline

The tagline is in 12 pt bold font. The tagline is a heading used before the evidence. It is short – usually 2-4 words. The tagline is typically repeated twice to highlight the important information contained in the evidence that is about to be shared. For instance, if the evidence states that unicorns were a species of horses that is now extinct due to hunting and loss of habitat, then the tagline might be "Unicorns: An Extinct Horse."

Line 1

Line 1 is in 12 pt font with the notated information also underlined. Line 1 contains the author, author credentials, date of publication, the publisher's credentials, and the date of publication. It may take more than one line when filled out. The author and date of publication must be read aloud when presenting the evidence. All other citation information may be included orally but is not necessary. In cases where there is no author, the publisher and the date of publication must be read aloud.

Line 2

Line 2 is in 9 pt italicized font. Line 2 contains the date accessed, the source URL, and the article name. This information is not read aloud during a debate round but must be present on all pieces of evidence.

Line 3

Line 3 is in 11 pt font with the portions to be read aloud underlined. This is a direct quote from the source that strengthens your case. This is read verbatim during the debate round. Please reference [ASDA Evidence Standards](#) for additional information.

Sample Written Evidence

Radioactivity of a Banana

Authored by Joe Schwarcz, Ph.D. (Dr. Joe Schwarcz is Director of McGill University's Office for Science and Society). Published by McGill University's Office for Science and Society (The Office for Science and Society (OSS) is an organization dedicated to science education, operating from Montreal 's McGill University. Its staff and contributors work to improve scientific literacy). March 15, 2018.

Accessed September 5, 2026 "https://www.mcgill.ca/oss/article/you-asked/it-true-banana-radioactive" Is it true that bananas are radioactive?

"A banana contains about 450 mg of potassium, and when eaten exposes the consumer to about 0.01 mrem due to its K-40 content. For comparison, a chest x-ray delivers 10 mrem. A quick calculation (10/.01) shows that it would take an ingestion of at least a thousand bananas to result in an exposure of 10 mrem, which would then increase the risk of death by 1 in a million. In other words, for death to ensue, a million times a thousand, or a billion, bananas would have to be consumed. And that would have to be at one sitting."

Supplemental Materials 4: Speech Reference Guides

Speech Reference Guides are provided to participants and judges to present ASDA's objective standards for evaluating speeches.

When placing competitors in a ranked order, judges should consider their subjective preference. However, when considering competitor feedback, judges should use the speech reference guide for the event to determine the objective standard that the competitor met.

The highest ranked speech is not required to be the speech with the highest feedback nor is the lowest ranked speech required to have the lowest feedback.

The Speech Reference Guides may also be printed from a PDF on ASDA's website by navigating to the [Resources](#) page.

Belief & Values Limited Prep Reference Guide



Belief & Values Limited Prep Reference Guide



ASDA Core Values of Conversational, Collaborative, Congenial, and Community should be evident in all events	Unacceptable <i>Disrespectful or unethical competitor</i>	Fair <i>Growth necessary to successfully compete</i>	Good <i>Prepared, competent competitor</i>	Excellent <i>Top half of room; polished, well-spoken competitor</i>	Superior <i>Exceptional preparation, polish and presentation</i>
Main Idea <i>Speaker has something interesting or important to say</i>	Inappropriate or offensive topic	Response has limited appeal, thesis needs more development, main idea unclear, minimal support for thesis, or does not understand the topic	Response is developed enough to understand the speech, could use additional clarity or support, mostly understands the topic	Interesting or important response that is clear throughout the speech and supported by depth of research, logic or stories; understands the topic	Response stands out in its depth of understanding and advanced research, logic or relevant stories; thoroughly understands the topic
Language <i>Speaker's ideas and stories are organized and effective</i>	Use of plagiarism or offensive language, disregard for content rules	Speech has limited organization, includes little research or citations, or speaker has misunderstood the topic	Speech organized enough to follow, time used reasonably well, assertions may need balancing or developing, or support incomplete or unconvincing	Compelling organization, introduction and conclusion; ample support; good use of time to balance assertions	Surprisingly compelling speech in organization, transitions, and citations or other support
Voice <i>Speaker's voice captures the audience's attention</i>	Disrespectful, unkind or offensive attitude, language, or tone of voice	Competitor too quiet, hard to understand, or uses little variation in tone, rate or pitch	Volume, pronunciation, or manner of speaking is comprehensible but not conversational	Accurate pronunciation, sincere and conversational in use of volume, rate and pitch	Vocal variety captivates interest, engages audience
Action <i>Speaker's visual performance engages the audience's attention</i>	Inappropriate dress or disrespectful, unkind or offensive gestures, movements or posture	Action on stage inadequate to engage audience	Use of stage is deliberate and interesting; speaker might appear nervous	Command of the stage and use of body language and eye contact catch and keep audience's interest	Captivating use of stage, movement and eye contact
Impact <i>Speaker develops a rapport with the audience and aligns with the mission of ASDA</i>	Rude to the audience, blatant disregard of the ASDA mission	Audience has a hard time relating to the speech or speech contradicts ASDA mission	Impact is meaningful according to the ASDA mission, somewhat developed rapport	Memorable speech with connection to audience through humor or other emotion, aligns with the ASDA mission	Excellent rapport, sensitive treatment of topic, aligns with and promotes ASDA mission

Note: When placing competitors in a ranked order, judges should consider their subjective preference. When considering competitor feedback, the highest standard for the room is the objective standard as detailed here. Because many great speeches share similar qualities, this reference guide is provided as a means of helping you to articulate your feedback. The highest ranked speech is not required to be the speech with the highest feedback.

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Digital Presentation Reference Guide



Digital Presentation Reference Guide



ASDA Core Values of Conversational, Collaborative, Congenial, and Community should be evident in all events	Unacceptable <i>Disrespectful or unethical competitor</i>	Fair <i>Growth necessary to successfully compete</i>	Good <i>Prepared, competent competitor</i>	Excellent <i>Top half of room; polished, well-spoken competitor</i>	Superior <i>Exceptional preparation, polish and presentation</i>
Main Idea <i>Speaker has something interesting or important to say</i>	Inappropriate or offensive topic	Topic has limited appeal, thesis needs more development, minimal support for thesis, or main idea unclear	Topic is developed enough to enjoy the speech, could use additional clarity or support	Interesting or important topic that is clear throughout the speech and supported by depth of research, logic or stories	Topic stands out in its appeal to a wide audience and relevance over time and includes advanced research, logic or stories
Language and Visual <i>Speaker's ideas and visual aids are organized and effective</i>	Use of plagiarism or offensive language, disregard for content rules	Speech has limited organization or slides seem unfinished or inadequate	Speech organized enough to follow, assertions may need balancing or developing, or slides might need some improvement	Compelling organization, introduction and conclusion; effective slides; good use of time to balance arguments	Surprisingly compelling speech in organization, transitions, slides and support
Voice <i>Speaker's voice captures the audience's attention</i>	Disrespectful, unkind or offensive attitude, language, or tone of voice	Competitor too quiet, hard to understand, or uses little variation in tone, rate or pitch	Volume, pronunciation, or manner of speaking is comprehensible but not conversational	Accurate pronunciation, sincere and conversational in use of volume, rate and pitch	Vocal variety captivates interest, engages audience
Action <i>Speaker's visual performance engages the audience's attention</i>	Inappropriate dress or disrespectful, unkind or offensive gestures, movements or posture	Inability to understand slides; action on stage inadequate to engage audience	Use of slides and stage is deliberate and interesting; speaker might appear nervous	Interaction with slides and use of body language and eye contact catch and keep audience's interest	Captivating use of stage and slides; hand motions, eye contact, and other body language are deliberate and enhance the speech
Impact <i>Speaker develops a rapport with the audience and aligns with the mission of ASDA</i>	Rude to the audience, blatant disregard of the ASDA mission	Audience has a hard time relating to the speech or speech contradicts ASDA mission	Impact is meaningful according to the ASDA mission, somewhat developed rapport	Memorable speech with connection to audience through humor or other emotion, aligns with the ASDA mission	Excellent rapport, sensitive treatment of topic, aligns with and promotes ASDA mission

Note: When placing competitors in a ranked order, judges should consider their subjective preference. When considering competitor feedback, the highest standard for the room is the objective standard as detailed here. Because many great speeches share similar qualities, this reference guide is provided as a means of helping you to articulate your feedback. The highest ranked speech is not required to be the speech with the highest feedback.

Duo Interpretation Reference Guide



Duo Interpretation Reference Guide



ASDA Core Values of Conversational, Collaborative, Congenial, and Community should be evident in all events	Unacceptable <i>Disrespectful or unethical competitor</i>	Fair <i>Growth necessary to successfully compete</i>	Good <i>Prepared, competent competitor</i>	Excellent <i>Top half of room; polished, well-spoken competitor</i>	Superior <i>Exceptional preparation, polish and presentation</i>
Main Idea <i>Speaker has something interesting or important to say</i>	Inappropriate or offensive topic	Literature selection has limited appeal or theme needs more development	Story and theme developed enough to enjoy the speech, could use wider appeal or relevance	Interesting or important story of literary merit that clearly develops theme through humor or other emotion	Speech stands out in its appeal to a wide audience and relevance over time and shows advanced theme development
Script <i>Story is organized and effective</i>	Use of plagiarism or offensive language, disregard for content rules	Story line hard to follow or features unclear character choices	Literature selection is cut well enough to follow, but scenes or characters may need balance or development, or speech might lack conflict and resolution	Use of artful elements from literature selection such as symbols, foreshadowing or imagery; plot is clear; interesting choice of characters	Excellent retelling incorporating artful features and powerful development of the plot
Character Acting <i>Characters capture the audience's attention</i>	Inappropriate dress or disrespectful, unkind or offensive attitude, language, or tone of voice	Characters are inconsistently portrayed or hard to distinguish, or speech is hard to hear	Clearly distinguished characters most of the time, and character transitions move the speech along	Smooth transitions and consistent characters that are clearly distinguished by vocal qualities, bearing and manner	Superior portrayal of believable, distinct characters; speech features advanced vocal and physical techniques and transitions
Scene Development <i>Speaker's visual performance engages the audience's attention</i>	Disrespectful, unkind or offensive gestures, movements or posture	Speech has confusing scenes or transitions or imbalance in participation by the competitors	Creative staging, good transitions, but speakers might appear nervous	Meaningful creation of scenes and imaginary props and balanced interaction between competitors	Extremely believable scenes, excellent partner harmony, magical transitions
Impact <i>Speaker develops a rapport with the audience and aligns with the mission of ASDA</i>	Rude to the audience, blatant disregard of the ASDA mission	Audience has a hard time relating to the speech or speech contradicts ASDA mission	Impact is meaningful according to the ASDA mission, somewhat developed rapport	Memorable speech with connection to audience through humor or other emotion, aligns with the ASDA mission	Excellent rapport, sensitive treatment of topic, aligns with and promotes ASDA mission

Note: When placing competitors in a ranked order, judges should consider their subjective preference. When considering competitor feedback, the highest standard for the room is the objective standard as detailed here. Because many great speeches share similar qualities, this reference guide is provided as a means of helping you to articulate your feedback. The highest ranked speech is not required to be the speech with the highest feedback.

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Extemporaneous Reference Guide



Extemporaneous Reference Guide

ASDA Core Values of Conversational, Collaborative, Congenial, and Community should be evident in all events	Unacceptable <i>Disrespectful or unethical competitor</i>	Fair <i>Growth necessary to successfully compete</i>	Good <i>Prepared, competent competitor</i>	Excellent <i>Top half of room; polished, well-spoken competitor</i>	Superior <i>Exceptional preparation, polish and presentation</i>
Main Idea <i>Speaker has something interesting or important to say</i>	Inappropriate or offensive topic	Response has limited appeal, thesis needs more development, main idea unclear, minimal support for thesis, does not understand issue, or does not take a position	Response is developed enough to understand the speech, could use additional clarity or support, understanding of issue limited but tries to take a position	Interesting or important response that is clear throughout the speech and supported by depth of research, logic or stories; understands the issue and takes a position	Response stands out in its depth of understanding and advanced research, logic or relevant stories; thoroughly understands the issue and argues strongly for a position
Language <i>Speaker's ideas and sources are organized and effective</i>	Use of plagiarism or offensive language, disregard for content rules	Speech has limited organization, includes little research or citations, or speaker has misunderstood the topic	Speech organized enough to follow, assertions may need balancing or developing, includes small variety of sources	Compelling organization, introduction and conclusion; ample citations and support; good use of time to balance assertions	Surprisingly compelling speech in organization, transitions, and citations or other support
Voice <i>Speaker's voice captures the audience's attention</i>	Disrespectful, unkind or offensive attitude, language, or tone of voice	Competitor too quiet, hard to understand, or uses little variation in tone, rate or pitch	Volume, pronunciation, or manner of speaking is comprehensible but not conversational	Accurate pronunciation, sincere and conversational in use of volume, rate and pitch	Vocal variety captivates interest, engages audience
Action <i>Speaker's visual performance engages the audience's attention</i>	Inappropriate dress or disrespectful, unkind or offensive gestures, movements or posture	Action on stage inadequate to engage audience	Use of stage is deliberate and interesting; speaker might appear nervous	Command of the stage and use of body language and eye contact catch and keep audience's interest	Captivating use of stage, deliberate and interesting use of hands and other body language, and consistent eye contact
Impact <i>Speaker develops a rapport with the audience and aligns with the mission of ASDA</i>	Rude to the audience, blatant disregard of the ASDA mission	Audience has a hard time relating to the speech or speech contradicts ASDA mission	Impact is meaningful according to the ASDA mission, somewhat developed rapport	Memorable speech with connection to audience through humor or other emotion, aligns with the ASDA mission	Excellent rapport, sensitive treatment of topic, aligns with and promotes ASDA mission

Note: When placing competitors in a ranked order, judges should consider their subjective preference. When considering competitor feedback, the highest standard for the room is the objective standard as detailed here. Because many great speeches share similar qualities, this reference guide is provided as a means of helping you to articulate your feedback. The highest ranked speech is not required to be the speech with the highest feedback.

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Impromptu Reference Guide



Impromptu Reference Guide



ASDA Core Values of Conversational, Collaborative, Congenial, and Community should be evident in all events	Unacceptable <i>Disrespectful or unethical competitor</i>	Fair <i>Growth necessary to successfully compete</i>	Good <i>Prepared, competent competitor</i>	Excellent <i>Top half of room; polished, well-spoken competitor</i>	Superior <i>Exceptional preparation, polish and presentation</i>
Main Idea <i>Speaker has something interesting or important to say</i>	Inappropriate or offensive topic	Response has limited appeal, thesis needs more development, main idea unclear, minimal support for thesis, or does not understand the topic	Response is developed enough to understand the speech, could use additional clarity or support, mostly understands the topic	Thesis is clear throughout the speech, relates directly to the assigned topic, and is supported by personal, historical, literary stories, etc.	Thesis stands out in its depth of understanding, speech shows advanced storytelling from personal, historical, literary, or other sources
Language <i>Speaker's ideas and stories are organized and effective</i>	Use of plagiarism or offensive language, disregard for content rules	Speech has limited organization or is too short	Speech organized enough to follow, time used reasonably well, assertions may need balancing or developing, or support incomplete or unconvincing	Compelling organization, introduction and conclusion; ample support; good use of time to balance assertions	Surprisingly compelling speech in organization, transitions and support
Voice <i>Speaker's voice captures the audience's attention</i>	Disrespectful, unkind or offensive attitude, language, or tone of voice	Competitor too quiet, hard to understand, or uses little variation in tone, rate or pitch	Volume, pronunciation, or manner of speaking is comprehensible but not conversational	Accurate pronunciation, sincere and conversational in use of volume, rate and pitch	Vocal variety captivates interest, engages audience
Action <i>Speaker's visual performance engages the audience's attention</i>	Inappropriate dress or disrespectful, unkind or offensive gestures, movements or posture	Action on stage inadequate to engage audience	Use of stage is deliberate and interesting; speaker might appear nervous	Command of the stage and use of body language and eye contact catch and keep audience's interest	Captivating use of stage, movement and eye contact
Impact <i>Speaker develops a rapport with the audience and aligns with the mission of ASDA</i>	Rude to the audience, blatant disregard of the ASDA mission	Audience has a hard time relating to the speech or speech contradicts ASDA mission	Impact is meaningful according to the ASDA mission, somewhat developed rapport	Memorable speech with connection to audience through humor or other emotion, aligns with the ASDA mission	Excellent rapport, sensitive treatment of topic, aligns with and promotes ASDA mission

Note: When placing competitors in a ranked order, judges should consider their subjective preference. When considering competitor feedback, the highest standard for the room is the objective standard as detailed here. Because many great speeches share similar qualities, this reference guide is provided as a means of helping you to articulate your feedback. The highest ranked speech is not required to be the speech with the highest feedback.

Open Interpretation Reference Guide



Open Interpretation Reference Guide



ASDA Core Values of Conversational, Collaborative, Congenial, and Community should be evident in all events	Unacceptable <i>Disrespectful or unethical competitor</i>	Fair <i>Growth necessary to successfully compete</i>	Good <i>Prepared, competent competitor</i>	Excellent <i>Top half of room; polished, well-spoken competitor</i>	Superior <i>Exceptional preparation, polish and presentation</i>
Main Idea <i>Speaker has something interesting or important to say</i>	Inappropriate or offensive topic	Literature selection has limited appeal or theme needs more development	Story and theme developed enough to enjoy the speech, could use wider appeal or relevance	Interesting or important story of literary merit that clearly develops theme through humor or other emotion	Speech stands out in its appeal to a wide audience and relevance over time and shows advanced theme development
Script <i>Story is organized and effective</i>	Use of plagiarism or offensive language, disregard for content rules	Story line hard to follow or features unclear character choices	Literature selection is cut well enough to follow, but scenes or characters may need balance or development, or speech might lack conflict and resolution	Use of artful elements from literature selection such as symbols, foreshadowing or imagery; plot is clear; interesting choice of characters	Excellent retelling incorporating artful features and powerful development of the plot
Character Acting <i>Characters capture the audience's attention</i>	Inappropriate dress or disrespectful, unkind or offensive attitude, language, or tone of voice	Characters are inconsistently portrayed or hard to distinguish, or speech is hard to hear	Clearly distinguished characters most of the time, and character transitions move the speech along	Smooth transitions and consistent characters that are clearly distinguished by vocal qualities, bearing and manner	Superior portrayal of believable, distinct characters; speech features advanced vocal and physical techniques and transitions
Scene Development <i>Speaker's visual performance engages the audience's attention</i>	Disrespectful, unkind or offensive gestures, movements or posture	Speech has confusing scenes or transitions	Creative staging, good transitions, but speaker might appear nervous	Smooth transitions and meaningful creation of scenes and imaginary props	Extremely believable scenes and imaginary props, magical transitions
Impact <i>Speaker develops a rapport with the audience and aligns with the mission of ASDA</i>	Rude to the audience, blatant disregard of the ASDA mission	Audience has a hard time relating to the speech or speech contradicts ASDA mission	Impact is meaningful according to the ASDA mission, somewhat developed rapport	Memorable speech with connection to audience through humor or other emotion, aligns with the ASDA mission	Excellent rapport, sensitive treatment of topic, aligns with and promotes ASDA mission

Note: When placing competitors in a ranked order, judges should consider their subjective preference. When considering competitor feedback, the highest standard for the room is the objective standard as detailed here. Because many great speeches share similar qualities, this reference guide is provided as a means of helping you to articulate your feedback. The highest ranked speech is not required to be the speech with the highest feedback.

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Original Oratory Reference Guide



Original Oratory Reference Guide



ASDA Core Values of Conversational, Collaborative, Congenial, and Community should be evident in all events	Unacceptable <i>Disrespectful or unethical competitor</i>	Fair <i>Growth necessary to successfully compete</i>	Good <i>Prepared, competent competitor</i>	Excellent <i>Top half of room; polished, well-spoken competitor</i>	Superior <i>Exceptional preparation, polish and presentation</i>
Main Idea <i>Speaker has something interesting or important to say</i>	Inappropriate or offensive topic	Topic has limited appeal, thesis needs more development, minimal support for thesis, or main idea unclear	Topic is developed enough to enjoy the speech, could use additional clarity or support	Interesting or important topic that is clear throughout the speech and supported by depth of research, logic or stories	Topic stands out in its appeal to a wide audience and relevance over time and includes advanced research, logic or stories
Language <i>Speaker's ideas are organized and effective</i>	Use of plagiarism or offensive language, disregard for content rules	Speech has limited organization or integration of research	Speech organized enough to follow, assertions may need balancing or developing, or research incomplete or unconvincing	Compelling organization, introduction and conclusion; effective research; good use of time to balance arguments	Surprisingly compelling speech in organization, transitions, slides and support
Voice <i>Speaker's voice captures the audience's attention</i>	Disrespectful, unkind or offensive attitude, language, or tone of voice	Competitor too quiet, hard to understand, or uses little variation in tone, rate or pitch	Volume, pronunciation, or manner of speaking is comprehensible but not conversational	Accurate pronunciation, sincere and conversational in use of volume, rate and pitch	Vocal variety captivates interest, engages audience
Action <i>Speaker's visual performance engages the audience's attention</i>	Inappropriate dress or disrespectful, unkind or offensive gestures, movements or posture	Action on stage inadequate to engage audience	Use of stage is deliberate and interesting; speaker might appear nervous	Compelling use of stage and use of hands and other body language and eye contact catch and keep audience's interest. Speech appears to be memorized	Captivating use of stage; hand motions, eye contact, and other body language are deliberate and enhance the speech. Speech appears to be memorized
Impact <i>Speaker develops a rapport with the audience and aligns with the mission of ASDA</i>	Rude to the audience, blatant disregard of the ASDA mission	Audience has a hard time relating to the speech or speech contradicts ASDA mission	Impact is meaningful according to the ASDA mission, somewhat developed rapport	Memorable speech with connection to audience through humor or other emotion, aligns with the ASDA mission	Excellent rapport, sensitive treatment of topic, aligns with and promotes ASDA mission

Note: When placing competitors in a ranked order, judges should consider their subjective preference. When considering competitor feedback, the highest standard for the room is the objective standard as detailed here. Because many great speeches share similar qualities, this reference guide is provided as a means of helping you to articulate your feedback. The highest ranked speech is not required to be the speech with the highest feedback.

Supplemental Materials 5: Speech Ballots

ASDA Tournaments use an online balloting system. The speech ballots are provided as a reference to judges and participants to understand what will be evaluated during the presentation of a speech.

ASDA's Speech Ballots may also be printed from a PDF on ASDA's website by navigating to the [Resources](#) page.

Belief & Values Limited Prep Ballot

Belief & Values Limited Prep Ballot



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.	Speaker :
	Topic :
	Speech Length :
	Judge :
	Round :
Room :	

Speaker Rank							
For tournament placement, please rank the competitors in the room based on which speech you preferred with 1st as your favorite.							
1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th

Competitor Feedback						
Main Idea	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
What is interesting or important about the main idea? You might comment on:						
- Importance or interest level of response to the prompt - Reference to main idea or thesis throughout speech - Thesis supported by appeals to authority or other research - Understanding of topic as indicated through speech development						
Language	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
How did the use of language enhance the speech? You might comment on:						
- Speech organization, intro and conclusion - Integration of quotes, citations or paraphrasing from sources - Use of transitions and literary devices - Use of time to balance assertions						
Voice	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
In what ways did the speaker's voice capture your attention? You might comment on:						
- Ability to hear and understand speaker - Accuracy of pronunciation - Use of volume, rate, pitch, etc. - Ability to be sincere and conversational						
Action	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
What made the speech interesting to watch? You might comment on:						
- Posture, use of hands and body language - Eye contact, facial expressions, gestures - Use of stage						
Impact	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
Does the speech develop rapport and align with ASDA mission? You might comment on:						
- Ability to use tact with opinion topics if applicable - Use of humor, sympathy or other feelings - Development of rapport with audience - Alignment with ASDA mission						

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Digital Presentation Ballot

Digital Presentation Ballot



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.	Speaker :	
	Topic :	
	Speech Length :	Script Use? Yes No
	Judge :	
	Round :	
Room :		

Speaker Rank							
For tournament placement, please rank the competitors in the room based on which speech you preferred with 1st as your favorite.							
1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th

Competitor Feedback						
Main Idea	<i>Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one:</i> Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
What is interesting or important about the main idea? You might comment on:						
- Importance or interest level of topic - Reference to main idea or thesis throughout speech - Thesis supported by logic, research or stories						
Language & Visual	<i>Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one:</i> Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
How did the use of language and visual aids enhance the speech? You might comment on:						
- Speech organization, intro and conclusion - Use of transitions and literary devices - Effectiveness and appeal of slides - Use of time to balance assertions						
Voice	<i>Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one:</i> Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
In what ways did the speaker's voice capture your attention? You might comment on:						
- Ability to hear and understand speaker - Accuracy of pronunciation - Use of volume, rate, pitch, etc. - Ability to be sincere and conversational						
Action	<i>Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one:</i> Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
What made the speech interesting to watch? You might comment on:						
- Posture, use of hands and body language - Eye contact, facial expressions, gestures - Interaction with slides - Use of stage and management of equipment						
Impact	<i>Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one:</i> Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
Does the speech develop rapport and align with ASDA mission? You might comment on:						
- Ability to use tact with opinion topics if applicable - Use of humor, sympathy or other feelings - Development of rapport with audience - Alignment with ASDA mission						

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Duo Interpretation Ballot

Duo Interpretation Ballot



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.	Speaker :	
	Topic :	
	Speech Length :	Script Use? Yes No
	Judge :	
	Round :	
Room :		

Speaker Rank							
For tournament placement, please rank the competitors in the room based on which speech you preferred with 1st as your favorite.							
1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th

Competitor Feedback						
Main Idea	<i>Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one:</i> <i>Unacceptable</i> <i>Fair</i> <i>Good</i> <i>Excellent</i> <i>Superior</i>					
What is interesting or important about the main idea? You might comment on:						
- Theme appeals to wide audience and relevant over time - Theme developed through humor or other emotion - Interest level of literature selection						
Script	<i>Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one:</i> <i>Unacceptable</i> <i>Fair</i> <i>Good</i> <i>Excellent</i> <i>Superior</i>					
How did the script enhance the speech? You might comment on:						
- Artful elements such as symbols, foreshadowing, imagery, etc. - Rising action, conflict and resolution - Choice of characters - Ease of following the story line						
Character Acting	<i>Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one:</i> <i>Unacceptable</i> <i>Fair</i> <i>Good</i> <i>Excellent</i> <i>Superior</i>					
In what ways did the characters capture your attention? You might comment on:						
- Differentiation of characters through accent, volume, rate or pitch, etc. - Believability of character bearing, mannerisms or facial expressions, etc. - Transitions between characters - Consistency of the portrayal of characters throughout						
Scene Development	<i>Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one:</i> <i>Unacceptable</i> <i>Fair</i> <i>Good</i> <i>Excellent</i> <i>Superior</i>					
What made the speech interesting to watch? You might comment on:						
- Balance of competitors' participation - Interaction between the two competitors - Staging and creation of scenes - Transition between scenes						
Impact	<i>Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one:</i> <i>Unacceptable</i> <i>Fair</i> <i>Good</i> <i>Excellent</i> <i>Superior</i>					
Does the speech develop rapport and align with ASDA mission? You might comment on:						
- Ability to use tact with opinion topics if applicable - Use of humor, sympathy or other feelings - Development of rapport with audience - Alignment with ASDA mission						

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Extemporaneous Ballot

Extemporaneous Ballot



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	Topic :
	Speech Length :
	Judge :
	Round :
Room :	

Speaker Rank							
For tournament placement, please rank the competitors in the room based on which speech you preferred with 1st as your favorite.							
1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th

Competitor Feedback						
Main Idea	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
What is interesting or important about the main idea? You might comment on:						
- Importance or interest level of stance - Reference to main idea or thesis throughout speech - Thesis supported by logic, research or stories - Depth of understanding as indicated through source use						
Language	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
How did the use of language enhance the speech? You might comment on:						
- Speech organization, intro and conclusion - Integration of quotes, citations or paraphrasing from sources - Use of transitions and literary devices - Use of time to balance assertions						
Voice	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
In what ways did the speaker's voice capture your attention? You might comment on:						
- Ability to hear and understand speaker - Accuracy of pronunciation - Use of volume, rate, pitch, etc. - Ability to be sincere and conversational						
Action	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
What made the speech interesting to watch? You might comment on:						
- Posture, use of hands and body language - Eye contact, facial expressions, gestures - Use of stage						
Impact	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
Does the speech develop rapport and align with ASDA mission? You might comment on:						
- Ability to use tact with opinion topics if applicable - Use of humor, sympathy or other feelings - Development of rapport with audience - Alignment with ASDA mission						

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Impromptu Ballot

Impromptu Ballot



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.	Speaker :
	Topic :
	Speech Length :
	Judge :
	Round :
Room :	

Speaker Rank							
For tournament placement, please rank the competitors in the room based on which speech you preferred with 1st as your favorite.							
1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th

Competitor Feedback						
Main Idea	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
What is interesting or important about the main idea? You might comment on:						
- Importance or interest level of response to the prompt - Reference to main idea or thesis throughout speech - Stories from personal experience, history, literature, etc. - Understanding of topic as indicated through speech development						
Language	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
How did the use of language enhance the speech? You might comment on:						
- Speech organization, intro and conclusion - Integration of stories - Use of transitions and literary devices - Use of time to balance assertions						
Voice	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
In what ways did the speaker's voice capture your attention? You might comment on:						
- Ability to hear and understand speaker - Accuracy of pronunciation - Use of volume, rate, pitch, etc. - Ability to be sincere and conversational						
Action	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
What made the speech interesting to watch? You might comment on:						
- Posture, use of hands and body language - Eye contact, facial expressions, gestures - Use of stage						
Impact	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
Does the speech develop rapport and align with ASDA mission? You might comment on:						
- Ability to use tact with opinion topics if applicable - Use of humor, sympathy or other feelings - Development of rapport with audience - Alignment with ASDA mission						

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Open Interpretation Ballot

Open Interpretation Ballot



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.	Speaker :	
	Topic :	
	Speech Length :	Script Use? Yes No
	Judge :	
	Round :	
Room :		

Speaker Rank								
For tournament placement, please rank the competitors in the room based on which speech you preferred with 1st as your favorite.								
1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	

Competitor Feedback						
Main Idea	<i>Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one:</i> Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
What is interesting or important about the main idea? You might comment on:						
- Theme appeals to wide audience and relevant over time - Theme developed through humor or other emotion - Interest level of literature selection						
Script	<i>Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one:</i> Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
How did the script enhance the speech? You might comment on:						
- Artful elements such as symbols, foreshadowing, imagery, etc. - Rising action, conflict and resolution - Choice of characters - Ease of following the story line						
Character Acting	<i>Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one:</i> Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
In what ways did the speaker's voice capture your attention? You might comment on:						
- Differentiation of characters through accent, volume, rate or pitch, etc. - Believability of character bearing, mannerisms or facial expressions, etc. - Transitions between characters - Consistency of the portrayal of characters throughout						
Scene Development	<i>Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one:</i> Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
What made the speech interesting to watch? You might comment on:						
- Believability of scene development - Staging - Creation of imaginary props - Transition between scenes						
Impact	<i>Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one:</i> Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
Does the speech develop rapport and align with ASDA mission? You might comment on:						
- Ability to use tact with opinion topics if applicable - Use of humor, sympathy or other feelings - Development of rapport with audience - Alignment with ASDA mission						

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Original Oratory Ballot

Original Oratory Ballot



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	Topic :	
	Speech Length :	Script Use? Yes No
	Judge :	
	Round :	
Room :		

Speaker Rank								
For tournament placement, please rank the competitors in the room based on which speech you preferred with 1st as your favorite.								
1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	

Competitor Feedback						
Main Idea	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
What is interesting or important about the main idea? You might comment on:						
- Importance or interest level of topic - Reference to main idea or thesis throughout speech - Thesis supported by logic, research or stories - Demonstration of depth of understanding						
Language	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
How did the use of language enhance the speech? You might comment on:						
- Speech organization, intro and conclusion - Use of transitions and literary devices - Integration or stories, statistics or quotes - Use of time to balance assertions						
Voice	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
In what ways did the speaker's voice capture your attention? You might comment on:						
- Ability to hear and understand speaker - Accuracy of pronunciation - Use of volume, rate, pitch, etc. - Ability to be sincere and conversational						
Action	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
What made the speech interesting to watch? You might comment on:						
- Posture, use of hands and body language - Eye contact, facial expressions, gestures - Use of stage - Memorization of the speech						
Impact	Using the Speech Reference Guide, circle one: Unacceptable Fair Good Excellent Superior					
Does the speech develop rapport and align with ASDA mission? You might comment on:						
- Ability to use tact with opinion topics if applicable - Use of humor, sympathy or other feelings - Development of rapport with audience - Alignment with ASDA mission						

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Supplemental Materials 6: Debate Speaker Points Rubric

The Debate Speaker Points Rubric is provided to participants and judges to present ASDA's objective standards for evaluating debate speaker points.

During each debate round, judges will determine whether the affirmative or negative team won the debate. Additionally, judges must provide feedback on each competitor's debating abilities.

When selecting a winner for the round, judges should set aside their own personal bias and determine the winner based on the information presented in the round. However, when considering competitor feedback and speaker points, judges should use the debate speaker points rubric to determine the objective standard that the competitor met.

The winners of the debate round are not required to receive the most speaker points. Likewise, the competitors with the lowest speaker points are not required to lose the debate round.

The Debate Speaker Points Rubric may also be printed from a PDF on ASDA's website by navigating to the [Resources](#) page.

Debate Speaker Points Rubric



Debate Speaker Points Rubric

ASDA Core Values of Conversational, Collaborative, Congeniality, and Community should be evident in all events	1 Unacceptable <i>Disrespectful or unethical competitor</i>	2 Fair <i>Growth necessary to successfully compete</i>	3 Good <i>Prepared, competent competitor</i>	4 Excellent <i>Top Half of Room. Polished, well-spoken competitor</i>	5 Superior <i>Exceptional preparation, polish and presentation</i>
Constructive Speech <i>Debater provides a compelling speech affirming or negating the resolution</i>	Attitude of disregard for opponent and judge or lacks verbal citations	Lack of preparation, lack of understanding and little convincing argumentation	Understanding of the issues, adequately convincing argumentation	Deep research and clear and compelling argumentation	Comprehensive research and mature and persuasive argumentation
Cross-Examination <i>Debater asks questions to clarify the round</i>	Aggressive time manipulation or belittling of opponent	Inability to comprehend the issues or formulate clarifying questions	Inquiries and responses that show knowledge of the issues	Skill in asking and answering questions that enhance the round	Strong use of questions and answers to strengthen position and weaken opposing view
Rebuttal Speech <i>Debater refutes earlier argumentation and strengthens position</i>	Misrepresentation of evidence, introduction of new argumentation in final affirmative rebuttal or use of other unkind and unfair tactics	Inability to understand the issues or deliver reasonable rebuttal speeches	Adequate understanding of the issues and some refutation of earlier arguments	Refutation of earlier arguments, clarification of misunderstandings and strengthening of position	Compelling ability to refute arguments, simplify the round and convincingly clarify position
Evidence <i>Debater uses evidence in the form of advocacy, examples or logic to support claims</i>	Misuse of evidence through ignorance or willful manipulation or misapplication of advocacy, examples or logic	Lack of advocacy, irrelevant examples, illogical arguments or incorrect citations	Appropriate amount of advocacy, examples or basic logic	Excellent use of relevant advocacy, helpful examples, and clear logical connections that show depth of research	Superior use of extensive advocacy, enriching examples, or advanced logic that shows comprehensive research
Organization <i>Debater organizes speeches so that ideas flow logically</i>	Lacks full plan in first affirmative speech or does not follow speaking order	Weak and hard to follow organization	Some organization of arguments around a thesis, somewhat logical presentation	Organization that helps the judge understand the arguments and the flow from speech to speech	Organization that simplifies the round and flows logically from the constructive speech to the final conclusion
Delivery <i>Debater uses speech and body language to uphold ASDA values</i>	Poor delivery that is disrespectful, aggressive, unkind or inappropriate	Discomfort on stage, awkward speech or body language	Comfort on stage, polite speech and body language	Stage presence that shows kindness and respect to the opponent and judge	Ability to build a relationship with the judge and opponent

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Supplemental Materials 7: Debate Ballots

ASDA Tournaments use an online balloting system. The debate ballots are provided as a reference to judges and participants to understand what will be evaluated during the presentation of a debate.

ASDA's Debate Ballots may also be printed from a PDF on ASDA's website by navigating to the [Resources](#) page.

Lincoln-Douglas Ballot

Lincoln-Douglas Debate Ballot



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- Welcomes youth from all learning environments.

Affirmative:

Negative :

Judge :

2026-2027 Lincoln-Douglas Resolution

Resolved: When in conflict, our obligations to future generations ought to be valued above our obligations to our own generation.

Winning Team

Affirmative

Negative

Speaker Points

Affirmative Speaker :	Rank
<i>Score 1-5 (1=unacceptable, 2=fair, 3= good, 4=excellent, 5=superior)</i>	
Constructive Speech	
Cross-Examination	
Rebuttal Speech	
Evidence	
Organization	
Delivery	
Total Speaker Points	

Speaker Feedback

Negative Speaker :	Rank
<i>Score 1-5 (1=unacceptable, 2=fair, 3= good, 4=excellent, 5=superior)</i>	
Constructive Speech	
Cross-Examination	
Rebuttal Speech	
Evidence	
Organization	
Delivery	
Total Speaker Points	

Speaker Feedback

Reason for Decision

Team Policy Debate

Team Policy Debate Ballot



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	Negative :
	Judge :
	2026-2027 Team Policy Resolution Resolved: The United States Federal Government should significantly reform one or more of the following entitlement programs: Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, or TANF.

Winning Team	
Affirmative	Negative

Speaker Points

1st Affirmative Speaker :	Rank
<i>Score 1-5 (1=unacceptable, 2=fair, 3= good, 4=excellent, 5=superior)</i>	
Constructive Speech	
Cross-Examination	
Rebuttal Speech	
Evidence	
Organization	
Delivery	
Total Speaker Points	
Speaker Feedback	

1st Negative Speaker :	Rank
<i>Score 1-5 (1=unacceptable, 2=fair, 3= good, 4=excellent, 5=superior)</i>	
Constructive Speech	
Cross-Examination	
Rebuttal Speech	
Evidence	
Organization	
Delivery	
Total Speaker Points	
Speaker Feedback	

Please see the reverse side for the remainder of the ballot.

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Index

Accommodations, 14, 15
ad hominem, 9, 44, 51
Adult Representative, 11
Adults, 11
Affirmative and Negative Responsibilities, 41, 46
Age, 14
appropriateness, 9
Artificial Intelligence, 22, 23, 24
Audience participation, 24
Belief & Values, 23, 26, 28
citations, 23, 34
Coaches, 16
collaborative, 8
college, 15
consequences, 13
conversational, 8, 40, 53
Debate Resolution, 41, 46
Digital Presentation, 23, 29
Dress Code, 18
Duo Interpretation, 18, 23, 31, 32
Eligibility, 14
Evidence, 43, 44, 49, 50
Extemporaneous Speaking, 34
General Speech Rules, 23
graduated, 14
homeschooled, 15
Impromptu, 23, 36
inappropriate, 10, 19, 24
integrity, 9, 28
Judge Recruitment, 18, 19, 44, 45, 51
kind, 8
kritiking, 40, 53
learning disability, 14
Lincoln-Douglas, 17, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45
mission, 7, 8, 13, 20, 40, 53
National Tournament points, 20
older, 14
Open Interp, 23, 37, 38
Original Oratory, 23, 39
Original source, 33, 38
original work, 23
Parents, 11, 16
penalties, 13, 26, 29, 31, 34, 36, 37, 39
physical limitations, 15
plagiarism, 9, 24, 26
Plagiarism, 24
private school, 15
profanity, 24
public school, 15
Restrictions, 17, 18
safety, 11
Scripts, 29, 32, 38, 39
special needs, 14
spreading, 40, 53
submission, 25, 29, 32, 38, 39
timer, 24, 34, 36, 43, 45, 49, 51
Values Debate, 41
Works Cited, 23, 29, 31, 32, 37, 38, 39
younger, 10, 14