

Policy Debate Judging

This is a 2 v 2 debate with an affirmative (“aff”) and negative (“neg”) team. The affirmative typically introduces a plan that defends the resolution. The negative team’s primary job is to negate the aff. This comes in a variety of forms with counterplans, disadvantages, and solvency attacks. The 2023-2024 resolution is: **Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase fiscal redistribution in the United States by adopting a federal jobs guarantee, expanding Social Security, and/or providing a basic income.**

Before the Debate

1. **Let the students into the room.** (they are not allowed into a classroom without an adult)
2. **Take attendance immediately** by reading off the names of the competitors on your list. Do this as an introduction as you are entering the room. You don’t want to judge the wrong competitors.
3. **Get ready. There is no huge rush.** You may take notes using pen and paper or directly on the computer/into the Tabroom ballots.
4. **Address the room** – You should tell them your experience level. It is acceptable to admit to them that you are a first time judge or have limited experience. **They will probably ask for your paradigms. In other words, what are you looking for in the debate round?** Until you begin to know what YOU are looking for in a debate round, this is a good paradigm: *“Do not spread (talk too fast). I am a very inexperienced judge and if I can’t follow your arguments because you are speaking too fast I won’t be able to vote for you.”*

Timing and Format

Format:

8 min - Aff First Construction Speech (1AC)	3 min - Neg Cross-Examination (CX)
8 min - Neg First Construction Speech (1NC)	3 min - Aff Cross-Examination (CX)
8 min - Aff Second Construction Speech (2AC)	3 min - Neg Cross-Examination (CX)
8 min - Neg Second Construction Speech (2NC)	3 min - Aff Cross-Examination (CX)
5 min - Neg First Rebuttal Speech (1NR)	5 min - Aff First Rebuttal Speech (1AR)
5 min - Neg Second Rebuttal Speech (2NR)	5 min - Aff Rebuttal Speech (2AR)

Each team gets 8 min of preparation time that can be used in different chunks at their discretion.

During the Debate

1. Don’t interrupt debaters in the round. Exception: If someone is being exceptionally aggressive or abusive. You can ask them to tone it down.
2. It is okay, especially if you warn them in advance, to say “slow down.” Some judges tell the debaters that they will raise their hand during the debate if they are speaking too fast.
3. Because debaters cannot choose which side of the resolution to advocate, judges must be objective evaluators or both sides of the resolution. Evaluate the round based only on the arguments that the debaters made and not on personal opinions or on arguments you would have made.

4. Take as many notes as possible, especially on the last two speeches (2NR and 2AR).
5. **Don't vote just off "confidence"**, speech clarity, or how the debaters look. Evaluate the content and soundness of their arguments.
6. **Cross-examination** should clarify, challenge, and/or advance arguments. It shouldn't be a reason to select either side. No one can "win" a cross-examination.

Immediately after the Debate

1. They will ask: a) do you have feedback? b) are you going to disclose (tell them who won)
 - o You may disclose if you wish, but you are not required to do so. It is entirely up to you.
 - o Tell debaters the feedback will be on their Tabroom ballots. Please do not spend a lot of time giving them verbal feedback at the end of the round, as it will slow down the tournament!

Alone with Your Ballot

1. **Decide who won the debate. Helps:**

- o Look for major arguments made by one team that were completely ignored by the other team. Each side has the responsibility to respond to all of their opponents' arguments. However, if the argument they responded to does not have that big of an impact, it should not make that big of an impact on your decision.
- o Look for Impacts that outweigh the other teams impacts. The debaters often try to help you decide which impact is more important. Make sure to listen to their reasoning on why their impact is more important. For example, they might argue that saving x amount of lives is more important than helping the economy because lives always come first.
- o Look for weak support or weak logic by one team. This is common. Ensure that the logic and reasoning behind the claims that they make are sound and are defensible.

2. **Write an RFD (Reason for Decision). Templates:**

- o The Aff's impact of _____ outweighs the Neg's impact of _____.
- o Very little support that _____ is true for the Aff. The Neg's argument that _____ is true was well supported and logical.
- o The Neg side completely dropped (failed to address) the Aff's 2nd contention.
- o I was totally confused & didn't understand Neg's argument that _____.

3. **Lastly, enter Speaker Points.**

- o Rank the two debaters 1-4 using a 25-30 scale. One speaker might be a 29 and one speaker might be a 25. NO TIES! Base this score on overall speaking ability including proper volume, diction, body language, confidence, eloquence, etc.

Please Submit your ballot ASAP after a round in order to ensure the tournament keeps moving smoothly.

You can always go back and add more comments later (even after submitting)!