

NITD Youth Parliamentary Debate

Parliamentary Debate, as its name suggests, is modelled on the British Parliamentary System. In this Group event, a team is called either Proposition or Opposition depending on the side it is given. Both sides are comprised of two debaters who are modelled members of the House. In the same way as the Parliament, the Proposition supports the motion while the Opposition opposes it.

RULES AND REGULATIONS:

Debaters of each side try to persuade judges to vote for their side within a limited period of time. Debaters will speak in the following order.

- First Proposition (Prime Minister) Speech 5 minutes
- First Opposition (Leader of the Opposition) Speech 5 minutes
- Second Proposition (Member of the Government) Speech 5 minutes
- Second Opposition (Member of the Opposition) Speech 5 minutes
- Opposition Reply Speech 2 minutes
- Proposition Reply Speech 2 minutes

Constructive Speeches:

The first four speeches are the constructive speeches. In First Proposition Speech, the First

Proposition Speaker defines the terms of the motion and presents a case for debate. The First Opposition Speaker must refute the Proposition's analysis presented by the First Proposition Speaker, and reconstruct their own stance by providing an argumentation which supports their side. Both the speakers can offer Points of Information when they wish to give or are asked for information relevant to what the opponent speaker on the floor has said in his/her constructive speech. The speaker on the floor has the right to accept or decline the point. Next, the purpose of the Reply Speeches is to crystallize all the arguments and show judges why her/his team has won the round. No new constructive arguments may be presented. In a Parliamentary Debate, emphasis is placed on quick thinking and logical argumentation. It requires skills and a sense of humour in order to grab the attention of the audience and persuade them effectively.

Basic Guideline for Debate:

This is a DEBATING competition, not an elocution competition. Therefore, debaters should NOT read out their speeches moreover in this competition intelligent and straightforward definitions of the motions are expected and rewarded. In particular, the definition must be fair to the Opposition and give them an equal case to argue back. The Opposition should accept any definition by the Proposition unless it presents an unreasonable or clearly irrelevant interpretation of the motion, or is true and does not

leave the Opposition a side to argue.

Role of each speaker

A) First Proposition Speaker: It is the duty of the First Proposition Speaker to define the motion, which describes exactly what the basis for the debate will be. This means that the speaker must

(1) explain any ambiguous words, (2) set any limits to the debate, (3) interpret the motion as a whole and state exactly what contention their team is going to try and prove. Furthermore, the First Proposition Speaker must propose the argument(s) to support their case.

B) First Opposition Speaker: The First Opposition Speaker must refute the arguments of the Proposition (perhaps by highlighting inconsistencies or weaknesses) and explain why there is a difference between the two sides. This speaker is the first one to isolate exactly what the debate will be about, by saying which parts of the Proposition case they will agree with and which they choose to dispute. He/she will then go on to explain the structure of the Opposition case and to prove his/her points.

C) Second Proposition and Opposition Speakers: The second speakers on either team should divide their time between countering points made by their opponents and continuing with their side of the argument. At the end of a second speech, a brief summary of the whole argument of their side is recommended.

D) Reply Speeches: The Reply Speech is intended to review the major issues of the debate and to leave a lasting impression in the judges' minds that is favourable to the Reply Speaker's own side. A Reply Speaker goes over the various arguments that have already occurred but implies that her/his own side has won. It is important to concentrate on the major areas of difference between the two sides, rather than trivial points or areas of agreement. Her/his job is to remind the judges "exactly where her/his team disagreed in this debate", and then to prove why her/his team's arguments in those areas are superior. She/he is therefore looking at the debate as a whole rather than simply reviewing the individual points one by one. Remember, no new arguments may be introduced into the Reply Speeches.

1) Format of the debate

- 1.1 The debate will consist of two teams comprised of two debaters per team, a chairperson/timekeeper, and a judge or a panel of judges.
- 1.2 All registered debaters shall comprise members of the House.
- 1.3 All speakers shall address the Chair, using the formula "Mr. (or Madam) Chairperson" or "Madam (or Mr.) Speaker".
- 1.4 Each team will be designated either as Proposition or Opposition.
- 1.5 The motion and the speaking position will be announced 20 minutes prior to the commencement of the debate.
- 1.6 All members of the House will act in a courteous manner during the

debate.

1.7 The debate shall be conducted as follows: CHAIRPERSON / TIME
KEEPER'S INTRODUCTION

First Proposition (Prime Minister) Speech 5 minutes

First Opposition (Leader of the Opposition) Speech 5 minutes

Second Proposition (Member of the Government) Speech 5 minutes

Second Opposition (Member of the Opposition) Speech 5 minutes

Opposition Reply Speech 2 minutes

Proposition Reply Speech 2 minutes

1.8 Only the First Speaker on each team can make the Reply Speech.

1.9 Debaters must not introduce new arguments in Reply Speeches.
However, in the Proposition Reply Speech the speaker may introduce new arguments in his or her refutation only to refute arguments that were first raised in the Second Opposition Speech. New examples, analogies, etc. which support previously introduced arguments are allowed in Reply Speeches.

2) Time management

2.1 Constructive Speeches are 5 minutes. Reply Speeches are 2 minutes.
Debaters should not exceed the above-mentioned time period by more than thirty seconds

2.2 The timekeeper will keep debaters informed of the elapse of time. If the speaker continues for more than thirty seconds, the judge will ask the speaker to stop speaking.

2.3 Time management will be considered in the evaluation.

3) Preparation

3.1 The Preparation time is 30 minutes. After 30 minutes, the debates will start. All debaters, judges, chairpersons/timekeepers must be prepared to start the round at this time.

3.2 During the first 10 minutes, the Proposition team has the right to use the debating room to prepare. The Opposition team may not enter the debating room during this time.

3.3 All debaters must be in the debating room 10 minutes before the commencement of the round.

3.4 Teams must prepare on their own without support from others. Once the motion is announced, debaters must not receive advice from others.

3.5 Only printed and prepared materials and electronic dictionaries may be

used during the 20minute preparation time and the debate. The use of other electronic media, memory, or search devices, including computers and cell phones is not permitted after the release of motions.

4) Defining the motion

4.1 It is the duty of the First Proposition Speaker to define the motion, which describes exactly what the basis for the debate will be. The First Proposition Speaker must

1) explain any ambiguous words, (2) set any limits to the debate, (3) interpret the motion as a whole and state exactly what contention the Proposition side is going to try and prove. Only the First Proposition Speaker can define the motion.

4.2 Once the First Proposition Speaker defines the motion and makes the case statement, the Proposition side must prove the definition, not the motion.

4.3 The definition should be reasonable and must state :

- (i) The issue(s) arising from the motion
- (ii) The meanings of terms in the motion requiring clarification
- (iii) Clear and logical connections with the wording and the context of the motion

4.4 The definition should NOT be:

- (i) Content (matter) stated as fact, i.e. a truism (a claim that is so obvious or self-evident as to be hardly worth mentioning except as a reminder or as a rhetorical or literary device)
- (ii) Circular, i.e. a tautology which proves itself in its own terms and leaves no room for the Opposition to mount a substantive case opposing it
- (iii) Time/place specific, unfairly restricting the Opposition's ability to oppose the definition to a specific time and place
- (iv) A "Squirrel", which presents no clear or logical connections to the motion and thus denies the opposition reasonable access to the content (Matter) of the motion v Too specialized, i.e. requires more specific knowledge of a particular field than an average reasonable person would have

4.5 Only the First Opposition Speaker has the right, but not the obligation, to challenge the definition. The definition can be challenged only in the case when the Proposition infringes upon the prohibitions stated in. If he/she does not challenge the definition, all debaters must accept it.

4.6 The First Opposition Speaker must prove the justification of his/her own proposed definition giving the reasons why the original definition proposed by the Proposition has been rejected.

4.7 The First Opposition Speaker must provide a substitute appropriate definition to the motion.

4.8 The Proposition should not ignore the definition challenge, and the Opposition should not ignore the definition of the Proposition.

5) Points of Information

5.1 Points of Information are offered when a speaker of an opponent team wishes to give or ask for information relevant to what the speaker on the floor has said. For example,

- I. To point out a fact that weakens the opponent's argument.
- II. To indicate a contradictory conclusion.
- III. To show inconsistency between the competitors on a team.
- IV. To ask questions about statements which are not clear.

5.2 Either speaker on the opponent team may make Points of Information during the four Constructive 5-minute Speeches

5.3 Both speakers on a team are strongly encouraged to offer and accept Points of Information during the four Constructive 5-minute Speeches. However, if offered Points of Information are few, it is not absolutely necessary to accept Points of Information. It is a strategic decision for the debaters.

5.4 The first and last minutes of the speech are known as "protected time" and Points of Information may not be offered during this time.

5.5 A Point of Information may not be made during the three-minute Reply Speeches

5.6 To offer a Point of Information, a speaker must stand up and say, "Point of Information" or by any similar expression show that she/he wishes to make a Point of Information. The speaker holding the floor (i.e. giving the Constructive Speech) then has the right to accept or decline the point. If it is declined, the speaker offering the Point of Information must sit down.

5.7 Points of Information must not exceed fifteen seconds in length. The clock is NOT stopped while they are delivered.

5.8 If the Point of Information exceeds fifteen seconds, the speaker on the floor has the right to stop the Point of Information.

6) Points of Order

6.1 Points of Order can be made at any time by any debater to call attention to any violation of Tournament Rules. They must be addressed to the Judge(s).

6.2 Reply Speeches must not offer any new arguments. Points of Order can be offered to call the attention of the judges when any debater finds a new argument during the Reply Speeches except for the refutation of the

Proposition Speaker to the Second Opposition Speaker's new arguments.

- 6.3 The Judge(s) will acknowledge the Points of Order. The clock will be stopped during the Judge(s)' acknowledgement. The Judge(s) will rule on the validity of the Point of Order after the debate has ended and the debaters have left the debating room.

7) Criteria for evaluation

The main criteria for evaluation are

Content (Matter), Strategy (Method) and Style (Manner).

The points which should be evaluated for each criterion are as follows:

7.1 Content (Matter)

- Analysis
- Relevance
- Evidence
- Argumentation
- Refutation
- Point of Information

7.2 Strategy (Method)

- Individual Strategy (Organization of Individual Speeches/ Time Management)

8) 8.1 There would be 8 teams of 2 members each participating in the event. For the preliminary round, they would randomly be divided into 4 pairs. Each team must compete against the other team in that pair to reach the finals. The final round will have four teams with two speakers each. The teams will be further divided into groups of two each. Two of the teams (and hence four speakers) are on the government and two teams are on the opposition. The first two speakers on the government side are called the opening government, the first two on the opposition are called the opening opposition and similarly the last two speakers on the government and the opposition are called the closing government and the closing opposition respectively. Speeches alternate between the two sides, starting with the first government speech, and are usually up to either five or seven minutes in length. All the teams are trying to win the debate outright - this means that it is not the side which wins but a specific team. Hence, speakers within the same team cooperate but teams on the same side do not cooperate during the debate, and instead try to outmanoeuvre each other. The teams are then ranked first to fourth in the debate. Each of the teams has a specific role in the debate.

The final round will also contain an Interrogation round.

8.2 Interrogation Round At the end of the four substantive speeches, the teams shall be asked to cross examine each other in the format of a 1 on 1 interrogation, with one

speaker from the opposition commencing the questioning by choosing any one speaker from the Proposition. Next, one speaker from the Proposition chooses one from the Opposition for interrogation. The same is repeated again with the remaining speakers on either team. Each speaker will question for 3 minutes. The teams are expected to use interrogation as a means of logically exposing errors and inconsistencies in the arguments of the opposing side.

8.3 Guidelines for Interrogation:

Introduction of new lines of argument is not allowed in the interrogation round, though new examples are permitted. Any such matter introduced in the interrogation round will be ignored by the adjudicators.

Both questions and answers should be kept brief and to the point. The Chairperson can step in if he or she feels that a speaker is stalling or wasting time.

The examining team may request the Chair to interrupt the answering team in the event of the following:

- o That the latter is wasting time
- o That the latter is introducing matter irrelevant to the question
- o That the latter is introducing arguments not previously stated in their constructive speeches.

The Chair may or may not accept the request. The decision of the Chair will be final.

The Chair may direct the examining team to keep their questioning precise and brief, in the event that the questions are being used to further expand their case.

The Chair may choose to disqualify questions that are deemed irrelevant to the purpose and scope of the debate.

Under exceptional circumstances, the team being examined may ask the Chair to intervene if they feel that are not being given enough time to answer.

9) Time Limits

Each Substantive speech – 5 Minutes (6 minutes for final round)

The speaker will be given half a minute count on request. The timekeeper/Chairperson will give a single knock of the gravel at the completion of the first minute, another single knock at the completion of the 4 and a half minutes (5 and a half minute for final round) and two knocks after five minutes (6 minutes for final round).

Each speaker will get a grace period of 30 seconds. Any points made by the speaker

after that shall be ignored by the adjudicators.

Once the Prime Minister completes his/her speech, the Leader of Opposition will get a minute to prepare. The other speakers will not be given any preparation time. In the final round, both teams will get a common minute to prepare for the Interrogation session. Both teams will get a common minute on completion of the Interrogation round to prepare their Reply speeches.

Each session of Interrogation – 3 Minutes (ONLY FOR FINAL ROUND)

The Chairperson/timekeeper shall inform the examiner that he/she can ask one more question at the 2 minutes mark.

Each Reply speech – 2 Minutes (3 minutes for final round)

The Chairperson/timekeeper will give a single knock of the gavel at the completion of the first minute, another single knock at the completion of the second minute (third minute for final round). Each speaker will get a grace period of 30 seconds.

Debaters will speak in the following order for the final round.

- First Proposition (Prime Minister) Speech 5+1 minutes
- First Opposition (Leader of the Opposition) Speech 5+1 minutes
- Second Proposition (Member of the Government) Speech 5+1 minutes
- Second Opposition (Member of the Opposition) Speech 5+1 minutes
- Proposition interrogation 3 minutes
- Opposition interrogation 3 minutes
- Opposition Reply Speech 2+1 minutes
- Proposition Reply Speech 2+1 minutes