

## CONGRESS JUDGING CHECKLIST

This is a general checklist designed for on-line tournaments that can be used for in-person tournaments. Instead of a Judges' Lounge, some tournaments ask judges to report to another room such as a Cafeteria. Refer to each tournament's LiveDoc or emails for tournament-specific procedures and round start times.

### Before the round:

1. Report to the Judges' Lounge.
2. Check text/email for an assignment.
3. **If no assignment is received in text/email:**
  - a. Confirm in Tabroom.com under "Current Ballots and Panels."
  - b. Refresh your page several times.
  - c. Still no assignment? Wait in Judges' Lounge until dismissed.
  - d. Return to Judges' Lounge before the next blast for your format as outlined in the tournament schedule to avoid fines for missing judges.
4. **If you received an assignment:**
  - a. Click on "Current Ballots and Panels" on your Tabroom.com page.
  - b. Hit the "Start" button immediately.
  - c. Report to the competition room through the blue camera link.

### During the round:

1. Have multiple windows open.
2. The round should not begin until the Parliamentarian and all judges are present, have hit "Start," and have completed a tech check.
3. Mute your microphone if it hasn't already been muted.
4. Remain on the Speeches tab throughout the session.
5. Students will elect a Presiding Officer.
6. Provide comments and feedback as well as a score for the Presiding Officer.
  - a. Choose their name from the "Select a speaker" drop-down menu.
  - b. Click the button next to "Presiding Officer" to turn it to "Y."
  - c. Complete Comments & feedback based on how they started the round.
  - d. Give a point score for their performance up to this point on a scale from 1-6. See next to last page for Presiding Officer Rubric or [click here](#).)
7. Before speakers begin, open their ballots.
  - a. Find the speaker's name under the "Select a speaker" drop down menu.
  - b. Click on their name to open their ballot page.

- c. Type in the topic of the bill.
- d. Choose the side that the speaker is speaking on.
- e. Be sure the Presiding Officer button shows “N.”
8. Take notes/type feedback during each speech.
  - a. Use a word processor (Word, Docs).
  - b. **Do not type notes on your ballot.**
9. Complete the ballot for each speech.
  - a. Copy and paste your commentary in the “Comments & feedback” text box.
  - b. Give a point score for the speech on a scale from 1-6. (See last page for scoring rubric or [click here.](#))
10. Click “Save New Speech.”
11. Repeat the process with the next speaker. (See step 7 above.) Be sure that the correct name is displayed in the “Select a speaker” box.

#### **After the round:**

1. Provide comments and feedback for the **Presiding Officer**.
2. Click on the “Rankings” tab.
3. Rank the speakers and Presiding Officer with 1 being the best in the session up to 8. All others receive a rank of 9.
4. **Submit Ballot ASAP!**
5. Confirm your ballot.
6. Wait until you see the confirmation message and then click “Return Home.”
7. Return to the Judges’ Lounge.
8. If you need to edit comments, return to the ballot and do so ASAP. Your ballot must be completed before the tournament ends.
9. Wait in the Judges’ Lounge until the next round or the end of the tournament.

**THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR VOLUNTEERING TO JUDGE!**

## Congressional Debate Rubric: Presiding

This table of evaluation standards may be used by any judge who would like assistance in determining scores for a presiding officer (PO). Each scorer independently (without collaborating) awards 1 to 6 points for each hour of presiding.

| Points                  | 1-2<br>Weak – Mediocre  | 3-4<br>Proficient   | 5-6<br>Excellent – Superior  |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|
| Speaker Recognition     | The PO needs to improve his/her communication with fellow delegates to gain their trust and respect relating to the rationale for rulings made. Frequent errors are made in speaker recognition, which lacks consistent method or impartiality. | While the PO does not adequately explain his/her preferences for running the chamber in advance, he/she does clearly explain rulings, when necessary. Speaker recognition may be somewhat inconsistent or biased. | Presiding preferences are clearly explained at the beginning of the session and executed consistently. The PO is universally respected and trusted by his/her peers, and is consistent in recognition (very few errors) and rulings, distributing speeches throughout the room, equally between schools of the same size, and among individuals. |
| Parliamentary Procedure | The PO's knowledge of parliamentary procedure is lacking, and he/she shows negligible effort to correct errors and/or consult written rules.  | The PO demonstrates competency in procedure, but makes mistakes in determining the results of motions and votes, etc. S/he does not hesitate to consult rules when necessary to ensure fairness.                  | The PO has command of parliamentary procedure (motions) and uses this almost transparently to run a fair and efficient chamber, seldom consulting written rules and ruling immediately on whether motions pass or fail.  |
| Delivery/ Presence      | The PO needs to improve his/her vocal and physical presence and professional demeanor.  | The PO displays a satisfactory command of the chamber in his/her vocal and physical presence. Word choice is usually concise. The PO generally has command over the chamber.                                      | The PO dynamically displays a command and relates well to the chamber through his/her vocal and physical presence. Word choice is economical and eloquent. The PO does not hesitate to rule abusive or inappropriate motions out of order.   |

### Speaker Recognition Rules:

1. When more than one speaker seeks the floor, the presiding officer must follow the *precedence/recency* method:
  - a. First recognize students who have not spoken during the session
  - b. Next recognize students who have spoken fewer times
  - c. Then recognize students who spoke earlier (least recently)
2. During any session, precedence/recency should not reset, to ensure that all students in a chamber have an equal opportunity to speak and receive evaluation from scorers. When a new session begins, precedence/recency will be reset along with a new seating chart, and election of a presiding officer.
3. Before precedence is established, the presiding officer should explain his/her recognition process and it must be fair, consistent and justifiable. **They may not use the following methods:**
  - a. Number of motions and/or questions (*activity*)
  - b. Number of times a speaker has risen to seek recognition (*longest standing or standing time*)

### Presiding Officers and Motions

The presiding officer should pause briefly between speeches to recognize any motions from the floor, however, he/she should not call for motions (at the beginning of a session, the presiding officer should remind members to seek his/her attention between speeches).



## Congressional Debate Rubric: Speaking

This table of evaluation standards may be used by any judge who would like assistance in determining scores for speeches. Each scorer independently (without collaborating) awards 1 to 6 points for each speech. Each speaker has up to three minutes to present arguments followed by a questioning period (the time length for which will vary, depending on specific league rules). Remember, you **do not base your score on agreement or disagreement with the positions they debaters offer; rather, evaluate based upon how well the debaters argue their positions.**

| Points                                     | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6   |
|--|--|--|--|---|
|  | Mediocre   | Proficient   | Excellent  | Superior  |
| Content: Organization, Evidence & Language | The speech lacked a clear thesis and organizational structure. Claims are only asserted with generalizations and no real evidence. Language use is unclear or ineffective. | While the speaker's purpose is present, the speech lacks logical organization and/or developed ideas. Analysis of evidence, if present, fails to connect its relevance to the speaker's claims. Use of language is weak. | While a clear purpose is apparent, organization may be somewhat loose (weak introduction/conclusion; no transitions between points). Diction represents a grasp of language. Much evidence is presented, but not in a persuasive or effective manner; or the speaker relies on one piece of evidence, but does so effectively. | Content is clearly and logically organized, and characterized by depth of thought and development of ideas, supported by a variety of credible quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (testimony) evidence analyzed effectively to draw conclusions. Compelling language, a poignant introduction and conclusion and lucid transitions clearly establish the speaker's purpose and frame the perspective of the issue's significance. |
| Argument & Refutation                      | The speaker offers mostly unwarranted assertions, which often simply repeat/rehash previous arguments.   | The speaker fails to either introduce new arguments (simply repeating previous arguments) or the speaker fails to refute previous opposing arguments; in other words, no real clash is present.                          | New ideas and response to previous arguments are offered, but in an unbalanced manner (too much refutation or too many new arguments). Questions are answered adequately.  | The speaker contributes to the spontaneity of debate, effectively synthesizing response and refutation of previous ideas with new arguments. If the speaker fields questions, he/she responds with confidence and clarity.  |
| Delivery                                   | Little eye contact, gestures and/or movement are present. Vocal presentation is inarticulate due to soft volume or lack of enunciation.                                    | Presentation is satisfactory, yet unimpressively read (perhaps monotonously) from prepared notes, with errors in pronunciation and/or minimal eye contact. Awkward gestures/movement may be distracting.                 | The presentation is strong, but contains a few mistakes, including problems with pronunciation and enunciation. The speech may be partially read with satisfactory fluency. Physical presence may be awkward at times.   | The speaker's vocal control and physical poise are polished, deliberate, crisp and confident. Delivery should be extemporaneous, with few errors in pronunciation. Eye contact is effective and consistent.   |

**Scores of less than three (3) are discouraged**, and should be reserved for such circumstances as abusive language, a degrading personal attack on another legislator, or for a speech that is extremely brief (less than 45 seconds) or delivered without purpose or dignity for the cause exhorted by the legislation. Substantial written comments and description of specific incidents should accompany such scores.