

Unit 10

Judging Instructions

Congress judges assess quality of research and analysis of issues, argumentation (including advancing debate), skill in asking and answering questions, use of parliamentary procedure, and clarity of delivery.

Types of Judges

All judges evaluate and rank independent of each other.

- **Parliamentarian:** sits in the front of the room, next to the presiding officer (PO); responsible for starting a session, advising PO, ensuring fairness; and holistically assesses debate. At the end of the last preliminary round (or end of elimination round), ranks through total participating legislators.
- **Scorer:** sits in the rear or side of the room, and evaluates every speech, as well as PO's performance. At the end of the round, they rank the 1st through 8th best legislators (which may include PO).



Role of the Presiding Officer (PO)

Students elect peers to this *leadership* position, entrusting them with facilitating debate through **recognizing speeches, questions, and motions** in a *fair* and *efficient* manner. These leaders **sacrifice** their opportunity to speak in service to colleagues.

- Weak POs erode a chamber's capacity for meaningful debate. Lack of order leads to chaos.
- Effective POs are rare, because experienced contestants shy away from presiding. This is a direct result of the perception that judges won't rank POs

because either they don't understand the value of the position or they are uncertain as to how to compare the PO to other competitors in the room.

- **When a judge does not rank the PO, they must include an explanation as to why the PO failed to keep order in the chamber or demonstrated a lack of leadership.**

Presiding Standards for Evaluation

- **Speaker Recognition:** methods are clearly explained at the beginning of the session and executed consistently. The PO 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:** command of parliamentary procedure (motions) to transparently run a fair and efficient session, seldom consulting written rules and ruling immediately on whether motions pass or fail, but consulting the parliamentarian when necessary to ensure accuracy.
- **Delivery/Presence:** dynamically fosters order and trust, and relates to peers well through vocal and physical presence. Word choice is economical and eloquent. The PO does not hesitate to rule abusive or inappropriate motions out of order. they foster trust by peers.

Presiding Officer Essentials

Speaker Recognition/Priority Rules:

1. When more than one speaker seeks the floor, the PO should:
 - a. First recognize students who have **not spoken** during the session
 - b. Next recognize students who have spoken **fewer times** (precedence)
 - c. Then recognize students who spoke **earlier** (least recently – recency)
 - d. Before above benchmarks are established—use a fair, consistent, and justifiable process.

2. The PO should open the round clearly explaining recognition process – and they should stick to it!
3. Within a round, precedence/recency does not reset, to ensure all students have equal opportunity to speak and receive evaluation. A new round begins with resetting of speaker priority, legislation not previously debated at that tournament, a new seating chart, and election of a presiding officer.

Motions: PO should pause briefly between speeches to recognize motions, and **not call** for them (at the beginning of a round, the PO may remind members to seek their attention between speeches).

Gaveling: appropriate times for the PO to gavel—to call the session to order, to denote when speaking/questioning time has lapsed, for speech time signals, and to establish order when decorum is lost. POs should **not** gavel for recognizing speakers or questioners – that only encourages *athleticism* and *ableism* for speakers to stand the fastest by emulating the start of a race.

Types of Speeches

– all equal value, and all demonstrate different skill sets.

- **Authorship/Sponsorship:** constructs advocacy by explaining need for the legislation to **solve/mitigate** a *problem*, and how it will do that.

- **First Negative:** constructs opposition by explaining how attempting to solve/mitigate a problem with the legislation will fail to meet objectives or will make the problem worse.
- **Rebuttal:** directly refutes opponents' *arguments* by explaining why they are incorrect – and **not** simply listing names of opposing legislators and/or saying they're wrong.
- **Extension:** taking a previous argument on the same side and extending the concept to a related concept or more in-depth exploration. These speeches are not rehash if new nuance is introduced.

Speeches may be a combination of rebuttal and extension.

- **Crystallization:** summarizing positions of both sides, and weighing the impacts to prove why one side wins over the other. This speech establishes key voting issues in the round.

Types of Questioning Periods

- **Traditional** – preliminary rounds – one delegate may ask one question at a time
- **Direct** – elimination rounds – questioning periods divided into 30-sec. blocks of exchange between the questioner and floor speaker.

Scoring Speaking and Presiding

- 6 – *Exemplary:* may have slight, nuanced room for improvement (recommend if necessary)
- 5 – *Accomplished:* could use a few improvements (suggest tactics)
- 4 – *Competent:* meets expectations, but should develop more depth/knowledge (offer specifics)
- 3 – *Developing:* barely meets minimum standards, and requires more growth (explain in detail)
- 2 – *Emerging:* underdeveloped skills [short arguments; lack of evidence] (describe what is needed)
- 1 – *Unacceptable:* offensive mockery or attack of peers, or (for speeches) spoke on wrong side

Going over time: When speakers extend beyond 3 minutes, their score should be lowered, and they should be downranked for monopolizing time by decreasing opportunities for others to speak.

Speaking Standards for Evaluation

- **Content**— organization, evidence and language: logical arrangement of ideas; depth of thought; support from a variety of credible quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (expert testimony) evidence analyzed to draw conclusions; compelling language; memorable introduction and conclusion; and cohesive



transitions to establish speaker's purpose and frame perspective of the issue's significance.

- **Argument & Refutation:** arguments have clear claims, are substantiated with sound, analysis and evidence, and explain the impact on those affected; these ideas are either new/fresh, or clear extensions rather than mere repetition of what has already been said; refutation of opposing arguments actually disproves them, rather than simply listening and saying they're wrong; answers to questions are given in similar structure.

- **Delivery:** vocal control and physical poise are deliberate, crisp and confident. Delivery should be extemporaneous and engaging others in the room, with few errors in pronunciation. Eye contact is effective and consistent.

Dispelling Myths of Congressional Debate

- Debate exists to advance arguments. ***Students should be prepared on both sides of legislation.*** One of the skills of Congressional Debate is being able to flip one's points if one really wants to give a speech on a particular piece of legislation, and more students seek

the opposite position. Hence, one-sided debate is highly frowned upon. If everyone is in agreement, then there is no debate!

- Students should feel comfortable ***moving the previous question*** when debate has become one-sided or debate has become stale – even if other students wish to speak. This is not rude,
- **IMPORTANT: Students do NOT need to speak on each item of legislation.** In fact, many tournaments limit debate on each legislation to prevent this from happening, and this also gives students the ability to not speak on a topic that might be a personal trigger for them.
- There is no “minimum cycle”, nor a “maximum cycle” rule, except at *certain* tournaments.
- There are **not** motions to “open the floor for debate,” “open the floor for presiding officer nominations,” nor “open the floor for agenda nominations.” These are part of the normal, established order of business for Congressional Debate, so the PO simply announces they will do these things.

RECENCY TABLE AND FRACTIONS OF VOTING

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# VOTES CAST	MAJORITY	TWO-THIRDS	ONE-THIRD
8	5	6	3
9	5	6	3
10	6	7	4
11	6	8	4
12	7	8	4
13	7	9	5

# VOTES CAST	MAJORITY	TWO-THIRDS	ONE-THIRD
14	8	10	5
15	8	10	5
16	9	11	6
17	9	12	6
18	10	12	6
19	10	13	7

# VOTES CAST	MAJORITY	TWO-THIRDS	ONE-THIRD
20	11	14	7
21	11	14	7
22	12	15	8
23	12	16	8
24	13	16	8
25	13	17	9