

PHSSL Parliamentary Debate - Judge Instruction Sheet

Thanks for agreeing to judge this round of Parliamentary Debate. Please know that the event is evolving with every round debated and you are an important part of that. Please address any comments on the event to the PHSSL Office.

Beginning a Round

You may be asked to judge a Prepared Debate or an **Extemporaneous** Debate.

- If you are judging a **Prepared** round, students knew the resolution well before this day of competition. Unless the sides of the debate are specified on the schematic, you will need to conduct a coin flip to see which team will be The Government (in favor of the motion) and which team will be The Opposition (against the motion.) Teams are allowed to bring any materials and computers, if they wish, into these Prepared Rounds.
- If you are judging an **Extemporaneous** round, students knew the topic areas ahead of time – but are just seeing the exact motion for debate for the first time. Conduct a coin flip to see which side each team will debate: The Government or The Opposition. Announce the beginning of the 15-minute prep time. Give students 15 minutes to prepare. During this time they are allowed to use any resources including technology that they have available. Teams may want to go to different parts of the room so that they are not disturbed by their opponents' work. Hand your ballot to each team and ask them to fill in their team code and the speaker names.

Format of a Round

First Speaker for The Government – 6 minutes

First Speaker for The Opposition – 6 minutes

Second Speaker for The Government – 6 minutes

Second Speaker for The Opposition – 6 minutes

Third Speaker for The Government – 6 minutes

Third Speaker for The Opposition – 6 minutes

Reply Speech for The Opposition – 3 minutes

Reply Speech for The Government – 3 minutes

There is no extra time for preparation once the debate begins.

Unique Feature of Parliamentary Debate -- Points of Information

- The most unusual feature of this debate is the ability of any member of the opposing team (the interrupter) to question the speaker. In fact, that is where most clash comes from. Points of Information are the only interruptions to a student's speech that PHSSL rules recognize.
- The speaker who has the floor is in total control of the time and may either accept the Point of Information from the interrupter or decline it.
- If the Point is accepted, the interrupter may make a short point or ask a short question (15 seconds or less) that deals with some issue in the debate.

- A Point of Information is offered by standing and saying “Point of Information” or similar.
- The speaker on the floor is not obliged to accept every point. He may ask the interrupter to sit down, may finish the sentence and then accept the point, or may accept the point immediately.
- Debaters must sometimes tread a fine line between the offering legitimate Points and overwhelming the speaker. Points should advance the debate, not merely interrupt it.
- The first and last minute of each main speech and the entire reply speech is “protected time” – Points of Information are not allowed during these times.

Timing the Debate

The first minute and last minute of each speech is protected time. No Points of Information can be offered during those times. Minutes two through five are open to Points of Information. Agree with the speakers before the round begins what signals you will use. Many judges find it useful to “knock” on the table at the one-minute point and the five-minute point of the main speeches to signal that protected time has ended and has begun.

There is no grace period for the speeches. After time expires, speakers ought to be allowed to finish their sentence but then must stop speaking.