

IV. RULES OF LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

A. General

1. Lincoln-Douglas Debate is a form of two-person debate that focuses on values, their inter-relationships, and their relationship to issues of contemporary human concern. The focus is not upon facts to be ascertained or policies to be implemented, although such matters can be referred to as supporting material. Rather, the Lincoln-Douglas Debate should require the students to explain in a persuasive manner the most important values and criteria for judgement about the resolution under debate.

2. Lincoln-Douglas Debate seeks to encourage the development of the following skills in the debater:

a. Understanding of the nature and functioning of values in human activity;

b. Use of logic in reasoning;

c. Development of cross examination skills;

d. Emphasis on reasoning and understanding;

e. Moderate rate of delivery;

f. Reasonable demeanor and style of presentation.

3. The resolution is a statement about a valuable or important issue of contemporary human concern. It should clearly demand defense or attack because it takes a position on a fundamental issue about human nature or behavior that has social, political or individual ramifications. One student shall defend the proposition on the affirmative; one student shall attack it on the negative.

4. The resolution is a statement of value which contains at least two terms: an object of evaluation and an evaluative term. The object for evaluation is the general topic area under consideration; the evaluative term is the descriptive word or phrase by which we are asked to measure it. Thus, in the resolution "Social security is more important than military security," social security is the object of evaluation, and more important than military security is the evaluative term.

5. All debates must be based upon a values resolution selected by the Tournament Director. All levels of Lincoln-Douglas Debate will debate the same resolution for all rounds of the Tournament. Debaters must be prepared on both sides of the resolution.

6. The format of the debate shall be as follows:

Affirmative Constructive	6 Minutes
Negative Cross Examination	3 Minutes
Negative Constructive	7 Minutes
Affirmative Cross Examination	3 Minutes
First Affirmative Rebuttal	4 Minutes
Negative Rebuttal	6 Minutes
Second Affirmative Rebuttal	3 Minutes

7. A judge's decision should be based upon:

a. **Skill in analysis.** This includes not only the analysis of the resolution but also analysis of the debate argumentation as it progresses. The analytical debater is able to get quickly to the essence of the question.

b. **Use of evidence.** In Lincoln-Douglas Debate, arguments should be supported with appropriate evidence such as examples, facts, analogies, and/or references to authorities. Logical reasoning may also be used to defend arguments. There is no need for overwhelming statistical support of values positions.

c. **Validity of evidence.** If a debater falsifies evidence in support of a point, he/she shall lose the point. If the falsification is obviously deliberate, the judge shall impose an additional penalty according to the seriousness of the falsification.

d. **Validity of argument.** This includes reasoning and conclusions drawn from the evidence presented.

e. **Clarity of organization.** This includes clear outlining of constructive arguments and easily followed handling of refutation.

f. **Effectiveness of delivery.** This includes all matters pertaining to oral presentation, with special emphasis upon the ability to speak in an extemporaneous manner.

g. **Strength and conviction.** In the final analysis, the debate should be decided on the strength and convincingness of the debater's arguments.

8. A judge's decision in Lincoln-Douglas Debate should not be based upon:

a. **The merits of the debate resolution.** The judge should not be influenced by prejudices in favor of or against the resolution.

b. **Partiality.** The judge should not be influenced by the reputation of either debater, his/her school or coach.

c. **Preconceived notions or arguments.** The judge should not allow an idea of what the best affirmative or negative arguments or cases may be to influence the decision.

d. **Personal preferences on debating style.** A judge should not penalize a debater if his/her style, either in delivery or case construction, differs from that which the judge personally prefers. All styles should be evaluated on the basis of effectiveness in winning conviction.

9. Once a debater has stated a position, he/she should not change it during the debate.

10. Any restatement or quotation of an opponent's argument should be accurate. A speaker who misconstrues an argument unintentionally should not be penalized more than the time wasted. If it is intentional, the debater should, in addition, forfeit the argument.

11. A judge should not discredit an argument as fallacious unless the fallacy is exposed by the opposition or the argument contradicts common sense or generally accepted knowledge, except in the last affirmative rebuttal, when the judge should discredit upon discovering the fallacy.

12. All debaters should be courteous to their opponents and their judges. Discourtesy should be penalized according to the seriousness of the offense.

13. Visual aids are permissible in a debate. Once introduced, they become available to the opponent's use.

14. A debater is entitled to see a copy of any evidence read by the opponent during the round. However, judges are prohibited from reading evidence unless falsification is suspected and raised by the opposition and the original source in question is available in the round.

15. Each debater shall be entitled to four minutes of preparation time during each debate.

16. When a speaker's time has expired, the judge shall disregard anything beyond a closing statement.

17. In the absence of a timekeeper, the judge shall keep speaking time. The judge shall keep all preparation time.

18. The judge should not give oral critique during the tournament nor reveal any debate decisions. After the tournament, the judge may give an oral critique to any debater.

B. Constructive Speeches

1. The affirmative may define the terms of the resolution in any reasonable manner. The negative may dispute the affirmative definitions. In case of dispute, the affirmative definitions should be accepted if they are supported by recognized authorities or logical argumentation.

2. The affirmative should state the importance of the resolution and/or the values it contains. The affirmative should also focus on the core value(s) that will form the criterion or criteria of judgement in the debate.

3. The affirmative should present reasonable arguments to support the values in the resolution, showing how these meet the proposed criterion or criteria of judgment in the debate.

4. Appropriate evidence to support arguments should be presented.

5. The negative should attack both the values in the resolution and the affirmative's interpretation and defense of the resolution.

6. The negative may present a different value or values to act as a criterion or criteria of judgment, showing how his/her value(s) go beyond those of the affirmative or are superior to those of the affirmative.

C. Cross Examination

1. The purposes of cross examination include clarifying an obscure point in an opponent's case, exposing factual errors or unsupported assertions, and obtaining damaging admissions. It should not be used (as it is in law) to attack the personal integrity of the witness. Questions should add substance to the debate.
2. The attitudes of both the questioner and the witness should appear to be reasonable, cooperative, and eager to please. Neither one should practice unpalatable sarcasm, obvious "stalling," or brow-beating of the opponent.
3. The value of any cross examination decreases unless the results are tied to later speeches. Admissions or information gained through cross examination must be used in subsequent speeches in order to count in determining the winning debater. The cross examination should be an integral part of the debate and not a "side-show."
4. Both questions and answers should be of a reasonable length.
5. Both speakers must talk to the audience and/or judge(s).
6. During cross examination, the questioner:
 - a. Controls the time and may interrupt the witness to request shorter or more direct answers, or to indicate that the answer he/she has given is sufficient.
 - b. Must ask fair and relevant questions. He/she should neither comment on the answers, argue with the witness, nor make speeches. The debater should use this time for questioning alone, not for either constructive argument or summary. In fact, a conclusion is all the more effective if the audience reaches it without the questioner's help.
 - c. Should have sufficient scope in the questions asked. Since the time is his/her's, he/she may waste time if he/she wishes. The witness should answer even if the significance or relevance of the question is not immediately apparent to him/her.
 - d. May not insist on a simple "yes" or "no" answer unless his/her question is simple, direct and factual. Questions about why something is true are necessarily complicated, and the questioner cannot expect the witness to answer them briefly.

e. Should phrase questions with the verb first, then the subject, and finally the object or modifying phrases and/or clauses: e.g. “Do you admit that Joseph R. McCarthy was the Junior Senator from Wisconsin?” He/she should avoid negative questions or any phrasing with “not”: e.g. “Do you not know that there have been 37 violations of the Korean Truce by the Red Chinese?” The answers to questions of this sort can only be confusing.

f. May remind the audience and the witness of a relevant fact by beginning the question “are you aware that...” or “are you familiar with...” However, the questioner’s motive in putting such questions should be to put the witness on record concerning the statement involved and not to present material of his/her own.

7. During the cross examination, the witness:

a. Must answer directly and briefly any legitimate question susceptible to a simple answer.

b. May refuse to answer any tricky, unfair or irrelevant question if the witness has a good reason for doing so. The judge will be the final determiner of whether or not a question is permissible.

c. May ask questions to clarify a question or may ask the questioner to stop giving speeches or to continue questioning.

d. Must confine responses to answers and not make arguments or ask questions, except to clarify.

e. Must answer questions without consulting anyone or offering the excuse that the question will be answered in a later speech.

f. May clarify a question if to do so is appropriate. The witness cannot be restricted to a “yes” or “no” answer if a longer response is appropriate.

g. Should not be penalized for ignorance of obscure information but should be expected to know the answers to questions directly related to information presented by him or her during the debate.

8. When time expires,

a. A question that has not been fully asked must be dropped.

b. A question that has been fully asked must be answered.

c. The questioner may pursue, and the witness must answer, a line of questioning that was legitimately begun prior to the expiration of time.

D. Rebuttals

1. The judge(s) shall disregard new arguments introduced in rebuttal, unless the rebuttal is the first opportunity to respond to a question or a new argument.

2. New evidence to support old arguments may be introduced.

3. The affirmative must reply to the major negative arguments before the last rebuttal; otherwise, the negative, having no speech in which to reply, is unfairly handicapped.

4. In each of the rebuttals, it is the responsibility of the speaker both to defend his/her own case from the attacks thus far made by the opponent and to attack the case of the opponent itself. In general, clash is an essential feature. An argument left untouched by the opponent must stand.

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