



## Adjudicator Manual

### Introduction: World Schools Style

Each debate has two teams. Each team has three debaters, who each speak once. After each speaker has spoken once, each team has one reply speech. This can be given by the first or second speaker on the team. The reply speech is half the length of the main speeches. During the main speeches the opposing team can offer points of information (see section 5). However, no points of information may be offered during the reply speeches.

### The Mark Sheet

In 1993 the World Schools Debating Council adopted a standard mark sheet. Marks are awarded to each speaker as follows:

<b>Content</b>	40
<b>Style</b>	40
<b>Strategy</b>	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	100

In the reply speeches, the marks are halved. There is no global mark for teamwork. Please note that although the official marking standard is out of 100, in practice marks are only awarded between 60 and 80 (see pages 8-9 for a more detailed discussion of this practice).

### Content

Content covers the arguments that are used, divorced from the speaking style. It is as if you are seeing the arguments written down rather than spoken. You must assess the weight of the arguments without being influenced by the magnificence of the orator that presented them.

Content will also include an assessment of the weight of rebuttal or clash. This assessment must be done from the standpoint of the average reasonable person.

The adjudicator's job is to assess the strength of an argument regardless of whether the other team is able to knock it down. If a team introduces a weak argument, it will not score highly in content even if the other team doesn't refute it. Two consequences flow from this, however:

First, if a major team argument is plainly weak, an opposing team which doesn't refute it may well have committed a greater sin than the team which introduced it. In effect the team has let the other team get away with a weak argument. This is not an automatic rule, but is true in many cases. Of

course, it must be a major argument, not a minor example which the opposing team correctly chooses to ignore in favour of attacking more significant points.

Second, adjudicators have to be careful not to be influenced by their own beliefs and prejudices, nor by their own specialised knowledge. For example, if you are a lawyer and you know that a team's argument was debunked by the International Court of Justice last week, you should probably not take into account this special knowledge unless the ICJ's decision was a matter of extreme public notoriety.

## Style

The term is perhaps misleading. Adjudicators are not looking for speakers who are *stylish*, but rather they are looking at the *style* of the speakers.

Style covers the way the speakers speak. As has already been noted, this can be done in many ways, in funny accents and with the use of strange terminology. Put the strangeness out of your mind and be tolerant of different ways of presenting arguments.

There are some particular things that you need to be warned about in advance:

For some teams, English is a second language and there are occasionally strong accents, odd words and (once or twice) a pause while the speaker thinks how to express the thought in English.

*This doesn't matter!*

Of course a speaker's style may cease to be an expression of a particular national debating style and become intensely irritating to everyone. For example there is still a speed limit on speaking. But be tolerant of differences, and only intervene when a speaker's style has gone beyond what everyone would accept. Some general guidelines for good style include:

- Is the speaker audible?
- Does the speaker make eye contact with the audience?
- Does the speaker vary his/her tone and pitch to add emphasis to the arguments?
- Does the speaker talk too fast for everything to be understood?
- Is the speaker fluent?
- Does the speaker have any annoying physical tics (e.g. repetitive hand gestures), or does s/he look comfortable and confident?

## Strategy

Strategy requires some attention. It covers two concepts:

1. The **structure and timing** of the speech, and
2. Whether the speaker understood the **issues** of the debate.

These matters are sufficiently important to justify taking them separately.

## Structure and timing

A good speech has a clear beginning, middle and end. Along the way there are signposts to help us see where the speaker is going. The sequence of arguments is logical and flows naturally from point to point. This is as true of a first speaker outlining the government case as it is of the third speaker rebutting the government case. Good speech structure, therefore, is one component of strategy.

Timing is also important, but it must not be taken to extremes. There are two aspects to timing.

1. Speaking within the allowed time limit, and
2. Giving an appropriate amount of time to the issues in the speech.

As to the first, a speaker who goes significantly over time ought to get a penalty. Equally, a speaker who goes significantly under time in most cases would get a similar penalty. Bear in mind, however, that timing is only one element of strategy. A speaker whose only sin is to go over time might still get a reasonable strategy mark if every other aspect of strategy was quite outstanding. It would not be a brilliant mark - there would still be a penalty - but it would not automatically be a very low mark either. It all depends how good the rest of the elements of strategy were.

As to the second, a speaker ought to give priority to important issues and leave unimportant ones for later. It is generally a good idea for a speaker dealing with rebuttal to begin with the attack on the other side before going on to the speaker's positive case. This is because it is more logical to get rid of the opposing argument first before trying to put something in its place.

A speaker should also give more time to important issues. If there is a critical point that buttresses the whole of that team's case, it ought to get a fair amount of time so that it can be properly established. But if there is a point that is fairly trivial, it doesn't deserve more than a trivial amount of time.

So the adjudicator must weigh up not only the strength of the arguments in the content category, but also the proper time and priority that was given to them in the strategy category.

## Understanding the issues

Closely related to the last point is that debaters should understand what the important issues were in the debate. It is a waste of time for a rebuttal to deal with trivial points if crucial arguments are left unanswered. Such a speaker would not understand the important issues of the debate, and should not score well in strategy. By contrast, a speaker who understood what the important issues were and dealt with them thoroughly should score well in strategy.

It is very important that adjudicators understand the difference between strategy and content. Imagine a debate where a speaker answers the critical issues with some weak rebuttal. This speaker should get poor marks for *content*, because the rebuttal was weak. But the speaker should get reasonable marks for *strategy*, because the right arguments were being addressed.

## Logical Argument

There are two ways to prove that a proposition is true.

1. You can look at every known instance and show that in each case the proposition's arguments hold.
2. You can analyse the proposition and show that it is supported by other known principles.

In debating it is usually impossible to use the first type of reasoning, because we debate generalisations with millions if not billions of known instances. So, we have to use the second type of reasoning.

## Three-a-Side Debating

Schools' debating is not just a British Parliamentary debate with an extra speaker on each side. There is a clear progression from the opening speaker who presents entirely new material to the closing speaker who deals entirely with what has been said by the previous speakers. Each team has to work closely together, and understand that they are members of a team rather than individuals.

We can all agree on that part, but there are two particular issues that have arisen in previous tournaments that need some further discussion.

## The Case Division

With three speakers on a team, the positive argument has to be divided between the first two (and perhaps the third proposition as well). This sounds very simple, but there is one major principle that must be looked at more closely.

The division cannot be along the steps of the team case, but instead has to be along some other lines. It can be on significant themes, or (less attractively) on examples. The problem with this division is that both speakers would be repeating the same major argument and merely using different examples to illustrate it. To that extent it might be repetitive and boring. But the important point is that each speech can stand on its own to prove that the whole case is true in at least some situations. It is only in this way that a speech can be rebutted and thus that a debate can take place.

### **Proposition:**

The proposition team does not have to prove its case beyond reasonable doubt, but merely that its case is true in the majority of cases or as a general proposition. Where the topic is expressed as an absolute, the proposition must prove the topic true in the significant majority of cases, but not in every single conceivable case.

**First Speaker:** The role of the first speaker of the proposition is to define the topic, establish the issues for the debate, outline the proposition case, announce the case division between the speakers, and present her part of the proposition case. The proposition may define the topic in any way provided that the definition -

- is reasonably close to the plain meaning of the topic
- allows the opposition team reasonable room to debate
- is not tautological or a truism, and
- is otherwise a reasonable definition.

Squirreling, place-setting and time-setting are not permitted

- Squirreling is the distortion of the definition to enable a team to argue a pre-prepared argument that it wishes to debate regardless of the motion actually set.
- Place-setting is the setting of a debate of general application in a particular place, rendering the debate very narrow.
- Time-setting is the setting of a debate of general application in a particular time, past or future, which renders the debate very narrow.

**Second speaker:** The role of the second speaker of the proposition is to deal with the definition if it has been challenged, respond to the opposition case, and continue with the proposition case as outlined by the first speaker.

If the second proposition does not challenge a re-definition of the debate made by the first opposition, the proposition is taken to have accepted the opposition's re-definition and no further challenges to the definition may be made.

**Third speaker:** See below.

### **Opposition:**

The opposition team must prove more than a reasonable doubt about the proposition case. Where the topic is expressed as an absolute, the opposition must do more than present a single instance where the topic is not true and prove that it is not true for at least a significant minority of cases.

**First speaker:** The role of the first speaker of the opposition side is to challenge the definition if necessary, present an alternative definition if the definition is challenged, respond to the proposition case, outline the opposition case, announce the case division, and present his or her part of the opposition case.

The first opposition may challenge the definition only if it does not conform to the regulations listed under the proposition first speaker's guidelines. If she challenges the definition, the first opposition must propose a new definition that conforms to guidelines. A definition challenge is a risky strategy and often can lead to a loss. There must be no shadow of a doubt that the definition is unfair. At all times try to avoid such a gamble. It leads to a messy debate with poor argumentation.

If the first opposition does not challenge the definition, the opposition is taken to have accepted the definition and the opposition may not challenge the definition in any other speech unless the proposition significantly alters the definition in their subsequent speeches.

In responding to the proposition case, the opposition team should produce their own positive matter, not merely attack the case presented by the proposition. They must in fact produce their positive case in a similar way to the proposition through their speeches and not concentrate solely on attacking the case presented by the proposition

**Second speaker:** The role of the second speaker of the opposition is to deal with the definition if it is still in issue, respond to the proposition case, and continue with the opposition case as outlined by the first speaker.

**Third speeches:** The role of both third speakers is to deal with the definition if it is still in issue, and respond to the other team's case. The third speaker of the proposition team may have a small part of the team's case to present, but this is not obligatory as the third speaker's primary role is to respond to what has gone before in the debate. If the third speaker is to present a part of the team's case, this must be announced in the case division by the first speaker.

**Note:** The more the debate progresses, the more each speaker must spend time dealing with what has been said by previous speakers. Hence the more the debate progresses, the less time will be spent by each speaker in presenting a new part of the team case and the more time will be spent responding to the other team's arguments.

**Reply speeches:** The role of the reply speeches is to sum up the debate from the team's viewpoint, including a response to the other team's overall case and a summary of the speaker's own team's case. The reply speaker may be either the first or second speaker of the team, but not the third. The reply speakers are in reverse order, with the opposition reply first and the proposition reply last. Neither reply speaker may introduce new matter into their speeches. A reply speaker may respond to an existing argument by raising a new example that illustrates that argument, but may not otherwise introduce a new argument.

#### ***Points of Information:***

Between the first and eighth minutes of a speaker's speech (in an eight minute speech), members of the other team may offer points of information. The purpose of a point of information is to make a short point or ask a short question of the speaker. Points of information need not be addressed through the person chairing the debate, and may be in the form of a question as well as a statement. A point of information should be brief, and no longer than 15 seconds. Points of information are an important part of the clash between the teams and allow speakers to remain a part of the debate even when they are not making a speech. Hence a speaker should offer points of information both before and after that speaker has given his or her substantive speech. The speaker has the absolute right to refuse to accept a point of information, or to accept it only at the end of the next sentence. However, a speaker is obliged to accept some points of information, provided that they have been offered at reasonable times in the speaker's speech.

As a general rule a speaker should accept at least 2 points of information in his or her speech. A speaker who accepts a significantly greater number of points of information risks losing control of his or her speech. Members of the opposing team should not offer an excessive number of points of information to the point that they are badgering. As a general rule each team member should offer at least 2 points of information per speech and should not offer them within a short time of a previous point of information having been offered.

The response by the speaker to a point of information will be included in the mark for that speaker's speech. The offering of points of information will be included in the mark for the speaker offering points.

### **Timing:**

- First, second and third speeches will each be 8 minutes for seniors and 6 minutes for juniors. The first and last minute of each speech will be protected time: no points of information may be offered in these periods. A grace period of 20 seconds will be given to each speaker after the 6/8 minute mark. However, the house will begin to bang the speaker out at 6/8 minutes and 20 seconds. Penalties will be given to speeches that run either noticeably under time or over time.
- Reply speeches will be 4 minutes for seniors and 3 minutes for juniors. No points of information may be offered at any point in these speeches. At 3/4 minutes the time keeper will double bang to show that the speaker's time is up. At 3/4 minutes and 20 seconds the house will begin banging the speaker out. The same penalties apply.
- Time cards may be used by the audience to show the speakers the progressive time in their speeches.

### **Objectivity in Judging**

It goes without saying that judges have to be as objective as possible. But in the international context this causes some interesting problems, because national perspectives on issues can be so different.

Judges also have to recognise that some motions require teams to take hard options in argument rather than soft ones. If the motion were "that we should abolish third world debts", the opposition would almost certainly have to argue the need for international financial responsibility by governments, no matter how tough and unfeeling this may sound. The best debates are often ones between two strongly opposed arguments, rather than between two wishy-washy cases that try to compromise at every opportunity.

### **Marking Points of Information**

It is relatively easy to mark the *responses* to points of information, because each response is incorporated into the speech and that is where it gets marked.

A speaker's speech mark should only be adjusted if her contribution to the debate through *offering* points of information *differed significantly* from her contribution in her speech. (Contribution to the debate through offering points of information involves both the quantity of points of information offered and the quality of those accepted: speakers should not be penalized if they offer plenty of points but none is accepted.) A speaker's speech mark may be adjusted by up to two marks in either direction to take account of points of information offered. So, a speaker whose speech deserved a 70 but who offered remarkably good points of information might receive an overall mark of 71, or perhaps 72 if the points were truly outstanding. A speaker whose speech deserved a 76 but who offered almost no points of information might receive an overall mark of 74 or 75. But a speaker whose speech deserved a 64 should not lose marks for failing to offer many points of information, because his contribution through offering points was no worse than his speech. Likewise, a speaker whose speech deserved a 78 does not get extra marks for making a couple of very good points of information, because those points were no better than her speech

A summary of how to mark points of information is as follows:

The primary component of the speaker's marks is the speaker's speech.

That mark can **increase** by up to a couple of marks if the speaker offered superb points of information during the rest of the debate.

That mark can **decrease** by up to a couple of marks if the speaker:

- (i) Offered no points of information (or almost none) during the rest of the debate;
- (ii) offered bad points of information during the rest of the debate;
- (iii) failed to accept points of information during her or his own speech.

Note that just because the response to a point of information was good, it doesn't mean that the point was not a good one. Don't judge the worth of the point on the response. After all if a motion is strongly arguable on both sides, then the major points on each side should have good counter-arguments.

### **Marking Standard**

Consistency is a virtue. It ought to be possible for a debater to pick up a mark sheet from any judge and work out how good the debate was just from the marks that were offered.

But if one judge thinks a good speech was worth 95% and another judge thought it was just as good and therefore worth 75%, we have a problem.

Marking standards are imposed in every competition. They are necessarily arbitrary. There is no reason why any particular standard is better than any other. But there must be a standard, and here it is.

*The expected range of marks is from 60% for an appalling speech to 80% for a brilliant one.*

*A good average speech at any World Schools Style competition is worth 70%.*

*Judges shall never give a speaker mark greater than 80 or less than 60.*

### **Standardised marking in the tournament and not an isolated debate:**

Adopting this standard means that you do not mark the first government speaker at 70 and mark everybody else up or down from that point. Instead, you must have a mental picture of a good average speech for this competition and mark every speaker (including the first government) according to that hypothetical. Thus the first government is as likely as the third opposition to score 80 or 60.

This allows some basis of comparison between marks in different debates (although the system isn't foolproof). The alternative, of marking everybody relative to the first government at 70, means that the marks for a brilliant debate and for an abysmal one will be about the same.

This standard begs the question of what is a good average speech for this competition. Unfortunately the question is impossible to answer. We could not say, for example, that a good



average speech was likely to come from the team from a particular country or province, because the standard of most teams varies considerably from year to year.

It is theoretically possible that the overall standard one year is very high while in another year it is very low. This ought to be reflected in the marks for the whole competition. But it is not necessary for an individual judge's marks to average around 70 throughout the competition, although this is likely if the judge is judging teams from across the whole spectrum of abilities at the competition. If your marks are consistently coming in above or below 70, you might swap thoughts with your fellow judges to see if it is just you or whether you really have been judging a distinctly non-average group of teams.

The last word on this point is that nobody can enforce this particular part of the standard precisely. To achieve consistency in adjudication it is more important that the relative marks of judges on a panel should be about the same, even if the absolute marks vary to a small extent. Thus if I give three speakers 75, 78 and 73, and one of my fellow judges gives the same speakers 74, 79 and 71, we have clearly seen the debate the same way, even though our actual marks vary a little. Try to mark according to the hypothetical standard, but don't be too worried if you are a little bit different from your colleagues on this point.

### **Reply Speeches**

The same problem arises in the reply speeches because all the categories are halved. The best way to deal with this problem is to mark the reply speech out of 100 and then halve all the marks. This allows half-marks, which ought to solve all your problems.

### **Who Wins the Debate?**

If you find yourself saying "I thought the proposition won the debate but when I added up my marks I found that the opposition had won instead," something is wrong. It might be your belief about who won the debate or it might be your marks: somehow the two things must be reconciled. Look back over your marks to make sure that you were evaluating all speakers by the same standards and therefore that the marks accurately express your view of the relative performances of the speakers. Also, make sure that your belief about who won the debate is not being unduly influenced by the last few speeches: all speeches count equally (except for the reply speeches, which count at half value) and the speaker marks help to ensure that this fact is reflected in your decision. Likewise, make sure that your belief is not being unduly influenced by one category in the marks. If your marks for each category and each speaker accurately reflect your view of the debate, then your total marks should reliably indicate which team won the debate, given the particular weightings that we give to each mark category.

It is also worth noting the phenomenon called "the accelerating rebuttal mark". Some judges are swayed by rebuttal or clash. The more there is, the more they believe the speaker is doing a good job. This is logical until you realise that the government has one less opportunity to rebut the other side than the opposition does. The accelerating rebuttal mark means that opposition teams get a big advantage. Always be sure that you are giving full credit to the way a team has proposed an argument as well as to the way their opponents have attempted to knock it down.

## The Adjudication Speech

The adjudication speech should explain the result of the debate to the audience. Teams can and should speak to the judges individually after the debate, but the adjudication speech is the only opportunity for the audience to hear the reason for the decision. The adjudication speech should not refer to mistakes made by individual speakers: you can discuss these privately after the debate instead of belittling a speaker in public.

The adjudication speech should not summarize the content of the debate except insofar as is truly necessary to explain the result. The speech should be as short as possible – typically between 2 and 4 minutes – while communicating to the audience a clear explanation of the result of the debate.

When giving the adjudication speech you should remember that you are speaking for the panel, not just for yourself. Where there are importantly differing views, especially if the decision is not unanimous, you need to try as far as possible to explain how those differences came about. If at all possible, you should explain the grounds on which one or more judge dissented in a way that emphasizes the reasonableness of the disagreement, rather than leaving the audience to think that one judge got it wrong. In the unlikely and unfortunate event that you cannot present the dissenting view in a way that makes it sound reasonable, it is better to say nothing about it: just explain that the panel reached a majority verdict and then present the views of the majority.

### 1. First, Second and Third Speeches (Out of 100)

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Overall (100)</b>	<b>Style (40)</b>	<b>Content (40)</b>	<b>Strategy (20)</b>
Exceptional	80	32	32	16
Excellent	76-79	31	31	15-16
Extremely Good	74-75	30	30	15
Very Good	71-73	29	29	14-15
Good	70	28	28	14
Satisfactory	67-69	27	27	13-14
Competent	65-66	26	26	13
Pass	61-64	25	25	12-13
Improvement Needed	60	24	24	12

## 2. Reply Speeches (Out of 50)

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Overall (50)</b>	<b>Style (20)</b>	<b>Content (20)</b>	<b>Strategy (10)</b>
Exceptional	40	16	16	8
Very Good to Excellent	36-39	15	15	7.5
Good	35	14	14	7
Pass to Satisfactory	31-34	13	13	6.5
Improvement Needed	30	12	12	6

A team score is then totalled and the winner of each debate will evidently be the team with the highest total. Team points will be awarded as follows for tab purposes:

- Win 1
- Loss 0

### Conclusion

It need hardly be said that without a proper adjudicators a tournament would fail miserably. It's of course important to make the right decision, but it's also important to allow the children involved in the tournament to truly understand that decision. Most tournaments are largely focused on development and that should be kept in mind during adjudication. That's not to say you should mark kindly but simply treat the speakers gently. Tell them what they did wrong, but also advise them on how to fix it. Point out what they did right. You should speak to any member of the Chief Adjudication team if you have any questions. You do not have to handle anything by yourself: in fact, the Chief Adjudication team would always prefer being involved in any situation that may be tricky.