

Preparing for Congressional Debate

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Legislation

- Write legislation – good legislation makes for far better debate.
 - Variety of bills and resolutions sprinkled with proposed constitutional amendments.

Good legislation

- uses correct grammatical structure and style,
- Contains a clear purpose. What is the legislative intent. US Congress purview.
- Solves or addresses a current issue. The legislation is needed and feasible.
- Is formatted in the prescribed template.

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Learn the Terminology

- Learn the roles – PO, parliamentarian, senator or representative
- Watch rounds online and analyze. – Who stood out? Why? Who won? Figure out why.
- Talk to other competitors.
- Research primers – several can be found online.
- Be observant in round.
- Watch finals.

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Learn the Rules

- Knowing how to follow parliamentary procedure will prevent embarrassing mistakes.
- Practice this in class.
- Print and have accessible a Table of Frequently Used Motions.
- Read the rules – UIL/NSDA/TFA/etc. have minor rule differences that can have big implications.
- Precedence – when to speak.
- Gavel signals

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Ethics Discussion

Lessons
Evidence

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Prepare Arguments

Analyze the legislation.

Read topic literature.

- Books, textbooks, think tanks, journals, podcasts, YouTube, news articles (avoiding daily sources is best).
- Read from various perspectives.
- Wikipedia only to get an overview
- Laws that conflict with bill or resolution
- Constitutional constraints

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Brainstorm arguments.
 Brainstorm responses.
 Balance arguments.
 Impromptu speeches related to topic – develop intros
 Outlining and Notes
 Practice rounds
 Keep files – like extemp tubs.
 Suggestion – practice extemp =)

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Outlining Format

- Item number
- Description (title)
- Nuances
- Responses
- Point – evidence – example
 - Questions, answers

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Materials in round

- Precedence chart
- Legislation
- Charged computer
- Outlines and legal pad
- Pens
- Hose for girls
- Table of Motions
- Robert's Rules of Order/Rules

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Questioning

- Meaningful – content related, evidence related
- Relevant
- Professional
- Unique
- Prompt
- No prefacing
- Direct questioning
 - Precedence
 - Format
 - usefulness.

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Answering Questions

- Be clear, concise and complete.
- Be professional.
- Citations
- Reference previous speakers
- Make connections
- Be truthful

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Politicking

Discussion - fairness

- Make friends – congressional debate is a social game.
- Be communicative – what do you want and why.
- Stay in the loop by going outside your comfort zone.
- Facebook groups and off-time meetings.

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Non-verbals

- It starts when you get to tournament.
- How to begin. OWN IT!
- Facial expressions
- Gestures
- Movement
- Pay attention throughout round – prep before the round
- Leaving the chamber
- Respectfulness with personality v. aggression
- Appearance

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Speeches

- Quality over quantity
- Better to speak later than rehash arguments.
- Crystallize near end of cycle.
- Rebuttals
- Depth of analysis
- Clarity in rhetoric
- Rhetorical devices
- Authorship/Sponsorship
- Sources

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- Deliver extemporaneously – no written speeches
- Refutations attack arguments, not speakers.
- Format – Intro, Point 1, Point 2, Conclusion
- Enunciation
- Word economy
- Recognition

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Getting Noticed, For the Right Reasons

- Professional
- Engaged
- Eye Contact
- Courtesy
- Initiative
- Behavior in recess
- Problem-solving

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Coaching Challenges

- Personalities
- Who uses the prep?
- Team conflict
- Team unity
- Other issues

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Q & A

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