

WSDC Speaker Roles

Now that we're officially heading into our first match, this handout will act as a rudimentary guide to what the WSDC format looks like. It equips you with a basic understanding of speaker roles, total time, and the structure to be followed during the match. Keep in mind that the speech breakdown minute by minute is not to be followed by the yardstick, it is simply here to act as a general guide. Remember, debating is about the art of improvisation based on your given situation.

The table below highlights the key burdens of the proposition and the opposition within a matchroom.

Aspect	Proposition	Opposition
Primary burden	The proposition's burden is to prove the motion and/or that their proposed action/policy is better than the status quo.	The opposition burden is to disprove the motion and/or prove that their alternative is better than the proposition in the given scenario.
Key burdens	Define	Clash
	Clearly and reasonably define the motion in a way to be understood by an ordinary intelligent voters.	Rebut the proposition's: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Case,2. Need (<i>if necessary</i>)3. Definitions (<i>if necessary</i>)
	Establish	Attack
	Present a consistent and logical case (arguments).	Either take down the need or give an alternative solution to the need. If the need is accepted, either defend the status quo or provide a reasonable alternative (i.e. counter case) to persuade an ordinary intelligent voter.

	Prove	Prove
	Provide analysis to establish the impact of your stance/case given the scenario of the motion. Connect everything you say back to the motion.	provide comparative analysis to prove why your case is better than the proposition's and connect everything back to the motion.

The table below highlights the speech structure for each speaker within the matchroom.

Speaker Position	Total Speaking Time	Timestamp	Typical speech structure
Prop 1	8 minutes	0:00 – 1:30	Setup Define the motion, set the scope of debate, state the team stance, define the stakeholders, and outline what the structure of your speech will be. Also outline how your bench will proceed with the case altogether.
			Argument 1 Present the first major argument. This should be stated, well structured, and well analysed. Connect your whole argument back to the motion.
		4:30 – 8:00	Argument 2 Present the second major argument, linking it clearly back to the motion and the team stance.

Speaker Position	Total Speaking Time	Timestamp	Typical speech structure
Opp 1	8 minutes	0:00 – 1:00	Setup and Attack Define the motion according to what your bench's stance is, meaning either accept the definition or challenge it.
			State the Opp team stance, and outline your case or other essential issues.
		1:00 – 3:00	Rebuttal Directly respond to the Prop 1's key points and arguments.
		3:00 – 5:30	Argument 1 Present the Opposition's first major constructive argument. Structure it, analyse it, connect it back to the motion.
		5:30 – 8:00	Argument 2 (Setup & Attack): 1:00 – 3:00 (Rebuttal): 3:00 – 6:00 (Argument 1): 6:00 – 7:30 (Argument 2): Present the Opposition's second major constructive argument. 7:30 – 8:00 (Conclusion): Summarize the Opposition's case.

Speaker Position	Total Speaking Time	Timestamp	Typical speech structure
Prop 2	8 minutes	0:00 – 5:00	Clashes
			Focus on the Opposition's two main arguments and their core strategy. Systematically tear them down.
		5:00 – 8:00	Restore and defend Proposition's arguments against the attacks made by Opp 1.
		Argument 3	
		Introduce the Proposition's third argument/extension, which either deepens the clash or provides a new area of analysis.	

Speaker Position	Total Speaking Time	Timestamp	Typical speech structure
Opp 2	8 minutes	0:00 – 5:00	Clashes
			Focus on the Proposition's main arguments and their core strategy. Systematically tear them down.
		5:00 – 8:00	Restore and defend Opposition's arguments against the attacks made by Proposition.
		Argument 3	
		Introduce the Opposition's third argument/extension, which either deepens the clash or provides a new area of analysis.	

Speaker Position	Total Speaking Time	Timestamp	Typical speech structure
Prop/Opp 3	8 minutes	0:00 – 3:00	Clash 1 Focus on the most important issue that decides the debate, explain how and why your team wins this clash. Cover any supporting content that improves your position in the clash.
			Clash 2 and 3
		3:00 – 8:00	Explain the remaining two decisive issues for the debate. Explain why your team wins them.

This framework is just a guide. Focus on making one clear point at a time and remembering that consistency and clarity are more important than complexity. This guide is just to provide you with a starting point for your (most probably) first debate. Goodluck!