DEBATE FOR CHANGE

DEBATER'S GUIDE

DONATE, CREATE AND CELEBRATE

DCT Debate Format

1. **Each team is formed of three debaters and each debater will give one speech. In the case that a team is formed of two people, one debater will have to speak twice:**

- Each speaker in the team has different responsibilities, and it is important to choose a position that fits you. Each position is just as important as the others, so don't pick based on what you think will make you look the best, but rather the one that you will do the best in.

- In general, the first two speakers will be giving new content and arguments, and the final speaker should refute the opposition arguments and summarize the arguments made by your team.

The first speaker

lays the groundwork for the team's case. They should present the teams definitions, frameworks & clarify the more complex parts of their case. This speaker presents most of the team's arguments, as well as giving a brief roadmap of what the rest of the team will be saying.

The second speaker

not only furthers the argument, but also gives new arguments and refutes opposition arguments. Most importantly, they begin to narrow down the debate. The second speaker should adapt their own case to focus on the main issues that will win the debate.

The third speaker

explains why they win the debate. Making new points makes it unfair for opponents, thus won't be noted down by the judge. Instead, these speakers should refute opponent arguments while defending their own. Collapsing the debate onto main clashes (points of contention) and then weighing (comparing) the arguments against each other is more likely to win you a debate rather than trying to bring up new points.

2. Speeches are 3 minutes maximum but can be as short as the speaker desires. Although speakers will not be penalized for not filling the full allotted time, it is still encouraged to fill all three minutes.

- During other speaker's speeches, make sure you **actively listen** and **take notes** rather than work on your speech because you may miss something important or let the opponent make an incorrect point. Even if you've already given a speech, it's important to listen; you can still **make impactful POI's** and help your teammates find flaws.

- It's your job to point out inconsistencies with an opponent's case. You should **assume the judge doesn't know anything about the subject**. Even if the flaw seems obvious, point it out & refute it.

Basics of Arguement & Refutation

1. A good argument can be likened to a burger. They are generally composed of three basic components: a claim, a warrant, and an impact.

Claim
_____

is the crux of your argument, the bun in the burger. It is a debatable assertion that needs the be proven. For example, "Kevin Yao runs DCT" isn't a claim but "Kevin Yao runs DCT well" is. This gives the argument shape, and keeps the argument separate from others.

Warrant
_____

is the proof that your claim is true, and can be likened to the patty of the burger. Warrants are what makes your argument an argument rather than an assertion, just as the patty is what makes the burger a patty rather than just bread.

Evidence and statistics

Evidence should work to prove your point, not the entirety of the point itself. Even in cases where examples and studies exist to prove your point, it is still good to make a logical argument to prove why something happens.

Impact

is the reason why your argument matters and why the judge should value your argument over the opponents. In order to make an impact, identify who your claim affects and why they are the most important stakeholder in this debate.

You should consider questions such as: Does this impact the largest number of people? Does this impact the most vulnerable people that need to be protected? Is this a long term impact?

The impact of the argument is the final component of the argument, and is analogous to the sauce of the burger. The impact is the flavor of the argument, and is what makes the judge remember your arguments.

2. A rebuttal is a refutation of the argument and a claim that the opponent is incorrect. Rebuttals should also be backed up by warrants.

There are three types of rebuttal.

- The most basic is where the speaker attacks the warrant; claiming that the argument is false. Basically, the goal of this is to either prove that the claim is false or that the claim doesn't lead to the impact. Usage of this sort of rebuttal is pretty common in everyday life.

- The second type of rebuttal is more complex. It's where you **"turn" the opponent's argument back on them by attacking the impact.**

  For example, if the impact is how something leads to nuclear weapon proliferation and cost lives, you can argue that nuclear weapon proliferation will lead to less wars and by extension cost less lives.

  Or, if your opponents are arguing that something leads to economic growth, you could rebut that by saying that economic growth will be bad since it hurts the environment.

- The final type of rebuttal attacks the impact of the opposition argument, but instead of being an offensive attack, takes a more defensive role.

  In this type of rebuttal, you try to mitigate the damage of their argument by **downplaying the importance of their impact**. You can try to claim that their impact isn't as important as they claim it is, or point out how it's less important than your own impacts.

- It's important to remember that **for one argument you can give multiple rebuttals**, although it is important to keep them separate from each other.

  You can use phrases such as "we have five responses to this", "even if you don't believe what I just told you", or "even in their best case scenario" to keep your arguments cohesive and scare your opponents.

Points of Information

1. During speeches, debaters can ask points of information to the speaker.

- Points of Information (POIs)
- _____
- are short questions to the speaker, and should be kept simple & concise. To ask a POI, stand up & raise your hand. The speaker can choose to either accept or deny the POI. You should never interrupt the speaker; wait till they has given you permission to speak before questioning.

- **Keep POIs under 15 seconds**. Keep questions easy to understand to prevent confusion or misunderstanding. After asking a POI, sit down. follow-ups are not allowed in DCT.

- **Don't use POI time to bring up new points**. Questions should be about their case, not yours. Instead, ask probing and clarifying questions to get the speaker to elaborate on their points.

    - A common phrase that is discouraged from being used is "Is the speaker aware that…". This doesn't provide any insightful information, and doesn't help make your case to the judge.

    - As a rule of thumb, don't ask questions that can be answered with yes or no, but rather open-ended questions that force the speaker to elaborate.

- The first thirty seconds and last thirty seconds of each speech are protected time. This means that debaters cannot ask POIs during this time.

- For timekeeping purposes, the judge will **knock once at thirty seconds and once again at two minutes thirty seconds.** This signifies the beginning and end of protected time.

  At three minutes the judge will knock two times, and you should come to your closing remarks. At three minutes and fifteen seconds the judge will continuously knock.

Judging Rubric

To help you understand what DCT judges are looking for in your debate, here is the judging rubric below:

Rubric	Description for full marks
Logic /10	• **Ease of Understanding**: How understandable and clear was the speaker? Did s/he speak fluently? Did s/he outline his/her thoughts and points in a professional manner? Please do not penalise for accents. • **Conciseness**: Did the speaker make good use of time? Did the speaker use appropriate words to convey his/her argument depending on its complexity? Did the speaker use concise vocabulary in the right pace? • **Flow**: How well did the speaker's thoughts and ideas flow? Did the speaker's speech have a clear and distinguishable order while smoothly linking each section together and relating them to the point? Does their point support their central idea and argument?
Structure /10	• **Layout**: How well does the organisation of the speech help in presenting the idea of the speaker's argument? Does the speaker link back to the team's central argument? Does the speech have a clear structure? • **Delivery**: Does the speaker present his/her information well? Is the speaker heavily reliant on notes, or is s/he able to direct his/her speech to the audience? Does the speaker's tone vary? Does s/he make eye contact? Does s/he seem confident? • **Evidence:** Does the speaker make good use of examples and facts related to the motion? Did the speaker use research and statistics to back up his/her point of view? Does the speaker seem to have a good contextual understanding of the motion? Does the speaker provide counter-evidence against the other team's points?
Rhetoric /5	• **Persuasiveness:** How well did the speaker use persuasive and emotive language? Did the speaker seem passionate about the topic? Did the speaker consider the emotional and ethical parts of the argument? • **Language:** Does the speaker use language effectively to diminish the other team's points? Does the speaker properly use rhetoric devices, such as metaphors and rules of three?
Teamwork /5	• **Co-ordination:** Do teammates work together in forming an argument in terms of their speeches? Does the team refer to each other's argument to form a stronger argument, or do they appear to be debating about separate issues? • **Respectfulness:** Was the team courteous towards the other team during the debating process?