



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 a single speech. In the case that a team is formed of two people, one debater will have to speak twice:

- Each speaker in the debate team has different responsibilities when it comes to the team, and thus it is important to choose a position that fits you and form teams around that. Each position is just as important as the others, so don't pick ones 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 making new arguments, while the final speaker should refute the opposition arguments and summarize the arguments made by your teams.
 - The first speaker lays the groundwork for the team's case. They should present the team's definitions, frameworks, clarifications about the more complex parts of their case. This speaker will generally present most of the team's arguments, as well as giving a brief roadmap of what the rest of their team will be saying.
 - The second speaker not only furthers the arguments, but also gives new arguments and refutes opposition arguments. Most importantly, they begin to focus and narrow down the debate. After hearing the opposition's speech, the second speaker should adapt their own case to focus down onto the main issues they think will win them the debate.
 - The third speaker explains why they win the debate. Making new points makes it unfair for the opponents, and thus may not be noted down by the judge. Instead, these speakers should refute opponent arguments whilst defending their own, and then explain why their argument is most important. Collapsing the debate onto main clashes (points of contention) and then weighing (comparing) the arguments against each other is far 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 try and fill all three minutes.

- During other speaker's speeches make sure that you actively listen and take notes rather than work on your own speech. Otherwise, you might miss something important or let the opponent make an incorrect point. Even if you've already given your speech, it's still important to listen; you can still make impactful POI's and help your teammates find flaws.
- It is your job to point out inconsistencies & problems with an opponent's case. You should always assume the judge doesn't know anything about the subject. Even if the flaw seems obvious, take the time to point it out and refute it.

Basics of Argument & 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.

- A claim is the crux of your argument, and the bun in the burger. It is a debatable assertion that needs to be proven. For example, “Kevin Yao runs DCT” isn’t a claim but “Kevin Yao runs DCT well” is. This helps to give the argument shape, and keeps the argument organized and separate from other arguments.
- 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.
 - Examples of a warrants include examples, logical links, and even intuitive arguments. Claims can have multiple warrants, which will help to strengthen the argument.
 - This is where things like evidence and statistics come in. 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.
- 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.
 - The impact is the reason why your argument matters in the context of the debate and why the judge should value your argument over the opponents should they both be true. In order to make an impact, try and identify who this claim affects and why these people 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 going to be a long term impact?

2. When such an argument is presented by the opposition, it is important that you make a rebuttal. A rebuttal is a refutation of the argument and the claim that what your opponent is saying is incorrect. Just like any argument, rebuttals should also be backed up by warrants, but impacts aren’t needed in this case.

- There are three types of rebuttal. The most basic of these is where the speaker attacks the warrant of the argument; basically 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. This is pretty self-explanatory - usage of this sort of rebuttal is pretty common in everyday life.

- The second type of rebuttal is more complex. It is where you “turn” the opponent’s argument back on them by attacking the impact. For example, if their impact is how something will lead to nuclear weapon proliferation and thus lead to the loss of lives, you can argue that nuclear weapon proliferation will lead to less wars and by extension less loss of lives. Or if your opponents are arguing that something will lead to economic growth, you could rebut that by saying that economic growth will be bad since it will hurt the environment.
- The final type of rebuttal also attacks the impact of the opposition argument, but instead of being an offensive attack, it 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 large or important as they claim it is, or try and point out how its 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(POI) to the speakers.
 - POIs are short questions to the speaker, and should be kept simple and concise. To ask a POI, stand up and stretch out your hand before you. The speaker can then choose to either accept or deny your POI. You should never interrupt the speaker; wait till the speaker has given you permission to speak before questioning.
 - Keep POIs under 15 seconds. Try and keep questions simple and easy to understand to prevent any confusion or misunderstanding. After asking your POI, sit down. follow-ups are not allowed in DCT.
 - Don't use POI time to bring up new points or argue with the speaker. 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 new insightful information, and doesn’t help make your case to the judge.
 - As a general 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.
2. 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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?