

# CATEGORY IV: BRACKETS

## **Debate:**

Are you great at winning arguments? Do you have the poise of a public speaker and the convincing tone of a scholar? Join debate to compete with others who are just like you.

## **Math Olympics:**

Think you have what it takes for the Olympics? Earn the title of true Math Olympian in this intense battle of numbers.

## **MIST Quiz Bowl:**

Do you get an adrenaline rush at knowing the answer to any question asked? Are you a memorization whiz? Then MIST Quiz Bowl is the competition for you!

## **Improv:**

This competition is a fun way to display your creativity under spontaneous and timed circumstances. Each team must impress the judges in various hypothetical scenarios while under pressure to think on their feet and make the audience laugh!

# DEBATE

**Format:** In-Person

## **Registration Guidelines:**

1. A maximum of two (2) students from each team may register for this competition, with no substitutions.
2. This competition is a team effort, but students are also permitted to register solo. If solo, students must fill both roles for their team.

MIST Parliamentary Debates attempt to transform detailed discussions that occur in the House of Commons to a format that teaches principles of reasoning, argument, and quick wit. In addition, the Resolutions (i.e. debate topics) of Parliamentary Debates must be a question of policy (ex. Capital punishment is an effective deterrent to murder).

**Note:** Parliamentary Debate is a Bracket Competition, which stipulates that it is an elimination competition. There are:

- Two rounds of Preliminaries
- One Quarterfinal Round (top 8 teams)
- One Semifinal Round (top 4 teams) and one Final Round.

In the event that an odd number of teams are present at the very first preliminary round of the Parliamentary Debate Tournament, even-numbered pairs will be made, with a randomized odd team sitting out the first preliminary and competing in the 2nd preliminary round.]

All teams regardless of round results advance to Round 2 of preliminaries.

**Debate will follow a win versus loss structure as opposed to being points based.**

**For students with the same win-loss ratio, the following steps will be taken to break ties for seeding in brackets:**

1. An "opponent strength" score will be tallied to prevent easy schedule biases. Further ties will be taken to the judges to determine who moves on to the quarterfinal round.
  - a. Opponent strength will be measured by the win-loss ratios of the team's opponents. This is meant to balance based on schedule biases in preliminary rounds.
  - b. For example: if a team with a 1-1 loss ratio wins against a team that has 0 wins, they would rank lower than a 1-1 team.
2. Judges will rank speakers on teams in terms of speaking ability (rankings go from 1-4)
  - a. This will place teams with better speakers for their arguments higher.
  - b. For teams with only one competitor, this tiebreaker is used for roles (one person will be treated under two separate roles for their performance).
  - c. Please write ranks next to MIST IDs in the Debate Ballot.

## **Procedure:**

1. The total scores from each preliminary round will be calculated and the 8 teams with the best records will proceed to the next round.
2. The moderator of a Parliamentary debate is called the "Speaker" and all debaters must address themselves to "Mr. [or Madam] Speaker" at the outset of their speeches.
  - a. The affirmative side is called the "Government" while the "Opposition" represents the negative.
  - b. Participants in the debate and members of the audience are referred to collectively as the "House" while the resolution is simply termed the "Bill".
  - c. Debaters must always refer to one another in the third person (for example, "the Prime Minister", "Leader of the Opposition"). They must not call other debaters by their real names.
3. Members will speak only when called upon by the Speaker or when allowed a "Point of Information."

4. Debaters shall not use profane or offensive language.
5. No forms of AI are permitted to prep for this competition. Any usage is grounds for point loss and/or disqualification.
6. During the final rebuttal speeches presented by the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister, debaters may not bring up any new arguments or new evidence except in direct refutation of material which has already been presented.
7. Competitors are allowed to bring in notes and outlines on the Resolution and may refer to them at any point during the debate. **Electronic device usage is not permitted during the competition.**
  - a. If needed, competitors will be provided with scrap paper for tracking their opponent's arguments.
8. Competitors will not be permitted to view completed ballots at any point during the tournament, only at its conclusion.
9. In the event of less than 8 teams being present for preliminaries, the top 6 will proceed to quarterfinals.
10. Parliamentary Debate topics will be announced in a random order and are available at [www.getmistified.com/rulebook](http://www.getmistified.com/rulebook).

## DEBATE STRUCTURE

Speaker	Roles and Debate Order	Time (Minutes)
Prime Minister (PM)	Constructive Speech	6
Leader of Opposition	Constructive Speech	6
Crown Minister	Constructive Speech + Rebuttal	6
Member of Opposition	Constructive Speech + Rebuttal	6
Prime Minister	Rebuttal	3
Leader of Opposition	Rebuttal	3

### PM Constructive Speech (6 minutes):

- Has the Burden of Proof and must show why the government side must be adopted.
- Introduces resolution, defines major terms, presents the basic government case (position) along with three or more constructive points (reasons) in favor of the House adopting the resolution.

### LO (6 minutes)

#### Constructive Speech:

- The LO presents a new independent argument relating to the case. Outlines why the government case is flawed/wrong.
- Refutes the government case, explaining why the solution won't work or why the problem does not actually exist.

### CM (6 minutes)

#### Constructive Speech:

- Brings forth additional one or two arguments supporting the government.
- The CM rebuilds the Government position and the original points introduced by the PM.

#### CM Rebuttal:

- Goes through the points presented by the LO and rebuts them.
- The rebuttal should challenge the assumptions, and challenge the premises made by the Opposition.

### MO (6 minutes)

#### Constructive Speech:

- Brings forth the bulk of the opposition arguments, introducing 3 or 4 points.
- The MO rebuilds the Opposition position and reconstructs the points introduced by the LO.

#### **Rebuttal:**

- Introduces new Opposition rebuttal points (specific additional reasons raised by the Opposition for why the Government case is wrong).
- The LO may also pose questions to the Government. Questions may be asked for clarification, or meant to corner opponents (not rhetorical).
- Government may not ask questions during this section, and may freely choose to answer or refuse to answer specific questions.

#### **PM Rebuttal (3 minutes):**

- Rebuild critical aspects of Government case and sum up entire debate by showing why the Government has won the debate.
- No new evidence or arguments may be presented here.

#### **LO Rebuttal (final 3 minutes):**

Offers a rebuttal to the Government, summarizes the Opposition side and restates the Opposition points.

No new evidence or arguments may be presented here.

#### **Special Feature – Points of Information**

- Points of Information (POIs) are a unique feature of Parliamentary Debates.
- POIs are opportunities for debaters to rise during the opposition's speeches and offer a question or comment.
- To receive permission to present a POI, a debater must say "Point of Information" and place one hand on his/her head with one hand held out palm up.
- The speaker then knows the debater is interested in stealing the floor and may decline this request by waving the individual down or saying "No thank you".
- The POI can be used to clarify something or point out a flaw or contradiction in the speaker's argument or make a comment that will link to something the opposition will discuss later. POIs must be kept very brief and to the point (5-10 seconds).
- Only 2 POIs can be offered during any speech.
- POIs cannot be offered during the first and last minute of constructive speeches. No POIs may be offered during the last two speeches.
- The entire final LO and PM rebuttals are protected and POIs cannot be offered during this time.

#### **The Speaker**

- The Speaker acts as the timekeeper and introduces each debater before speaking.
- Before beginning, the Speaker will write the exact resolution and the names of debaters in their speaking order on a blackboard clearly visible to all judges.
- The Speaker will also flip a coin to determine which team will represent the Government and which will represent the Opposition.

1. After the Prime Minister's Speech, the speaker shall say: "I thank the Prime Minister for his/her remarks. We shall now hear the Leader of Opposition."
2. After the Leader of Opposition Speech, the speaker shall say: "Thank you for your remarks. I now call upon the Crown Minister to deliver his/her speech."
3. After the Crown Minister's Speech, the speaker shall say: "Thank you. A speaker for the Opposition will now deliver a speech opposing the Bill."
4. After the Member of the Opposition's speech, the speaker shall say: "I thank the member of the Opposition, and now call upon the Prime Minister to present the Government's final rebuttal. During this final rebuttal, no new arguments may be made."
5. After the Prime Minister's Speech, the speaker shall say: "Thank you. The Leader of the Opposition will now deliver the last speech opposing the Bill."
6. Finally, the speaker shall say: "On behalf of the House, I thank the Judges for their assistance; I congratulate all the debaters on their performances; and I thank the members of the House for their attentiveness. Since this debate is now concluded and there is no other business on the Order Paper, the House stands adjourned."

### **Judging Criteria**

1. Organization: The speech should be well structured, logical & coherent, containing an effective introduction and conclusion.
2. Evidence/Logic: Facts, statistics & authorities offered in support of contentions must be sound.
3. Credit should be given for thorough and relevant research.
4. Delivery: Poise quality & use of voice, combined with emphasis, variety and enunciation.
5. Effectiveness and ease of gestures, and eye contact should be assessed.
6. Refutation/Clash: The ability to apply logic and evidence in refuting the opponents' contentions while defending your own.
7. Format: Does each debater demonstrate an understanding of parliamentary procedure & adhere to the rules of the house? Are points of order & privilege appropriately used?

### **Note to Judges and Competitors:**

1. Due to the structured and formal nature of Parliamentary Debates, judges and competitors are required to be careful listeners, tracking each statement and argument, and weighing each piece of evidence.
2. Judges will be required to follow each team's arguments very carefully, making special note of what they present, how they respond to their opponents, and how effectively their statements and evidence drive home the arguments that they are attempting to make.
3. The end goal of debate is ultimately to decide which of the teams presented the most compelling arguments and put up the best defense against their opponents' arguments, not only the quality of the delivery.
4. Judges will take all factors into account, and offer their grading on a holistic level, making sure never to allow personal biases or predispositions concerning the debaters or the topics to impact their ruling.

### **Note to Organizers and Competitors:**

1. Reminder: Only the top 4 teams from debate may qualify for the National Tournament.
2. Regions must hold a 3rd place match concurrently with the final match, so that the semi-finalists are guaranteed 2 matches each. With this addition, the third rank will be determined more fairly. (One finals match to determine first and second place, and one third place match to determine third and fourth place).

# DEBATE BALLOT

Round #: \_\_\_\_\_ Room #: \_\_\_\_\_ Judge Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reminder: Please judge competitors only on their performance in the current round. Do not factor in preconceived notions about the topic or any team's previous performance.**

**Winner (circle one)**

Government (PM + CM)

Opposition (LO + MO)

**Speaker Rankings (1 = First, 4 = Last)**

*No ties allowed.*

Speaker	MIST ID	Rank (1=First, 4=Last)	Notes
Prime Minister (PM)			
Leader of Opposition (LO)			
Crown Minister (CM)			
Member of Opposition (MO)			

**Speech Time and POI Recording**

Speaker	Speech	Allowed	Actual	Sustained POIs (Only 2 allowed)
Prime Minister	Constructive Only	6:00		
Leader of Opposition	Constructive Only	6:00		
Crown Minister	Constructive + Rebuttal	6:00		
Member of Opposition	Constructive + Rebuttal	6:00		
Prime Minister	Rebuttal Only	3:00		
Leader of Opposition	Rebuttal Only	3:00		

Please find a clear version of this ballot [here](#).

### Judging Criteria (Brief Notes)

1. Organization: Structure, logic, coherence, intro & conclusion
2. Evidence/Logic: Facts, statistics, authorities, research quality
3. Delivery: Voice, clarity, pacing, gestures, eye contact, poise
4. Refutation/Clash: Direct engagement with opponents; defense of own case
5. Format/Procedure: Use of rules, points of order/privilege, adherence to parliamentary structure

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Please find a clear version of this ballot [here](#).