



## NOVICE BRIEFING

### Notes:

- This document is designed for those with very limited (or no) previous experience in British Parliamentary (BP) debating
- This aims to clearly explain the rules of this format of debate operating at this tournament, as well as setting out the expectations of teams
- This is not intended to be entirely exhaustive, and will be supplemented by the general briefing provided on December 28<sup>th</sup>

### The Format:

- Each debate will contain 4 teams, each team consisting of 2 speakers
- There are 2 teams on each side of the debate
- On one side are Opening Government (OG) and Closing Government (CG), on the other side are Opening Opposition (OO) and Closing Opposition (CO)
  - OG define the motions and advance arguments in favour of their side, and rebut arguments made by teams on the other side of the table
  - OO must rebut OG's case and advance substantive arguments as to why their side of the table should win the debate
  - CG must provide further arguments and analysis in favour of the motion, which are consistent with, but distinct from, the substantive material advanced by OG, as well as refuting the analysis of the Opposition teams
    - The second speaker of CG must summarise the debate as a whole on behalf of the Government bench
  - CO must provide further arguments against the motion, which are consistent with, but different from, the arguments advanced by OO, as well as rebutting arguments made by the Government teams
    - The second speaker of this team must summarise the debate as a whole on behalf of the Opposition bench
- Each speaker speaks once, so there will be 8 speeches in each debate
- The order of speeches is as follows:
  - The first speech is made by the first speaker (the "Prime Minister") from the OG team
  - The second speech is made by the first speaker ("the Leader of the Opposition") from the OO team
  - The third speech is made by the second speaker ("the Deputy Prime Minister") from the OG team
  - The fourth speech is made by the second speaker ("the Deputy Leader of the Opposition") from the OO team
  - The fifth speech is made by the first speaker ("the Member of Government") from the CG team
  - The sixth speech is made by the first speaker ("the Member of Opposition") from the CO team
  - The seventh speech is made by the second speaker ("the Government Whip") from the CG team
  - The eighth (the final) speech is made by second speaker ("the Opposition Whip") of the CO Team



- Speeches last for 7 minutes
- Time signals will be given to indicate when 1 minute, 6 minutes and 7 minutes have elapsed

#### Points of Information:

- The first and last minute of each speech is known as protected time, during which no points of information may be offered to the speaker who is making their speech
- During the intervening 5 minutes (between 01:00 and 06:00) points of information may be offered
- A point of information is a formalized interjection from any speaker on the opposite side of the table to the speaker who has the floor
- It may last up to 15 seconds
- It can take the form of a comment or a question to the speaker who has the floor
- It is up to the speaker who has the floor to decide which points of information to accept or reject
- Each speaker should accept 1 point of information (they may accept more if they wish)
- To offer a point of information a speaker should stand and say "point of information", "sir" or "madam"
- If the point of information offered is refused, the speaker who offered it should sit down immediately

#### Before the Debate

- Each round has a specific topic
- This topic will be announced to all participants 15 minutes before debates begin
- Teams may only prepare in their teams – i.e. the two speakers in a team may confer with each other ONLY while preparing
- Teams may not use any electronic devices to aid them in their preparation, with the exception of stopwatches (the use of mobile phones is allowed only insofar as the phone is used as a stopwatch) and electronic dictionaries
- Teams must be in the correct room, ready to begin the debate, once the 15 minutes have elapsed

#### Other Points of Importance

- Each debate will be judged by a panel of judges
- They will rank the teams from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>
- Teams will be told the results of the debates from rounds 1-6
  - While teams also receive speaker marks, these are not released until the conclusion of the tournament
- Rounds 7, 8 and 9 are "silent" rounds (teams will not be told the results)
- Speakers should be respectful to one another and their judges at all times

# DLSU Worlds Pre-Tournament Briefing

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## 1 Introduction

This briefing exists to outline how this debating tournament works. The style of debating used at the World Championships uses a small set of rules and tries to focus, as much as possible, on logical arguments about the motion set for each round. We want to make sure that you are all on the same page before the tournament begins, so that no one has an unfair advantage. We also recognise the need to standardise judging in a tournament to fulfil teams' right to know the criteria on which they are being judged.

Before we go any further it is very important to review how the *competition* in the debate works.

*Judges assess who seemed to win the logical argument, as it happened in this particular debate. They do this as the 'ordinary intelligent voter', applying a very small set of technical rules, which are there to facilitate, not displace, logical argument.*

The rest of this document is simply an examination of the various parts of the above statement, along with some comments on the logistics of the tournament.

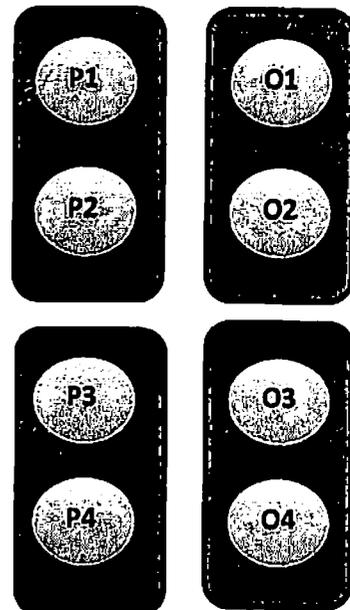
## 2 The Rules

There are four broad groups of technical rules. We consider the rules outlined below (summarised in a box at the end) to be *exhaustive*. That is, they are the **only things which are actually rules of the style**. If you consider anything else to be a rule, you are incorrect. This is not to say it is definitely not relevant to debating or judging, just that it isn't a rule.

When discussing rules, we'll outline what the rule says, what it **doesn't** say, and then how judges should assess rule infringements. Keep in mind while reading all of the following that the *aim* of the rules is to facilitate logical argument, not to constrain or displace it.

### 2.1 Who speaks when

As you hopefully all know, debates at Worlds involve four teams of two speakers each. Proposition speaks first, followed by opposition, with speakers from each side alternating. Speeches are seven (7) minutes long. During a speech, between the first and sixth minutes, debaters from the *other* side can offer short 'points of information'. These may not have 'titles' (i.e. phrases said when offering them) which communicate their content. 'Information', 'clarification' or terms such as 'Sir', 'Madam', or the name of the speaker are acceptable.



Each debate has a 'chair' (the head of the judging panel) who is responsible for calling speakers to the front and maintaining order. This includes managing decorum and taking account of small rooms.

## 2.2 Definitions

### 2.2.1 Defining the debate

The first government speaker defines the debate. This means they tell the rest of the people in the room exactly what will be debated. They need to say whether there is a *policy* (i.e. whether someone is doing something) and what that policy is, if it exists. They also need to leave enough room in the debate for other teams to make some arguments.

Note that merely stating the motion can constitute sufficiently 'defining the debate' as that sentence may be enough to do all of the above. On the other hand, the definition might involve a many-pointed model or some extensive caveating/parameter setting. It may be that the same motion could be usefully defined in *either* of these ways, producing different legitimate debates. In other words, OG needs to do enough to explain what the person, organisation, group of people etc. is doing. It is not the job of the judge to attack the definition. Only worry about the definition if teams in the debate do.

If the definition *is* successfully attacked as being insufficiently explanatory, the OG team should be penalised **only to the extent to which a lack of detail prevents teams from making arguments**. Judges should give other teams the benefit of the doubt relative to OG where such a lack poses a problem.

Remember, **debates are about the motion as defined by the opening government**. It is not about what you thought the words in the motion meant.

### 2.2.2 Parameterising debates

At this tournament, we'll set the debates we want you to have so, please, define debates in accordance with the words in the motion. As outlined above, teams have some freedom in defining the debate, but there are certain things you may not do. You may not time or place set a debate (e.g. you cannot turn THW allow abortion into a debate about whether the Judges in Roe v Wade should have reached the decision they did then).

You should debate at the level of **generality** implied in the motion. It is legitimate to exclude anomalous examples ('we're banning cosmetic surgery like the motion says, but not for burns victims'). It is **not** legitimate to include only anomalous examples ('we're banning cosmetic surgery like the motion says, but only for children'). Nor is it legitimate to narrow debates to one country, or one instance of a wider phenomenon described in the motion. If we wish a debate to be solely about a **specific country (or a specific set of countries)** we will state this in the motion.

### 2.2.3 Challenging the definition

If the definition provided by the opening government is illegitimate then it can be challenged. This must be done during the **first opposition speech**, or in a POI to the **first government speech**. The criterion for legitimacy is liberal: *'is this one understanding of the motion that does not do violence to the words in the motion, including not unduly narrowing the scope of those words'*. We explicitly do

not consider whether a definition helps one team or another, or whether it is in the 'spirit of the motion'. Motions do not have spirits. They have words.

If a team challenges the definition, they must explain why. That is, they must argue that the definition is illegitimate. Don't punish teams for making a 'definitional debate'. This might be boring, but being boring doesn't automatically imply that you lose.

Only if a position is tautologically untrue or unconscionable or *impossible* to argue can anyone else change the debate after this point. If the motion does thus change, judges must weigh the contributions teams made to the debate *as they found it at the time*. That is, if OO won very strongly the debate OG ran, which they made a hugely significant contribution to, but CG successfully change the definition based on the fact that it is tautologically untrue and make a significant contribution to this 'new' debate, we must compare OO's contribution to the debate they were involved in with CG's contribution to that they were, not disregard OO because 'the debate became about something else'. This is not their fault. Of course, it may be that moments where OO and CG engage directly (say, on POIs) may be particularly important to the comparison.

#### 2.2.4 The status quo and the opposition

So, government decides what they want to *do or say is true*. What about opposition?

In a debate about a policy, the opposition must say that we shouldn't do it; that is, that *something is better than doing this policy*. This can be the status quo in some countries, or it can be something which is currently done nowhere, it may be described as 'doing nothing' rather than 'doing the policy' (though naturally, teams doing this don't necessarily recommend wholesale government inaction, but are running the comparative 'whatever other broadly sensible relevant policies one is carrying out, the addition of this one makes things worse'). So long as opp provide reasons not to do the policy, this is fine. There are many ways for someone to disagree with a policy, and -- as long as they *actually constitute disagreements* -- you should be willing to accept them. Keep in mind that at an international tournament like this, there is no policy status quo of significance. There are, obviously, material conditions in the world which are relevant to the debate.

Don't accept a counter-proposal which is not mutually exclusive with the policy. This isn't disagreeing with the policy. Don't require a counter-proposal from opp, or penalise them for having one. Opp just have to disagree that the policy is the right option. If they do deploy a counter-proposal in this effort, don't pretend that the debate is now about whether the counter-prop is a good idea. The counter-prop remains one tool opp are using to say we shouldn't do the policy. It is perfectly conceivable that a particular problem with the counter-prop is demonstrated, but we are left with the conclusion that doing the policy (and the counter-prop!) will make things worse. This wouldn't be a reason to do the policy.

#### 2.3 New matter in 4<sup>th</sup> speeches

Debating breaks if teams can make new arguments in the last speech (O4), to which no one can respond. So they aren't allowed to do that. While G4 is technically allowed to make new arguments, the adjudication team is unable to imagine circumstances in which this would be a wise or productive choice. New arguments should instead be made by G3.

What do we mean by a 'new argument'? Debates are about doing things, or arguing that things are true. Therefore, we mean new reasons to do things, claims that new things will happen, or claims that new moral truths are the case.

**We do not mean:**

- New defences of arguments already made
- Rebuttal
- New examples to support existing arguments
- Anything the other side can reasonably be expected to understand that team intends from the 3<sup>rd</sup> speech.

### 2.3.1 Assessing new material in 4<sup>th</sup> speeches

If a team makes a new argument in the 4<sup>th</sup> speech, ignore it. That is **all you should do**. Don't penalise it, don't make them lose. Just ignore it.

New material in the 4<sup>th</sup> speech is just bringing material in such a way that it can't be credited. Therefore, teams are advised to avoid wasting their time by doing so.

#### **A note on technical rules and role fulfilment:**

The two sections above are the **only technical rules** that exist. Don't make up new ones, they'll just get in the way of debating. 'Role fulfilment' is only a concern insofar as someone breaks one of these rules.

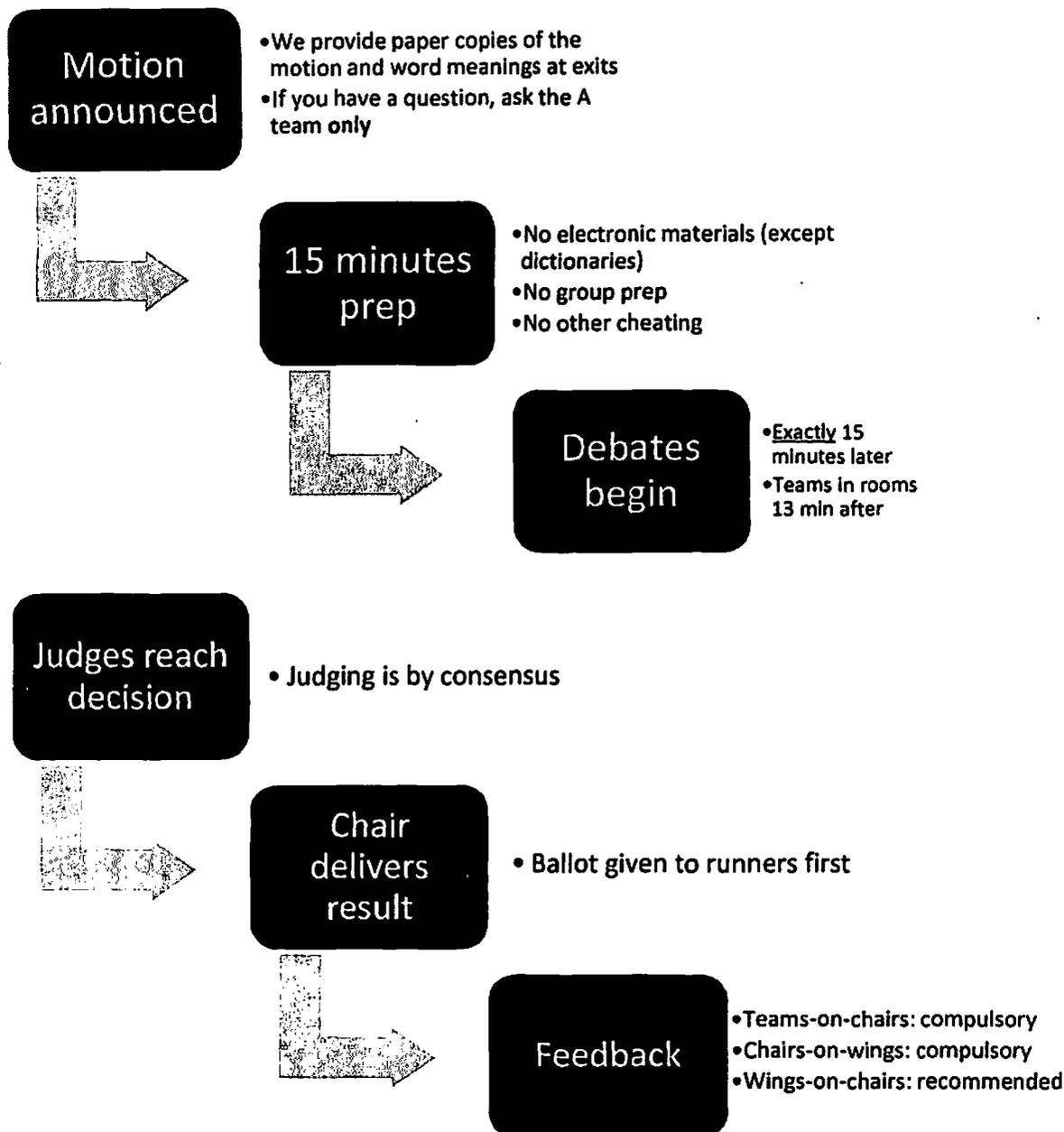
- It is **not** a failure of 'role fulfilment' if O1 doesn't rebut
- It is **not** a failure of 'role fulfilment' if P3 doesn't make new arguments

Note that both of the above speakers would probably make their teams lose, but not for any *rules-based reason*.

Judges should regard enforcement as 'light touch' – excluding rule-breaking material from consideration rather than penalising it. Role fulfilment is **not a metric to judge debates**. If you do so, you'll get it wrong. Just judge the arguments.

## 2.4 Processes

Here we'll briefly describe how debates will work at this tournament.



#### 2.4.1 What if things go wrong?

*If a team doesn't arrive:*

- Wait 2 minutes
- Tell the floor manager the team name, position, room
- A swing team will be called
- If the original team arrives first, they debate. If the swing team arrives first, they do.

*If a wing judge doesn't arrive:*

- Wait 2 minutes
- Start anyway

*If a chair judge doesn't arrive:*

- Wait 2 minutes
- Tell the floor manager
- Await instruction: either a new chair will be sent or a wing judge will be promoted.

*If there is inappropriate conduct in your round:*

- Judge the debate as normal, allowing this conduct to influence your reading of the arguments, but not artificially punishing it beyond this impact.
- Inform the conduct team after the round.

### 3 Deciding who wins

#### 3.1 The aim of the teams

Teams have to show that we should do a thing, or not; that something is true, or not. That is all they have to do. Government and opposition teams have equal and opposite burdens, and a marginal difference between them is enough to decide a win.

It isn't enough for opposition to 'question' the prop case – they need to show implementing the policy is worse than not doing it. There is **no need at all** for government to 'solve' every problem to which they refer, or even the main ones they set up. It is wildly irrational as an ordinary intelligent voter to say 'I agree that this policy is best overall, but, because it doesn't solve one particular problem you mentioned prominently, we shouldn't do it'.

One final thing we don't judge is whether or not a policy is likely to happen in the real world. This includes arguments of the form 'parliament won't vote for this', or, in the case of a motion about what the UN Security Council should do, 'China will veto it so it won't get passed'. These aren't arguments about whether something is good or not; they are arguments about whether people are likely to do it. They are irrelevant, and should receive no credit whatsoever.

It may be that there are related arguments about *why* parliament might object and consequently why the thing is a **bad idea**. Teams should make these arguments instead.

##### 3.1.1 Criteria

What constitutes a good/bad policy is itself debatable. Teams are allowed to debate the criteria for assessing whether a policy is good as part of arguing that it is, in fact, good. Judges should adjudicate this debate about criteria, as **opposed to just applying their own criteria**.

One common form of this mistake is to assume a **utilitarian framework**, and assess the debate in that way. If this is disconnected from a team arguing for a utilitarian framework, it is wrong. It is also wrong to disregard principled argumentation about which effects are particularly important, potentially for non-utility maximising reasons. Sometimes, of course, all teams in a debate agree on the framework to use, perhaps implicitly. In these cases, the judge should take on these consensus assumptions.

So, judges should listen to teams' arguments about what our aims and principles should be, and evaluate the claims of harms or benefits in that context. This *can* make these claims particularly vital; if in the debate 'THW Invade Korea' you show, for instance, 'war is always wrong, regardless of the practical benefits', the other side's claims about the practical benefits of invading North Korea

are simply relevant until they've proved a practical calculus is relevant. Note that there is no sense in which this argument is too 'generic' to gain credit. There is an absolute requirement that arguments be relevant to a debate. There is absolutely no requirement that arguments pertain *only* to that debate.

### 3.2 Assessing Argumentation

The outcome of the debate should obviously depend on what the teams do and don't say. Judges must not intervene in the debate. Don't invent arguments for teams, don't complete arguments and don't rebut arguments.

Judges often speak about a speaker "getting at a good point" even if "(s)he didn't quite get there". This is just an excuse for a judge to invent an argument (s)he'd like to hear. Don't do it.

As we don't do teams' rebuttal for them, we don't consider claims invalid just because we disagree, or because we can see holes in their arguments. Arguments stand as 'true' once they are made until they are responded to. (By 'argument' here we mean 'a set of words that gives us at least some reason to believe one conclusion over another'). This has an important implication: if OG, for instance, make arguments whose conclusion is 'we should do the policy' which everyone ignores, then they don't lose because 'the debate moved on from them'. Rather, their unrebutted arguments are still true and should be weighed as such. In fact, teams like this very often should beat the teams on the opposite bench.

There is one legitimate exception to this – if an argument is clearly absurd (such that you cannot conceive of anyone we would consider sane believing its logic and/or premises) and it was very marginal to the speech of the speaker making the claim, then it is reasonable for a team to decide to spend their time elsewhere, particularly where there is other stronger material in the round.

What is and is not rebutted is therefore of vital importance to judging debates. Note that speakers don't have to use the word "rebuttal" so respond to an argument. It is tidier if they do, but judges should not ignore material that adequately deals with an argument just because the speaker doesn't point out that it does.

Equally, this doesn't mean speakers should be 'punished' for not refuting everything: some claims do not do any harm at all to the opposite side. For example, in a debate about the legalisation of drugs, if the government say 'pink elephants are cute because they have those nice ears and are a pleasant colour', this flawed argument can be safely allowed to stand as it isn't a reason to legalise drugs. There is, therefore, no need to point out that blue elephants are obviously more tasteful. So too, if they said 'some drugs are less harmful than others', this could also be ignored. While it is clearly more related to the debate than the cute pink elephants argument, it is *pre-argumentative* – that is, it has not got sufficient surrounding words to be a reason to do or not do the policy. Opp can quite happily say 'yes, some drugs are more harmful than others' and move on. Or just ignore this argumentative non-sequitur. Often as a judge, it can be tempting to complete arguments for teams that are interesting but pre-argumentative. Don't.

Certain things don't matter (in themselves) in debating:

- The number of arguments a team makes,
- How clever or sophisticated the argument was,

- How interesting the argument was.

What matters, once an argument is made, is how important its conclusion seems to be in the debate, based on what people have said in this debate, and the extent to which it seems to be responded to (and how robust it is under such attacks). We should not here consider how important we thought a particular argument was, in the abstract, but rather how important it became in this particular debate. Similarly, we should not care how new, interesting, sophisticated or so on an argument was, except in so far as those things tacitly influence us to find those claims to be more true or important and have impacts on how well others can and do respond.

We've now come full circle. The team who seems to win the logical argument wins the debate. This must be assessed solely through material provided in the debate. Don't penalise teams for failing to make arguments. Don't consider arguments that you're aware of but which weren't made.

### 3.2.1 Mechanisms for persuasion

Many debating coaches decompose persuasiveness into different categories, which they then train teams to get better at. It is important to recognise that these are different mechanisms for persuasion, but they are means to that end.

Examples of such mechanisms are:

- Good analysis
- Good rebuttal
- Good style
- Good strategic decisions
- Sounding clever
- Sounding sophisticated
- Using examples

If these are done well they might influence you to believe the team was winning the logical argument. That's great for the team in question. But note that you shouldn't *also* consider them as separate categories for assessment. Doing so would be double counting them. While it may be helpful in coaching to dissect debating and examine these factors separately, as judges we just see what persuasive logic seems to have been produced, much as football referees don't mark players' passing and shooting, but just count the goals.

One thing which is certainly unpersuasive is inconsistency. Teams should not contradict themselves or their bench partners. Internally inconsistent teams cannot simultaneously get credit for two areas of mutually exclusive argument. We're forced to credit them for the least effective of the two.

## 4 Judging as the ordinary intelligent voter

There is obviously a need for judges to abstract themselves from their personal positions when in debates. If we simply judged as ourselves then the result would depend strongly on what we know, how we think and what opinions we hold. We would be making personal judgments about how compelling we find particular arguments. This would give teams who know us a great advantage, and would make the results more about us than them. Therefore, we attempt to judge as an abstract

'ordinary intelligent voter', and minimise the impact that our knowledge and opinions have on the result. This is a difficult process, and something that bears thinking about.

It is important, however, to remember that thinking 'as' the 'ordinary intelligent voter' does not absolve us from our responsibilities to actually judge the debate – that is to evaluate the logical flow of arguments and determine the extent to which teams have seemed to win them. We should not say 'While that was clearly irrational rabble-rousing, the ordinary intelligent person would have fallen for it'. This not only leads to irrational conclusions, but also, generally, overestimates how much cleverer we are than the ordinary intelligent voter.

There is another important feature of how the ordinary intelligent voter judges, as distinct from how we do. Many of us debate a lot, and we develop aesthetic preferences about speaking as well as in-jokes and references which we find terribly funny. This is completely natural, but distracts somewhat from debating. As voters we are much less likely to credit policies for being advocated in a 'sophisticated' or 'funny' way; these things might lead us to believe them better, but we would not say we voted for someone because she was funny, but because she'd make our life better. For instance, a speaker might be very amusing by making sarcastic remarks playing on the weakness or callousness of their case. This might lead us to find the speaker amusing, but would make the ordinary intelligent voter substantially less likely to support the policy. We as judges should remember that we are not aiming to evaluate who was cleverest, neatest or funniest, but who best used their cleverness, neatness and funniness to persuade that the policy was a good or a bad idea. The best way to do that is simply to address oneself towards debates as if there are real policies at stake and see who best persuades that the policy should or shouldn't be done. This is the *only* reason we use the term 'voter'.

The ordinary intelligent voter:

- Attempts to evaluate logically what the best thing to do is,
- Using as inputs the arguments made by the teams,
- Persuaded by a variety of tools which are not strictly logical, such as,
  - Style, neatness, clarity, etc. and their inverses.

Critically, the ordinary intelligent voter is actually open to persuasion, as some actively try to avoid being!

#### 4.1 You are probably not ordinary

Many of us (many of *you*, at any rate) know large amounts of knowledge and technical language that would be alien to many. The ordinary intelligent person has the sort of knowledge you'd expect from someone who read newspapers occasionally, but not frequently or cover-to-cover. She is not a politics geek, but has a broad understanding of major world issues and movements in high-level terms, but does not know the detail of individual conflicts, regional bodies or anything but the very most prominent countries' domestic situations.

You should certainly make reference to facts and details the ordinary intelligent person does not understand, but you should *explain* rather than *citing* these examples, facts and countries. While she may not *know* much by some of your standards, the ordinary intelligent person is genuinely intelligent, and understands complex concepts once they're explained. Where such examples are not explained beyond name-checking a country, judges should discount any material they *do* understand

because the ordinary intelligent person would not (though there may be a small stylistic benefit to sounding well-informed even as the content is lost). Judges should be bold in applying this rule: it is unfair on other teams in the room not to.

Once again, note our approach: judges should ignore material which is not explained, as opposed to actively punishing it.

#### 4.2 The Ordinary Intelligent Voter comes from nowhere

Our ordinary intelligent voter does not come from where you do; there are no 'domestic examples' requiring less explanation, even where everyone in the room comes from that country. Wherever you are from, assume your audience is from somewhere else.

This is an English-language competition, so our voter understands English. There are, however, multiple Englishes, and one should not use terms one does not expect international English-speakers to understand. This does not mean you must pitch your speech to someone who has only *some* English, but rather that you should recognise that an Australian English speaker has a different vocabulary to an English English speaker, who has a still different English to a Chinese English speaker. It is a good thing to make your English accessible. It is also part of the rules of this tournament that domestic colloquialisms do not count as comprehensible, unless our Ordinary Intelligent Voter would be able to figure them out without trouble from the context. Consequently, if you make an argument using them, you may not in fact count as having made it. Our advice: don't risk it.

Following on from the above, the ordinary intelligent person does not know technical terms that one would require a particular university degree to understand. She can be assumed to possess the sort of generalist vocabulary that comes from *a* university education of some sort, but probably not yours. He does not have the sort of halfway-there economic or legal jargon that we as debaters have become familiar with either. Saying 'Laffer curve' to most people is equivalent to making some clever-sounding noises. Similarly, using terms like 'economic efficiency' will lead to their being understood only as a layperson would grasp them, losing any technical specificity. Judges should judge accordingly.

### 5 Giving credit where it is due

We'd like to say something about awarding credit to teams for the material they bring to the debate. In particular, we want to answer the question "what counts as new material?"

Anything teams say that has not already been said in the *same way* is a new contribution and worthy of credit (or, if it is harmful, debit). This means they get credit for *everything* beneficial they do: arguments, rebuttals, framing, examples, etc. Their contribution is valuable insofar as what they say benefits their side more than what has already been said. So, a whole new argument that is entirely theirs is valuable to the extent that argument helps their side; an improvement on an existing argument is valuable insofar as *their addition to the argument* helps their side; rebuttal is valuable insofar as *defeating that specific material* helps their side. All this is determined by the current state-of-play.

One conclusion of this, is that it is **not enough** for a closing team to make an argument *somewhat* better than their opening: they gain credit only for the improvement on the previous argument. They must make improvements and additions to the opening *case* that outweighs the totality of that case.

## 5.1 Comparing contributions

Where teams have a chance to rebut each other, assessing relative contribution is easy. Judges should track the argument and assess, given their responses to each other, which team's contribution was more significant in furthering their cause to logically persuade us that we should do the policy, or that we should not.

Where teams don't get a chance to rebut others, this is trickier. This happens fairly often:

- Teams on diagonals
- O4 explains something in a new way
- Opening teams shut out of POIs

In these circumstances judges are forced to perform some more independent assessment of the 'robustness' of the arguments teams made. The question to ask is 'how robust to *potential* rebuttals was a team's contribution?' More 'robust' material is a greater contribution than less 'robust' material.

Ideally, assessing robustness will involve a comparison with material on the table, or very minor extensions thereof. For instance, when comparing with a team diagonally in front, judges should first ask whether anything in that team's case is relevant or (ideally) rebuttive. Did the team being assessed deal with this material? Check whether they allowed the diagonal team in on POIs, to give them an opportunity to engage. Deliberately shutting out engagement from a team whose material is relevant is often obvious and deeply unpersuasive.

## 6 Judging debates

We'll now briefly address the process of arriving at the result and delivering the adjudication.

### 6.1 Making the decision

Once the debate has finished, the judges should decide the rankings of the teams according to the following rules:

1. The criterion: *Judges assess who seemed to win the logical argument, as it happened in this particular debate. They do this as the 'ordinary intelligent voter', applying a very small set of technical rules, which are there to facilitate, not displace, logical argument.*
2. The 15 minute time limit

The aim of the discussion is consensus. Decide the ranking first, with no consideration of speaker marks until this has been established. This reflects the fact that **teams win debates, not speakers**, and they win based on their aggregate contribution. There is **no problem** at all with the vast majority of that contribution coming in one speech. We are not evaluating our aesthetic appreciation of the speeches (or proxy-marking 'team balance'): we're assessing the team's aggregate contribution. Imbalance within a team should be reflected by giving the speakers different speaker marks.

Note that the time limit is a rule of the tournament. That is all the time you have. Chairs of panels must manage their time accordingly, and recognise that the rules require a vote if no consensus has been reached early enough for the adjudication to complete in 15 minutes. Taking into account the time taken to decide on speaker marks, this means you should consider a vote around 12 minutes into a discussion.

Votes aim to establish a majority, with the chair holding a casting vote in case of an even split. In the case that there is absolutely no agreement, vote rank-by-rank from first to fourth.

### 6.1.1 The panel discussion

In close rounds, we expect that the judges on the panel will have different views on the debate. Therefore, achieving consensus in 10-12 minutes is a difficult task, requiring careful management by the chair judge. Here we sketch some suggestions for how this could be managed.

1. The chair should begin by asking each wing to give a ranking of the teams. This is not binding, it is a working hypothesis which will evolve as the discussion progresses. Wing judges should not feel any pressure to agree with one another or the chair in their initial call, as there is no negative implication for changing your call. Judges should have *some* opinion of the debate as soon as it is done, and should share their leanings along with their uncertainties. Having *no idea whatsoever* until five minutes of note-reading has passed does not bespeak an active following of the debate.
  2. The chair should then assess the level of consensus which exists. There are thousands of possible combinations, but thankfully a few scenarios crop up fairly often.
    - a. Everyone has exactly the same rankings – celebrate (but briefly). Have a brief discussion to ensure rankings are the same for similar reasons. Move on to scoring.
    - b. Everyone has the same except 1 person – ask him to defend his position. Be specific, tailoring the requested defence to the difference between the minority and majority opinion. If it is a difference of one team, focus on that team, etc.
    - c. There is similarity in rankings (you agree on where 1 team ranked or some relative rankings – everyone agrees OG is better than CG) but also some crucial differences. Begin by establishing which discussions need to happen (i.e. there is disagreement about whether OO beat OG). Begin by consolidating the consensus that exists, and use this as a platform to break deadlocks.
    - d. Chaos. There is no similarity between the rankings. Guide a discussion of each team's arguments, or, depending on what makes sense to you and in context, of the clashes between particular pairs of teams.
      - i. These debates often hinge on how one argument was evaluated, so your aim is to detect such differences in interpretation. The initial discussion is intended to inform each other of your perspectives and find some level of common understanding.
      - ii. If two judges believe different arguments are central, frame a discussion about their relative priority. Get each judge to explain their position, and attempt to establish a metric for the importance of arguments in the debate.
- After this brief discussion, rank the teams and compare again. If you have achieved some overlap, move on to the suggestions under (c) above. Vote if necessary.
3. Once a ranking has been decided upon, the chair should lead a quick determination of speaker scores. These should reflect the majority decision, and not be a compromise between various opinions. i.e. don't say "We all think OG wins, but we can make sure the

speaks reflect your view". If the majority doesn't think a relative ranking is close, there is no reason that the speaker marks should reflect such.

## 6.2 Awarding speaker marks

The below categories are rough and general descriptions of mark bands; not all speeches within a given band will fit all of the criteria: our job as judges is to find the best fit. Naturally, this will depend on contextual factors which this piece of paper can neither anticipate nor account for. Importantly, please do use the full range, and please do not feel that certain rooms should automatically get certain mark ranges.

- The range is 50 to 100
- Marks below 60 indicate a speech which actively harms a team's attempt to persuade – that is, you would, figuratively, be more persuaded of it without this speech.

95-100	Words cannot do justice. This is <u>extraordinarily</u> rare. If your opinion doesn't actively change, you agreed to start with, or are not human.
90-94	Brilliant arguments successfully engage with the main issues in the round, and are fantastically persuasive. Arguments are very likely to be obviously well-explained, demanding incredibly sophisticated responses; textured and central. The speech is likely to be clear and well-paced. Structure probably executed flawlessly.
85-89	Very good, central arguments engage well with the most important issues on the table; they are very compelling indeed. The speech is likely to be clear, well-paced, very persuasive. Structure probably flawless.
80-84	Relevant and pertinent arguments address key issues in the round with sufficient explanation, and as such are strongly persuasive. It is likely that arguments are robust though not unbeatable (though they may be unbeaten in the round). The speech is likely to be clear and well-paced. Structure unlikely to be an issue.
76-79	Arguments are almost exclusively relevant, only sometimes peripheral and genuinely persuasive. It is likely that arguments and responses are mostly well-explained, though they are likely to leave some things unjustified or vulnerable to detailed critical response. The speaker is likely to hold one's attention, and be clear.
75	For the most part, arguments are relevant, some reasons are provided, and the case is reasonably persuasive. There are likely to be some noticeable argumentative flaws, perhaps including some of i) deficits in explanation, ii) simplistic argumentation vulnerable to any competent responses and iii) momentary slips into irrelevance. The speaker likely holds the audience's attention and is usually clear, but rarely compelling.
70-74	The speaker is generally relevant and is somewhat persuasive of their logical case. In doing this, there is likely to be real logic, that has real gaps; attention-holding delivery that may be difficult to follow; and imperfect structure.
65-69	The speaker is frequently relevant, but with rudimentary explanation, which leads to present, but little, persuasive impact. In doing this, the speaker is likely to be clear enough to be understood the vast majority of the time, but this may be difficult or unrewarding. The speech may be poorly structured.
60-64	The speaker is often relevant, and to a very limited extent persuades us of a logical case. In doing so, they may have substantially under-explained arguments and responses; frequently be unclear and confusing; have really problematic structure/lack thereof.
55-59	The speaker is only occasionally making relevant claims, which are rarely formulated as arguments. The speech is very unpersuasive, and is likely to do at least some active harm to its side. This lack of persuasiveness may be contributed to by a general lack of sufficiently-explained responses or positive material, difficult-to-follow, little/no discernable structure; no evident awareness of role.

50-54	Terrible; (almost) never relevant. Where (if) relevant, it is extremely unpersuasive. Speeches in this bracket are likely to do substantial active harm to their side. This profound lack of persuasiveness may be contributed to by a total lack of sufficiently-explained responses or positive material, confused and confusing delivery and/or a lack of structure. This is not an exhaustive list of terrible things, though the speech may be.
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### 6.3 Giving feedback

The chair of the panel delivers the adjudication speech. In the case that the chair loses a vote, she may, if she chooses, retire from this position and ask one of the wing judges who voted in the majority to deliver the adjudication. If he does give the adjudication, this *must* be to defend the *majority* position, although the chair should overtly state they disagreed with the majority.

The adjudication speech should distinguish between *the reasons for the decision* and *advice for teams*. The reasons should be about what *did* happen, while advice is about what *didn't* happen. The latter cannot be a basis for the former.

The primary aim of an adjudication speech is to convey to the teams the reasoning of the panel in ranking the teams as they did. The speech should therefore present a logical argument for the ranking, using as evidence the arguments made in the debate and how they influenced the judges. Debates shouldn't be judged according to coaching models (either prescriptive models like 'problem/solution' or decompositions of persuasiveness like 'content, style, strategy').

The speech should be structured as followed:

1. Announce the ranking of the teams,
2. Go through the teams in an order that makes sense, comparing pairs of teams and explaining why one beat the other,
3. Summarise and invite teams for more detailed feedback.

Comparing teams involves more than making isolated statements about Team X and Team Y, and saying 'so X clearly beat Y'. It requires that you explain the interaction between the teams to establish who had the better argument.

Be specific and be detailed – the vague application of adjectives is not sufficient judging. Identify arguments, whether and how they were responded to, and what the impact of the remainder was. Identify which teams get credit for what, and how this influenced your decision about whether or not we should do the policy.

#### 6.3.1 Giving advice

Advice should be separated from the reasons for your decision, lest you confuse teams about which is which. There are a number of broad areas of advice you may want to give as a judge:

- General advice on how to improve
- Suggestions of reasons why things identified in the adjudication happened
- What might have been run (minimise this unless asked!)

## **7 Feedback on judges**

We want to know how judges are doing, for two reasons. Firstly, to ensure we provide the fairest possible competition by putting the best judges in charge of panels, secondly, because judges care about their success in the tournament and try to improve their standings.

There are three types of feedback:

- Team feedback on the chair judge's adjudication speech,
- Chair judge's feedback on wing judges,
- Wing judges' feedback on chairs.

Each type is important. At this tournament we have developed an entirely new system for tracking feedback, in order to allow us to use it more efficiently. The only way we can use this system is if you participate.