Vermont Public Forum Debate Manual
A Guide for Students, Teachers, and Coaches
2017

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Dedication

To Bob Walker, my first Debate Coach, Bill Haines, David Gale and all the coaches, students, and parents that make debate possible in Vermont.
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What is Public Forum Debate in Vermont?

Public Forum Debate is essentially an oral communication advocacy exercise done with a partner. Each team of two advocate either in favor of (PRO) or against (CON) a resolution by proposing three to four arguments supporting their position. With those arguments laid out in opening speeches, each side chooses the most important arguments to defend or attack. Using skills in cross-examination and the introduction of evidence, the debaters clarify, extend their own points, and expose weaknesses and/or contradictions in the oppositions’ arguments. Through a series of constructive and rebuttal speeches, the PRO and CON sides will, in forty-five minutes, seek to persuade a citizen judge of the merits of their position.

Sample topics:
- Resolved: Commercial airline pilots should be armed in the cockpit
- Resolved: The death penalty should be abolished in America
- Resolved: That Congress should repeal the No Child Left Behind Act

The benefits of debate are numerous.

Some of the more important ones are:
1. the opportunity to demonstrate and improve oral and non-verbal communication skills;
2. engage in controversy and learn to argue effectively;
3. research current issues and expand one’s knowledge base;
4. work collaboratively and learn to support a partner;
5. think on one’s feet and learn to adapt with quick, effective responses.

The citizen judges are drawn from a large talent pool including educators, legislators, people in the media, parents, non-governmental staff, retirees, and policy makers. Judges are asked to make their decision on the basis of the analysis of the resolution, the evidence presented, the expansion of the arguments, and the debaters’ delivery and rebuttal skills.

Public Forum Debate does not seek solutions to problems. It is not designed to replace other forms of debate. Rather it is an exercise in competitive argumentation that offers students an opportunity to discuss current issues in a structured format. This style of debate strives for a general audience who want to be entertained as well as to learn.
Public Forum Debate is a recognized co-curricular activity of the Vermont Principals Association and is organized by the Vermont Debate and Forensics League.

Public Forum Debate Primer
Public Forum Debate Format

Team A: First Speaker: Constructive Speech 4 minutes

Team B: First Speaker: Constructive Speech 4 minutes

Crossfire (between first speakers) 3 minutes

Team A: Second Speaker: Rebuttal 4 minutes

Team B: Second Speaker: Rebuttal 4 minutes

Crossfire (between second speakers) 3 minutes

Team A: First Speaker: Summary 2 minutes

Team B: First Speaker: Summary 2 minutes
Grand Crossfire (All speakers)  3 minutes

Team A: Second Speaker: Final Focus  2 minutes

Team B: Second Speaker: Final Focus  2 minutes

Each Team gets 2 minutes of prep time that they can take before their own speeches or Crossfires. The time can be split up at the discretion of the teams.

Public Forum Debate from Start to Finish
By
James Dixon

One team calls the flip of a coin, and if they win, have the choice of either going Pro or Con, First or second. If they lose the coin toss, the choice goes to the other team. After the winner of the coin toss chooses, the opposing team has the remaining choice. For example, if a team chooses to go Pro, the opposing team will have the choice of first or second. If the winner of the coin toss chooses to go first or second, then the opposing team will have the choice of going Pro or Con. For the following example, the Pro team is going first. Each team will have 2 minutes of prep time to be used before crossfires and their speeches. Prep time is not usually taken all at once, but in increments throughout the debate.

Speech #1: The Pro Constructive Speech  
Time Limit:  4 Minutes 
Purpose: The pro team presents their arguments in support of the resolution  
Speaker: Pro #1

This is a prepared speech that is written prior to the tournament. The first pro constructive speech should present the primary position of the pro in regards to the resolution for debate. The speech should be written to persuade your audience in favor of the resolution. This speech should have 3 points with claims, evidence with citations and impacts. Claims explain the arguments; evidence proves the arguments and impacts explain the results of the arguments.
Speech #2: The Con Constructive Speech  
Time Limit: 4 Minutes  
Purpose: The con team presents their arguments in opposition of the resolution  
Speaker: Con #1

This is a prepared speech that is written prior to the tournament. The first con constructive speech should present the primary position of the con in regards to the resolution for debate. The speech should be written to persuade your audience to negate the resolution. This speech should have 3 points with claims, evidence with citations and impacts. Claims explain the arguments; evidence proves the arguments and impacts explain the results of the arguments.

Crossfire #1: Crossfire  
Time Limit: 3 Minutes  
Purpose: Question/Answer Time  
Speakers: Pro #1 / Con #1

The first Crossfire is a period of time that can be used to clarify case arguments and uncover your opponent’s case weaknesses. Both debaters are allowed to ask questions during this time. Dialogue between debaters should be civil, and to the point as filibustering is discouraged. Crossfire represents a direct and interactive clash of the different positions being debated.

Speech #3: The Pro Rebuttal  
Time Limit: 4 Minutes  
Purpose: Refute Con Constructive  
Speaker: Pro #2

The job of this pro speaker is to refute the arguments provided by the Con in their case speech. Accurate notes taken during the con’s case speech are imperative be able to answer the arguments made by the con. The speech should directly refute the cons points in the order they were presented. This may seem like a more difficult speech because you do not know your opponent’s case; however prepping for a variety of points will allow your refutes to be more precise and organized. Create blocks that include refute claims, evidence with citations and impacts.

Speech #4: The Con Rebuttal  
Time Limit: 4 Minutes  
Purpose: Refute Pro Constructive & Rebuild Con Constructive  
Speaker: Con #2

The job of this pro speaker is to refute the arguments provided by the Con in their case speech. Accurate notes taken during the con’s case speech are imperative be able to answer the
arguments made by the con. The speech should directly refute the cons points in the order they were presented. This may seem like a more difficult speech because you do not know your opponent’s case; however prepping for a variety of points will allow your refutes to be more precise and organized. Create blocks that include refute claims, evidence with citations and impacts.

Crossfire #2: Crossfire
Time Limit: 3 Minutes
Purpose: Question/Answer Time
Speakers: Pro #2 / Con #2

The second crossfire is a period of time that can be used not only to further clarify case arguments, but to question your opponent’s refutes of your case. Both debaters are allowed to ask questions during this time. Dialogue between debaters should be civil, and to the point as filibustering is discouraged. Crossfire represents a direct and interactive clash of the different positions being debated.

Speech #5: Pro Summary
Time Limit: 3 Minutes
Purpose: Summarize Pro Position
Speaker: Pro #1

In this speech, the pro should answer to the con refutes by defending your case arguments. You also want to remind the judge how you refuted their most important points. Think of this speech as explaining what the whole debate round is about. You should never just restate arguments and refutes. Given time, you will also want to make comparisons with the con case and weigh arguments to show that yours are more important in the round. This sets up the Final Focus and tells the judge how they should evaluate the round.

Speech #6: Con Summary
Time Limit: 3 Minutes
Purpose: Summarize Con Position
Speaker: Con #2

In this speech, the con should answer to the pro refutes by defending your case arguments. You also want to remind the judge how you refuted their most important points. Think of this speech as explaining what the whole debate round is about. You should never just restate arguments and refutes. Given time, you will also want to make comparisons with the pro case and weigh arguments to show that your arguments are more important in the round. This sets up the Final Focus and tells the judge how they should evaluate the round.
Crossfire #3: Grand Crossfire  
**Time Limit:** 3 Minutes  
**Purpose:** Question/Answer Time  
**Speakers:** All students

Because you have begun weighing arguments, debaters should use grand crossfire to work on finding areas that have clashed in the debate and highlight the differences between your position and your opponents. Finding differences make it easier to show how your arguments have more validity than your opponents. Remember that you are “performing” for your judge(s) and not convincing your opponents of your position. Share the time equally with your partner.

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**Speech #7: Pro Final Focus**  
**Time Limit:** 2 Minutes  
**Purpose:** Give final voting issues in favor of Pro  
**Speaker:** Pro #2

In this speech, the debater should focus on the two primary arguments in favor of the pro team and how they have survived the con teams refutes. You should weigh your arguments against your opponents with phrases like “even though our opponents have these points, they are not as important as ours because…” Demonstrate your arguments are interconnected and solid by relating them to a centralized concept or theme. This speech should be very conversational in tone. Students should try not to rely on notes and instead give a clear and persuasive reason to vote for the pro team. Think of this speech as explaining what the debate comes down to. New arguments and evidence is not allowed in the speech.

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**Speech #8: Con Final Focus**  
**Time Limit:** 2 Minutes  
**Purpose:** Give final voting issues in favor of Con  
**Speaker:** Con #2

In this speech, the debater should focus on the two primary arguments in favor of the con team and how they have survived the con teams refutes. You should weigh your arguments against your opponents with phrases like “even though our opponents have these points, they are not as important as ours because…” Demonstrate your arguments are interconnected and solid by
relating them to a centralized concept or theme. This speech should be very conversational in tone. Students should try not to rely on notes and instead give a clear and persuasive reason to vote for the pro team. Think of this speech as explaining what the debate comes down to. New arguments and evidence is not allowed in the speech.

At the end of the debate the debaters should thank both their opponents and the judge gather their things and exit the room. Talking to the judge other than expressing thanks is strongly discouraged because the judge needs to get to work on the ballot and it may create uncomfortable feelings in you opponents.

### Speaking

**PROMPT:**

**Prepare:** Taking time with your thoughts, ideas and arguments allows your brain to explore, differentiate, and process the knowledge that you have received.

**Re-focus attention on the audience:** Don’t be self centered. Always come back to what your judges understand.

**Observe:** Watch other debaters perform as an example of what might work for you.

**Move:** This is not just physical movement (gestures), but movement of speech (pauses, speed, volume).

**Practice:** This includes discussions, arguing, and solidifying points.

**Take your time:** Take command of your speech.

**Concrete speaking essentials**

- Volume
- Pitch
- Eye contact
- Hand gestures
- Enunciation
Persuasion

Aristotle modes of persuasion:
- **Logos**: Persuasion by reason
- **Pathos**: Persuasion by emotion
- **Ethos**: Persuasion by authority

Logos + Pathos = Ethos

Organization basics
- Statements of reason method: Direct with a thesis followed by supporting reasons
- Comparative advantages method: Gives reasons that benefit an audience
- Criteria satisfaction method: Getting an audience to agree with a value or standard

Knowing the Resolutions
- **Proposition of Fact**: Question whether information is true
- **Proposition of Worth**: Question values, ideals, or judgments
Proposition of Policy: Question a course of action

Errors in persuasion

- Content
  - Lack of information
  - Poor information
- Organization
  - Lacks Introduction, Body, and Conclusion
  - Lacks Transitions
- Logical Fallacies and errors in argumentation
  - **Causal Fallacy**: Evidence does not support a cause and effect conclusion
  - **Bandwagon Fallacy**: Just because a majority from a poll support an issue, does not make it correct
  - **Hasty Generalization Fallacy**: Claim does not have inadequate evidence
  - **Slippery Slope Fallacy**: Exaggerates the consequences or does not clearly show the sequence of cause and effect
  - **Either/or Fallacy**: Narrowing the options to two extremes when more options exist
  - **Anecdotal Evidence**: Evidence is isolated and small

Argument Construction

**Argumentation** is comparing, contrasting and prioritizing ideas to find the truth

*Hint: Offense strategy & Defense strategy*

Elements of successful argumentation

- **Claim**: The basic idea of the argument using specific language. (Also called Tag)
- **Evidence**: Data that supports the claim and establishes argument credibility.
- **Warrant**: An explanation and justification of why the claim is true. A claim without a warrant is just an assertion.
  - A warrant explains how the claim will occur.
  - A warrant can also explain why the claim will occur.
- **Impact**: This gives the reason why the argument is important and should matter to the judge. They should be concrete, real-world examples and should relate back to the pro or con side of the resolution.
- **Enhance:** Fine tune the basic argumentative structure with analogies, expositions, and illustrations

**Goals of debate**
- Solid logic
- Persuasive arguments
- Analysis that walks your judge through a very clear position
- Evidence supports, but does not dictate your arguments. *(Speed and Spread is not necessary)*
- Clash of positions and arguments

**Topic Analysis**

Essential and Generic Questions for Analysis of the Resolution

What is the time frame?
*(Past, present, future or a combination of these)*

What definitions are necessary?

Who are the stakeholders?
- What individuals or groups are involved directly?
- What individuals or groups are involved indirectly?

What damages/harms is the resolution pointing toward?

What benefits/good is or should result from the resolution?
What happens if the status quo is maintained?

What are the obvious arguments/contention for the PRO side?

What are the obvious arguments/contentions for the CON side?

What are the less obvious or more subtle arguments/contentions for either side?

What indicators are involved in the resolution?

(statistics, history, stories, expertise, court cases)

What are the values involved in the resolution?

(political, economic, social, legal)

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**Research**

**Evidence**
- Published support of an argument that persuades a judge
- Gives credibility and support to your arguments
- Necessary because your current knowledge is limited

**Research Tips**
- Research sometimes takes time, so do not start the night before
- Google organizes sites by how popular they are, so continue to the less popular sites
- Follow links at the end of sites
• In longer articles and studies, look for the conclusions or use the Web Cached to highlight words used in your search
• Use the dictionary search http://www.onelook.com for definitions

Research steps
• What do I already know about the resolution?
• What words are unclear? If so, find definitions
• What information do I need to know about the resolved?
• Look at articles for quotes and to find more information
• Wikipedia is a good source for links to more substantial evidence

Research process
1. Formulate questions which give you a specific goal rather than topics which often widen searches.
2. Begin by researching general knowledge on the topic. (wikipedia is good for this type of knowledge)
3. Keep at it! Research take perseverance and the more you do it the better your will become.
4. Use different key words and keep track the combinations that you have used.
5. Copy links, sites, and material that you may need for your debate.

Gathering Evidence

Tag, citation and evidence
• The tag summarizes the evidence using a minimum number of words
• A complete citation is given
• The text of the evidence is copied exactly from the original source

Tag: The headline that summarizes the main idea of the evidence.

Citation: The history of the evidence
Evidence
- Obviously supports the argument the debater is making
- Authoritative, primary source and free from bias
- The passage is concise

Organize your evidence
- By Pro and Con
- By contentions and alphabetized
- Developed to suit your organizational style

Case structure

**Hint:** This may seem obvious, but be very clear and clean when announcing contentions

**Introduction (≈ 30 sec.)**

Opening (Questions to think about when preparing an opening)
- Why we are even talking about this?
- Why should we care about resolution?
• Why is it worth their time to listen?
• Why should we like your position?
• Can your argument make a real difference in the world?

Affirm or negate the resolution
“We the PRO team affirm the resolve that single-gender classrooms would improve the quality of education in American public schools.”

Define any terms in the resolution

Possible Introduction of a framework
• Framework is set up as a way for the judge to weighing which parts of the debate are most important and why
  ○ Cost/Benefit, Deontology, Utilitarianism, etc.
• Often they are based on values or standards such as security, justice, and morality

Body (= 3-3½ minutes)
2-3 independent self-contained contentions stating why the resolution is true or false
• Claim or Point: states your position on the issue
• Evidence or data: citations made to support your claim
• Warrant: interprets the evidence or data and shows how it supports your claim.
• Impact: answers why your argumentation matters
  ○ Quantitative (how many affected)
  ○ Qualitative (how negatively/positively they are affected)

Conclusion (= 10-20 sec.)
Summarize the main contentions and link them back to your introduction

Refutes

Refuting Basic
Refuting comes down to comprehensive ordered responses
  ○ Refute all points no matter how insignificant
  ○ Refute in the order they are presented
  ○ Repeating refutes in refutation speech wastes time
Don’t be afraid to agree sometimes. Some things are just bad; locate the area of disagreement

Utilize case attacks (Why your opponent’s argument is inadequate and incomplete)

Refutation by Professor Alfred Snyder in four steps
1. They say... (Sign post)
2. We disagree...
3. Because... (Reason)
4. Therefore... (my opponent’s claims are untrue, are not a serious problem, or their solution will not solve the problem)

Refutation explained another way
1. Very briefly summarize your opponent’s argument. Don’t just say, “My opponents 3rd contention...”
2. Refuting claims and impacts often only provides alternatives to these claims and warrants
3. Refuting warrants explains why your opponents arguments are untrue, have the opposite effect, or does not reduce the problem

Attempt to refute your opponent’s warrants because they target the reasons why your opponent’s arguments are flawed

Offense answers vs. defense answers
“’There’s a problem.”
Defensive Answer: That’s not such a big problem.
Offensive Answer: You make the problem worse.
“’This is the solution.”
Defensive answer: That will not solve the problem.
Offensive answer: That solution will cause more problems

Turns
Impact turns: risky and difficult “That thing that you think is bad is actually good.”

Crossfire

Purpose of cross fire

Clarification
• Identify weakness and attack weakness
• Defend your position simply and to the point
• Gain credibility with civility, diplomacy, and precise questions and answers

**Asking and Answering questions: The five C’s**

- **Confidence:** Sometimes one must only look like one is winning the debate
- **Compare:** The speakers are sharing time and the judge can readily compare
- **Concise:** Long speeches are boring and might set you up for mistakes
- **Calm:** Remember that you are performing for judges
- **Champion your case:** Work your case in wherever you can

**Good Rules for Questions**

- Set up arguments that you have already prepared
- Don’t ask open ended questions. This sets up your opponents to present their case
- Instead of “would you agree” questions ask whether the evidence is correct
- Ask questions that lead your opponents into traps
- Watch the judge’s reactions

**Grand Crossfire**

- Cooperation and teamwork is essential
- Come up with a signal that tells your partner that you want to speak
- Four people needing to divide speaking time means needing precise questions
- Flow the summary speeches well and know what is still on the table
- Focus on the key disagreements in the round
- Tie every question they ask you into your arguments/contentions
- Have evidence organized and ready and if possible, know the sources and dates for a quick reply
- Listen to the questions and answers of your partner and opponents to develop an overview of what is happening in Grand Cross fire

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**The Art of Debate:**

**Summary and Final Focus**
Art is the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination. In Public Forum Debate, this happens generally in the Summary and Final Focus where debaters examine “what is on the table” and apply analysis and synthesis to convince a judge that their position is the truest. Art is also about learning from others, then expanding upon this learning.

Whereas the case speeches exhibit research and organization, and the rebuttal speeches show the ability to challenge information; the Summary and Final Focus speeches display the critical thinking elements of comparing, contrasting and prioritizing that are crucial to winning in Public Forum.

**Debate analysis:** The process of separating a debate into its constituent arguments

**Debate synthesis:** To unify constituent arguments to form a coherent premise

### Summary

Summaries do not simply repeat the case points. Because your points have been refuted in speeches and crossfires, the summary must respond to these refutes. Many new debaters focus too much on refuting their opponents points as an extension of the refute speech. Debaters should make comparisons that highlight the strength of their points compared to the weaknesses of their opponent’s points. Debaters should think of the speech in terms of what the debate is about, not a retelling of points.

**Summary speech tips:**
- Teams should begin to synthesize the debate
- The summary should set up the final focus
- Bring the debate down to the main arguments and issues

**Summary Speech format:**
- Brief overview to remind the judge of the debate so far, and as context to transition into what you think the main arguments and issues are
- Choose 1-2 opposing arguments that might be a problem in winning the round and extend your refutes
- Choose 1-2 arguments from your case and extend them to explain why they are the strongest points and the most important to the round
- Set up the framework for the final focus

### Final Focus
If the Summary tells the judge what the debate is about, the Final Focus tells the judge what the debate has come down to. Weighing statements work particularly well in this final speech because they directly compare your points to your opponent’s points and refutes and tell the judge why your points carry more weight in the round. It also helps to focus on your impacts because they will tell the judge why choosing your side matters more.

**Final focus speech tips:**
- Use phrases like “Remember when my partner told you...” for continuity
- The last chance to make an impression on the judge
- Keep in mind what you would be voting on if you were judging the round
- Answer any remaining objections to your case and extend an argument one final time
- It’s better to not read too much from notes
- Make eye contact! Really Connect with your judge(s).

**Final Focus Speech format:**
- Tell the judge what the debate comes down too. This could be a centralizing concept, impact, or framework
- Answer to any strong refutes that may still be unanswered or unresolved
- Weigh your points against theirs and demonstrate that your points are more important
- End with good eye contact and think about what the judge wants to hear from you
How to start a team
Initial Steps

1. Contact the president of the VDFL
   ● Go to the [www.vdfl.net](http://www.vdfl.net) for the schedule and general information
   ● Coach: The VDFL requires that students be accompanied by a coach or parent. We have had many instances where a parent is the coach.

2. Costs
   ● Membership dues: $50 per school (This covers all the regular season tournaments.
   ● The State Tournament has an additional registration fee for each student attending.
   ● Many teams purchase briefs to help with case construction. They range from $20-$25 for each brief. Some popular briefs are “Forensic Files”, Champion Briefs or “Foundation Briefs” There are many resources to help in constructing case and refute speeches that are free online.

Meet with your principal and find out about the following information:
   ● Funding your Debate Team
   ● Whether your school will provide Busing, or other forms of transportation
   ● Ask if you can get a Coach stipend. Coaches not only work with their teams before a tournament, they run the tournaments as well. Most tournaments are on Saturday and including transportations are an all-day event. All this is quite a considerable time commitment.
   ● Ask if your team can be listed as a school club or student activity. These designations sometimes come with benefits such as busing and funding.

3. Advanced training preparation
   Summer camp
   October debate training

4. Observing at a debate tournament

5. The Novice Protection Plan
Being a Coach and Recruiting Students
Funds needed, Briefs and Signing-up for Tournaments
Tournaments
Vermont public forum debate general timeline for regular tournaments sponsored by one of the VDFL participating schools.

8:45 to 9:30 - Registration

8:30 – 9:15 - Judges’ Orientation
Work on round 1 schematics as needed

9:30 – 10:30 - Round 1 debates
Speed ballot completion
Ballot completion

10:45 – 11:45 - Round 2 debates
Speed ballot completion
Ballot completion

Noon – 1:00 pm - Round 3 debates
Ballot completion
Final tabulation

1:30-2:00 pm - Awards

Hosting a Tournament

Facility:

You will need to sign-up for cafeteria and rooms at your school ASAP as soon as you know that you will be hosting a tournament. You will need the cafeteria as a place for your debaters to wait in between rounds and eat the food that will be provided. You will also need a tab room and a closely adjacent judge room and rooms for debating.

Tournament numbers throughout the years are inconsistent as I have hosted 18 teams one year and the next hosted 30 teams. I sign up for a maximum number of rooms to facilitate 30 teams which requires 17 rooms and the cafeteria. It helps to have the tab and judge rooms close to the debate rooms. High schools will have an official sign-up procedure and form.

Judges:
You will need to start working to get judges. For 20 teams you will need 10 judges. Parents, teachers, administrators, local colleges, community organizations, List serves, alumni. You may also be able to use coaches to expand your judge pool.

**Food:**

Bagels, cream cheese, muffins, Danish, juice, snacks like popcorn, chips, fruit coffee, tea, candy. Some coaches provide a continental breakfast and snacks at their tournament, other coaches may choose to offer more extensive menus like sandwiches or pizza, still other coaches have parents cook casserole type dishes for their tournaments. Donations from food service providers and food provided by parents will increase the amount of food offered at a tournament. You will need to organize and obtain all the utensils and appliances necessary for serve the food and beverages, i.e.: coffee pots, toasters, large bowls etc. It alleviates a lot of stress to assign this aspect of the tournament to a parent, or parents.

**Lecterns:**

Arrange to get music stands from your school. These really help so that the debaters do not have to “create” the lecterns and disturb items in the classroom.

**Paperwork:**

Attached to this document is all the paperwork necessary to run a tournament including invitation, tabbing and judge training. Paste the correct month’s resolution in the top box of the ballot and create a judge list for the judge trainer.

**Trophies:**

There are different companies from which you can order them online. I use Dinn Brothers, but there are others. The VDFL agreed to offer the following awards: Team trophies for first, second, third and novice place. Six individual medals that are hung around the neck designated as first through sixth speaker awards. Coaches may decide how if they want to give two smaller trophies for team awards thus giving each person on the team an award, or the traditional larger single trophy for team.

Example of how the awards are designated for a team award:

**First Place**
Hartford High School
Public Forum Debate
11/14/2015

An example of how the awards are designated for a team award:

First Speaker

Hartford High School
Public Forum Debate
11/14/15

List of teams:

I create two lists. One list has the debater’s names, school designation and initials, and strength/novice, experienced designation. This will be used to do the scheme and in the tab room. The other has the debater’s names and their team designation only (MHS:SD for Montpelier High School: Chris Smith and Jane Doe). This is hung up next to the schem. to inform the debaters their designation and is used for check-in at the tournament.

Registration:

Coaches will send you emails listing the debate teams from their school, experienced/novice designations and relative team strengths. Remember that they can only have one “A”, one “B” team and so on.

First round Schematics or “schem” for short:

Follow the subsequent procedures for producing a first round schem.

Assign student assistants:

These students help set up the food, place and take out the music stands, arrange and rearrange the rooms, register teams, clean up and offer directions to the coaches, judges and debaters.

VDFL President for Debate responsibilities:

The president will assign tab room persons, the moderator and runners for the tournament. As host you are then free to take care of your judges and oversee the facilities. The moderator may call upon you to make a joint decision to resolve any conflict at the tournament.

Coach Responsibilities:
New coaches should judge debate rounds. Judging offers a unique perspective and will aid in coaching your students.

Experienced coaches are often called upon to judge when there are not enough citizen judges or in the third round when conflicts make the schematics difficult.

Other responsibilities include working the Tab Room, and running speed ballots.

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**Sample Invitation**

Dear Debate Coaches,

Please accept this invitation to the Hartford High School Debate Tournament on Saturday, November 8th, 2014 where we will be debating the following NFL November topic:

*Resolved: On Balance, the benefits of genetically modified foods outweigh the harms.*

We will provide a continental breakfast and snacks between rounds.

I will start setting up around 8:00 so you can arrive after this time. Check in and judge orientation will start at 9:00am and the first round will start between 9:30-10:00. We anticipate the tournament being over by 1:30-2:00 if there are no glitches. Please email me with the number of teams as soon as possible so that we can plan for the food requirements, judges and set up schematics.
Please indicate the strengths of your teams by designating them “A” for strongest then B, C, etc. Also designate novice teams. There can be only one “A” team, one “B” team and so on. I will set up the first round schematics to accommodate the strengths of the teams.

Please let me know if you can bring judges as I always am pressed to find enough, especially if we have a big turn-out.

I will be sending out an email with the tentative team list and asking for confirmations. I will also include a cell phone for last minute updates.

I look forward to hearing from you,
James Dixon
HHS Debate

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Procedure for creating a debate first round schematic

January 18, 2015

1. Create a team roster for all schools. Team listings should include relative strength of the team, the school, the last initials of each student, and indicate whether the teams are Experienced, Experienced/Novice, or Novice.

   Examples from Hartford High School after the Hanover Tournament:
   
   A. Hart: FW (Experienced) (Went 3-0)
   B. Hart: LD (Experienced/Novice) (Went 2-1)
   C. Hart: RL (Novice) (Went 2-1)
   D. Hart: GC (Novice) (Went 1-2)
There should be only one A team, one B team and so forth. The designation of A, B, C is up to each coach’s discretion. I compare a team’s relative experience to my other teams and their win/loss record at tournaments. If your team has won a tournament, or went 3-0, they are probably an “A” team, verses a team that has gone 2-1 might be your “B” team.

2. Cut the roster into individual slips of paper, each slip having one team.

3. Turn slips over and shuffle.

4. There are only three rules for the selection process:
   1. Novices meet Novices.
   2. “A” teams do not meet “A” teams.
   3. If there is an odd number of teams, the last novice team picked gets the “Bye.”

A “Bye” means that the team has won the round; however they cannot compete in the first round because they is an odd number of teams. The debate points and ranks for this round will be averaged from the net two rounds.

5. Suggestions for the selection process:
   1. I try to match Experienced/Novice teams with other Experienced/Novice teams.

2. I match “A” teams with “B” teams, and try to avoid matching them with a team further down on a school’s roster.

6. Turn over a slip and place in a Novice row, Experienced row, or Experienced/Novice row.

7. Turn the next slip over and following the rules/suggestions above. Match this team with the other team selected, or place in another row.

Example: The first slip is a Novice team. The second slip is an Experienced “A” team. These to slips would be in separate rows. The third slip is a Novice team and you would match them with the other novice team. The forth slip is another “A” team. You would place this slip under the other “A” team slip, and not match it. The fifth slip is a “B” team and would be matched with the first “A” team. The sixth slip is a Novice/experienced “C” team and would be placed in the Novice/Experienced row. Keep go, so on and so forth.

8. There is no absolute guarantee that a novice team will meet another novice team because you might have an odd number of novices. Often, you will need to match a Novice/Experienced team with an experienced team, or even a novice team against a Novice/Experienced team. I always hope I have even numbers in all three rows, but this is frequently not the case.

9. The goal, in the end, is to remove all conscious or unconscious decisions that you might make about the pairings. I have, at times, groaned as I paired one of my “B” teams up with an “A” team that was
much, much better, and would, in the end, beat them. In this system, there can be no request to match certain teams with other teams, as it removes random selection and imposes standards that pertain to said teams, but not others. All teams need to be selected by the same standards.

10. After you have matched all the slips of paper, Type the teams on to your first round schematic (schem for short).

11. Save the slips of paper as teams may withdraw or be added at the last minute, and you may have to do all or some of the pairings all over again.

12. Add the judges, making sure that there are no conflicts of interest between debaters and judges.

13. Lastly, add the rooms.

14. Pray to the gods of debate that you do not have to do this again before the tournament!

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**Vermont Public Forum Debate Judge Expectations**

1. Have an open mind. Discard your personal beliefs on the topic at the classroom door.

2. Please try to take notes during the round to keep track of the major arguments, important evidence, and rebuttal statements presented by each side.

3. Evaluate which team advocated more effectively for their side based on evidence, analysis and rebuttals.
   a. provide an explanation for that decision on the ballot
b. provide rankings and points for each debater that reflect your judgment on how they performed

4. Offer a comment that reflects what you saw done well by each debater and a comment about how they might improve.

5. Keep the process running smoothly by
   a. having debaters complete the top of the ballot for you
   b. starting promptly
   c. keeping track of time or having another attendee do so
   d. avoiding verbal comments immediately after the debate
   e. completing your ballot as soon as reasonably possible

6. Notify the Tournament Director before the round begins if there are any awkward judging situations.
   a. personal relationship with any debaters
   b. having judged a team in a previous round that day
   c. hearing problems

7. If anyone wishes to observe the debate, first check with the debaters. If any debater would find it distracting, please ask the observers to leave.

Judge’s Outline: Public Forum Debate Part 1: The Debate Round

*The job of the debaters is to present arguments, evidence and rebuttals to advocate that the resolution is either true or false.*

*As a judge, your job is to set aside your personal beliefs and knowledge of the topic and evaluate which team was more effective at debating based on the arguments, evidence and rebuttals they presented in the round.*
1. Going into a debate you should have: a writing utensil, paper for notes, a speed ballot, a regular ballot, a timer and a coin. (These will be provided to judges by the host school.)

2. First, there will be a coin toss to determine each team’s side (Pro or Con) and speaking order (1st or 2nd). Toss a coin in the air and ask a debater to call heads or tails. The team that wins the coin toss may choose their preferred side (Pro or Con) or their preferred speaking order (1st or 2nd). The team that loses the toss makes the remaining choice. Ask the team speaking 1st to sit on your left.

3. Ask the debaters to fill out the ballot including side taken and their names in speaking order. The team seated to the left of the judge should have their names written on the left side of the ballot. After you get the ballot back, double check with the teams to make sure that all the information is correct and on the proper side of the ballot.

4. Judges will need to time the speeches and crossfires. Some debaters will time themselves but you will keep the "official" time (see the bottom of the ballot for speech times). When time is up, debaters may finish their sentence but then should stop. Prep time may be taken before speeches or crossfires. Each team can determine when up to 2 minutes of prep time is used.

5. Judges should take notes during the debate to help keep track of the key arguments, evidence and rebuttals presented by each team and the quality and effectiveness thereof. This will make it much easier to fill out the ballot.

6. New arguments and evidence are not permitted in the Final Focus speeches.

7. No one should interrupt a speech. Debaters directly question each other only during crossfire. The debaters should treat each other with respect. As a judge, you are the audience rather than a participant in the debate; please save all your feedback for the ballot.

8. When the debate is over, do not reveal who won or give verbal feedback. Please go to the tab room to fill out the ballot.

Judge’s Outline: Public Forum Debate Part 2:
Filling out the Ballot

1. Please remember to judge the debate based on the quality of the arguments, evidence and rebuttals made, not on personal opinions, beliefs, arguments you wished the debaters had made, or knowledge that was not presented in the debate.

2. Winning Team: Look over your notes from the round and think about which team presented stronger arguments, better evidence, and more effective rebuttals. Fill in that team’s name and side (Pro/Con).
3. **Reason:** In the box under Winning Team, explain why that team debated better by referencing the specific arguments, evidence and/or rebuttals that convinced you to vote for that team.

4. **Speed ballot:** Now that you have determined which team won and why, fill out the Speed Ballot and return it to the tab room.

5. **Ranks:** Returning to the main ballot, evaluate the individual students as debaters keeping in mind all 5 categories listed on the ballot. Rank the debaters 1, 2, 3 and 4 (1 being the best debater). Because the winning team and individual ranks both reflect overall quality of debating, they should be consistent. (Depending on the round, the winning teammates might not always be ranked 1st and 2nd, but they cannot possibly be 3rd and 4th.)

6. **Debater points:** Next, you will assign each debater points (between 20 and 30) to reflect their quality of debating as defined by the 5 categories as follows:
   - 20 to 22 (Fair): Serious deficiency in multiple categories.
   - 23 to 25 (Good): Satisfactory performance in most categories, with a few areas of weakness.
   - 26 to 28 (Very Good): Strong performance in most categories, with room for improvement in one or two categories.
   - 29 to 30 (Outstanding): Truly outstanding. Excelled at all 5 categories.

7. **Comment boxes:** In the boxes at the bottom of the ballot, please give each debater individual feedback on what they did well in this round as well as a suggestion for improvement.

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**Tabbing a regular Tournament**

Refer to “Creating a First Round Schematic”

There should be at least two coaches tabbing and one to two coaches running ballots.

Check to see that all the teams have shown up that are on your first round schematic. (Schem. for short)

Recreate first round schem. if needed.

Make copies and hang up first round and announce that the first round schem. is up.
Decide who will keep track of putting teams on second round schem. and who will keep track of judges.

Create a two column win/loss scratch sheet to tab for the second round.

**Second Round Tab**

1. Collect speed ballots from the runners making sure that they stay in the order that they are received from the judges. This ensures that the tabbing for the next round is random and depends on when the judges turn in their speed ballots.

2. On the second round scratch sheet write the winners of the first round in one column and the losers in the other column.

3. After recording the team on the scratch sheet, make a check mark on the speed ballot indicating that you have recorded the speed ballot.

4. Pair winners with winner and losers with losers using brackets on the scratch sheet. The last team in the losing column gets the BYE if there is an odd number of teams.

5. Transfer the pairings to the second round schematic sheet or “schem” for short.

6. The judge tabber should take the first round schems and write down judge conflicts in the rows.

7. After some of the teams have been written down on the second round schem sheet, another tabber can start working on judges for the pairings.

8. The judge selection is done by looking at the first round schems with judge conflicts.

9. Make sure that a judge has not seen the same two teams they saw in the first round and that there are not conflicts with the teams in the second round.

10. You may need to add or subtract judges for various reasons.

11. Add the room numbers to the second round schem making sure that the judges are in the same rooms that they were in during the first round.

12. Make sure that you have collected all the ballots from the judges checking to see if they have filled the ballot out correctly.

13. Make copies of the second round schem sheet. One copy goes to the judge room and several are taped on a wall for the debaters.

14. Checking rooms

15. Recording win/loss, debater points, and ranks on to the tournament excel spreadsheet.

16. Make two copies of the ballots. Set up a table and give each school a copy of their ballot.

17. Write the teams that each judge saw on your first round schem judge sheet.

18. For the third round schem you will need the third round scratch sheet that has WW/WL/LL columns, your first and second round schems and your judge sheet.
19. Speed ballots, first round schem and third round scratch sheet.

20. Bracket looking at the first round schem to ensure the teams have not seen each other in the first round.

21. Odd numbers in the WW column means that you need to bring the team with the highest combined debater points up to the WW column. The last team in the Loss/loss column gets the BYE if there are an odd number of teams.

New coach Training

VDFL regular Season tournaments are run and facilitated by coaches, so new coaches should become familiar with and accustom to being called on to judge, work the tabroom and serve as moderator. Coaches familiar with judging and the tabroom are invaluable at a tournament because there are times when coaches need to be called on to perform these duties for various reasons and it fosters a sense of equanimity, comradery and spreads out the work load of tournaments.
1. New coaches should get familiar with judging at a debate tournament. They should attend judge training and judge at least a round of two. Judging allows new coaches to gain perspective on how a judge views the round as opposed to the debaters and observers.

2. New coaches should next train in the tab room so that they can gain knowledge in how things are run and decided in a debate tournament.

3. New coaches should then perform the duty of moderator and handle complaints and concerns of the debaters concerning evidence and rules.

**Awards**

Generally the following awards are given at a regular tournament:

1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 4\textsuperscript{th}, 5\textsuperscript{th}, 6\textsuperscript{th} Speaker awards usually medals that can be hung around the neck

1\textsuperscript{st} place Trophy

2\textsuperscript{nd} place Trophy

3\textsuperscript{rd} place Trophy

Novice Trophy: Goes to the best novice that does not receive a 1\textsuperscript{st}-3\textsuperscript{rd} place trophy

Some schools give one trophy per team, others give two smaller trophies per team, and others will give one trophy and two medals
Vermont State Tournament
1. Contact the Vermont State House Sergeant at Arms and send in a use of “State House Request Form” go to

http://legislature.vermont.gov/staff-and-offices/staff-offices/sergeant-at-arms/

2. Begin searching for judges. Assign coaches to ask parents, teachers, school administrators, former debaters, UVM debaters and citizens to judge. We pair-up judges so we need 24 judges for 24 teams. We also need 3 judges for the final round. These judges must have experience in Public Forum judging.

3. Coaches must agree on the State Tournament topic. Usually the March NSDA topic will suffice; however, in the event that the VDFL coaches agree that the March NSDA march topic is superficial, unbalanced, or inappropriate, they can elect to use the September/October NSDA topic.

4. Create and Excel document that ranks all the teams eligible for the State Tournament by win/loss, points and rank.

5. Send out the list of eligible teams along with a request for eligible teams from each school going to the State tournament. We limit the number of teams to 24 because of limited room availability at the State house.

6. Create the list of teams ranking them from 1 to 24 and email coaches for confirmation. Also, send coaches the guidelines for using the State House.

7. Create first round schem. And team cards

8. Assign tab room coaches

9. Assign each coach to bring food, etc. for the pot luck breakfast

10. Order lunch: pizza and subway in Montpelier and assign coaches to pick-up
11. Buy other supplies needed such as soda, water, chips, cookies, plates, napkins

12. Order gavels for speaker awards and pick up VPA awards

13. Collect registration fees

14. Welcome students, coaches and students and go over State House guidelines.
VDFL State Championship Debate Tournament
Tabbing Guidelines

Preliminary Round Pairing Rules:
1. Teams from the same school cannot see each other.
2. Teams cannot see a team they saw in a previous round at the tournament.
3. Teams should be divided into 3 groups (winning-record / even-record / losing-record).
4. Among teams in the same group, the strongest NCAA Season Ranked team in that group should be paired with the weakest NCAA Season Ranked team in that group, 2nd strongest with 2nd weakest, etc.

Note on “Byes”: In the event a cancellation creates an odd number of teams, the “bye” should be given to a team unlikely to place highly in the tournament, i.e., choose a team with a low NCAA Season Ranking and zero wins. For this tournament, a bye will count as a split ballot (1 win and 1 loss). A team should not be assigned a bye more than once in the tournament.

1. Process for determining Round 1 pairings
   - Pair using NCAA Team Season Ranking (placing highest against lowest rank). Go down the list pairing Rank #1 (highest ranked team) against #24 (lowest ranked team); Rank #2 (second highest) against #23 (second lowest), etc.
   - In the event that a team would meet a team from the same school, we need to avoid this, so give them the next lowest ranked team available. (e.g., if #2 and #23 are from the same school, pair #2 with #22 instead. Now when you go to pair #3, they get the lowest ranked team available who will be #23 this time.)
2. **Process for determining Round 2 pairings**

- As “Speed Ballots” come in, move each team’s Index Card onto the Pairing Board under the column corresponding to their cumulative number of winning ballots.

Use 3 columns:
- Winning-record (2-win)
- Even-record (1-win)
- Losing-record (0-win)

- Arrange the team index cards in the “winning-record” column in order of NCAA Team Season Ranking (#1 is strongest).

Verify that:
- No more than half of the teams in that column are from the same school
- There are an even number of teams in that column

- If not, “pull up” the highest NCAA ranked team from the “even-record” column that enables you to satisfy the two criteria above. Place this team’s index card at the bottom of the “winning-record” column.

- Pair the teams in the “winning-record” column. Go down the column pairing top against bottom, second-from-top against second-from-bottom, etc.

- In the event that a team would meet a team from the same school, we need to avoid this, so give them the next-lowest-in-that-column team available. E.g., if 2\textsuperscript{nd} highest and 2\textsuperscript{nd} lowest are from the same school, pair 2\textsuperscript{nd} highest with 3\textsuperscript{rd} lowest instead. Now when you go to pair 3\textsuperscript{rd} highest, they get the next-lowest-in-that-column team still available (who will be the team that you passed over when looking for a pairing for the 2\textsuperscript{nd} highest team).

- Repeat this pairing process for the “even-record” column. Note that you must pay attention to ensure teams that met previously in the tournament do not see each other again.

- Repeat this pairing process for the “losing-record” column, assigning a “bye” if needed to a losing-record team with relatively low NCAA Team Season Ranking (who did not already receive a bye in a previous round).

- Assign judges, double-checking to make sure there are no school conflicts for that judge and also that the judge has not seen either of the teams in an earlier round.
3. **Process for determining Round 3 pairings**

- As “Speed Ballots” come in, move each team’s Index Card onto the Pairing Board under the column corresponding to their cumulative number of winning ballots.

Use 3 columns:
- Winning-record (4-win and 3-win grouped together)
- Even-record (2-win)
- Losing-record (1-win and 0-win grouped together)

- Arrange the team index cards in the “winning-record” column in order of NCAA Team Season Ranking (#1 is strongest).

Verify that:
- No more than half of the teams in that column are from the same school
- There are an even number of teams in that column

- If not, “pull up” the highest NCAA ranked team from the “even-record” column that enables you to satisfy the two criteria above. Place this team’s index card at the bottom of the “winning-record” column.

- Pair the teams in the “winning-record” column. Go down the column pairing top against bottom; second-from-top against second-from-bottom, etc.

- In the event that a team would meet a team from the same school, we need to avoid this, so give them the next-lowest-in-that-column team available. E.g., if 2\textsuperscript{nd} highest and 2\textsuperscript{nd} lowest are from the same school, pair 2\textsuperscript{nd} highest with 3\textsuperscript{rd} lowest instead. Now when you go to pair 3\textsuperscript{rd} highest, they get the next-lowest-in-that-column team still available (who will be the team that you passed over when looking for a pairing for the 2\textsuperscript{nd} highest team).

- Note that you must pay attention to ensure teams that met previously in the tournament do not see each other again.

- Repeat this pairing process for the “even-record” column. Note that you must pay attention to ensure teams that met previously in the tournament do not see each other again.

- Repeat this pairing process for the “losing-record” column, assigning a “bye” if needed to a “losing-record” team with relatively low NCAA Team Season Ranking (who did not already receive a bye in a previous round). Note that you must pay attention to ensure teams that met previously in the tournament do not see each other again.

- Assign judges, double-checking to make sure there are no school conflicts for that judge and also that the judge has not seen either of the teams in an earlier round.
4. **Criteria for determining the four winning Teams from Preliminary Rounds who advance to Semi-Final Rounds** (in order of importance):

   a. Team Ballot Win-Loss Record
   b. Team Combined Debater Points
   c. Team Combined Ranks
   d. NCAA Team Season Ranking

5. **Semi-Final Round Pairings**

   - Teams **cannot** be paired with teams they already saw in earlier rounds.
   - Teams from the same school should not be paired with each other if possible.
   - If there is still some discretion as to how to pair the 4 semifinal teams, use their record from the preliminary rounds, and pair the strongest team against the weakest team

6. **Final Round Pairing**

   - Winners of the semi-final rounds

7. **Criteria for determining Speaker Awards** - only use data from Preliminary Rounds (in order of importance):

   a. Individual Debater Points
   b. Individual Ranks
   c. Team Ballot Win-Loss Record
State Tournament Awards

Trophies provided by the VPA:

- Championship Trophy
- Finalist Trophy
- Two Semi-Finalist Trophies
- Bill Haines Championship Cup
- Six Speaking Award Gavels
- The Huber Coach of the Year Plaque
Debate in the Classroom
Debate and Public Speaking Curriculum  
James Dixon  
Hartford High School

Course Description:  
Debate as an advanced English credit is a study of public speaking, Public Forum Debate, Words Debate, Congressional Debate, and essay structure with the aim of developing an overall knowledge and skill of speech and argumentation. In the class, we will focus on the ability to speak and write effectively through a variety of debating and public speaking formats. Students will learn how to successfully persuade and inform others through speaking, debating and writing essays. Students will choose from the debate or individual speech topics as a base for writing the essays.

Course Goals:  
Students successfully completing this course will:  
• Demonstrate the ability to understand and articulate opinions of current social-political issues from a variety of perspectives.  
• Develop on-line research skills necessary in preparation for Public Forum Debate, Worlds Debate, Congress Debate and public speaking.  
• Demonstrate the ability to analyze text related to different resolutions and public policy.  
• Write a persuasive essay, a personal essay, and a short research essay.  
• Communicate in a way that is authoritative, persuasive, and sincere.

Assessment and Grading:  
Primary assignments include: persuasive individual speech, Public Forum Debate, Worlds Debate, Congress Debate, personal essay, response to text essay and research essay. Primary
assignment grades are based on evaluation rubrics pertaining to speaking, debate and writing. The average of grades on classroom assignments is not the sole determinate of a quarter grade. Students will complete a self evaluation based on five competencies. This self assessment will be reviewed by the teacher and considered as a component of the overall grade.

Course Habits:
Developing dedicated and thoughtful class participation is expected by all students taking this class. A diversity of backgrounds, opinions and beliefs brought to the classroom will enrich the learning experience of each student. The classroom must be a place where controversial ideas can be freely communicated with civility and respect.

Missed Assignments:
By the very nature of having to practice and perform debate in the classroom, missing a debate is difficult to make up. However students can do alternative assignments that will demonstrate their proficiency.

Debate and Public Speaking Curriculum
Week to Week Essential Questions and Instruction
James Dixon
Hartford High School

Public Speaking: Weeks 1 and 2

Essential questions:
How much does delivery matter in Public speaking?
What attributes make some speakers more persuasive and engaging than others?
What should a student work on to become a proficient public speaker?

Instruction for public speaking:
- Instruct students on how speaking is evaluated: volume, eye contact, posture, speed, pitch, enunciation, gestures
- Instruct students on the art of persuasion: logos, pathos and ethos
- Model constructive feedback for 1 minute impromptu speeches and longer prepared speeches

Public Forum Debate: Weeks 3-6

Essential questions for Public Forum topic analysis:
What is the fundamental question asked by the resolution?
What possible alternate interpretations of the resolution exist?
How does one appropriately define the terms present in the resolution?
Instruction for Public Forum topic analysis:
● Instruct students in resolution analysis.
● Explore with students possible alternatives to their interpretation of the resolution.
● Discuss how the words in a resolution can have different interpretations for the pro and the con side.

Essential questions for Public Forum case speech:
How does one formulate an appropriate set of research questions?
What background knowledge is required for the resolution?
What research tools exist for academic debate?
How does one determine the quality of evidence?
How is evidence useful for a debate round correctly identified within an article?
How should a Public Forum case be organized, sign-posted and constructed?

Instruction for Public Forum case speech:
● Discuss how to formulate questions when discussing the resolution.
● Instruct the students to search for background information from sources such as Wikipedia and to use the links at the bottom of pages for further searches.
● Instruct students on different search engines and the differences between general search engines and academic ones.
● Discuss .com, .org, .edu, .gov sites and how to search using different combinations of words from the resolution.
● Instruct the students on how to make “cards”
● Instruct the students on how to construct a Public Forum case speech using tags, warrants, evidence and impacts.

Essential questions for Public Forum rebuttals:
How do students take notes on their opponent’s case speech?
How are refutes most effectively conducted?
How can a team effectively use their case against their opponent’s case?
How can opponent’s arguments be effectively summarized and grouped?
How are case arguments effectively extended throughout the round?
What role should the summary speech play in a Public Forum round?
What role should the final focus speech play in a Public Forum round?

Instruction for Public Forum rebuttals:
● Discuss note taking techniques
● Instruct students on making refute cards using tags, warrants, evidence and impacts.
● Instruct students on the importance of developing themes and centralized concepts to stay focused in a debate round and to help the judge better understand your side.
● Discuss how and which arguments should be extended throughout the round.
● “What the debate is about” and Summary speech instruction.
● “What this debate comes down to” and Final Focus speech instruction.
Essential questions for Public Forum crossfire:
What makes a good cross-examination question and answer?
What do teams who appear to “dominate” crossfire periods have in common?

Instruction for Public Forum crossfire:
- Discuss how to prep question in advance.
- Acknowledge and discuss a “good” crossfire and why it was good.
- Discuss civility, diplomacy, and assertiveness in Crossfire
- Discuss how to attacking your opponent’s points while defending your own.

Essential questions for judging
Why does a judge need to impartial and unbiased?
How does a judge evaluate the arguments and evidence to decide who won?
How does one give constructive feedback to the debaters so that they can improve?

Instruction for judging:
- Instruct students on how to make impartial and unbiased decisions on what is presented in a debate and not their beliefs or present knowledge.
- Instruct students on how points are eliminated or survive the whole debate round and also how to evaluate evidence, warrants and impacts to come to an RFD.
- Model constructive feedback and concrete vs. abstract feedback.

Individual speech and personal essay: Week 7
(To be added)

Advanced Public Forum Weeks 8-10

Essential questions for advanced Public Forum
How is a public forum debate round effectively flowed?
How are offensive and defensive arguments effectively balanced in the round?
How are arguments effectively weighed in the round?
How do debaters create frameworks to convince the judge how to vote?

Instruction for advanced Public Forum: (To be added)

Worlds Debate and the Response to Text Essay: Week 11

Essential questions for Worlds Debate:
How the government and opposition cases are correctly constructed?
What background information is needed to understand the resolution?
What are the differences between the first, second and third speech?
How can a team effectively ask questions?
How does one construct a logical argument without evidence?
Instruction for Worlds Debate: (To be added)

Advanced Public Forum Debate (tournament style): Weeks 12-13

Essential questions for tournament style debate:
How do students prepare for a debate in which they do not know which side they will be going?
How do students decide what to pick after winning the coin toss?

Instruction for tournament style debate: (To be added)

Congressional Debate and Research Essay: Weeks 14 and 15

Essential questions for Congress Debate:
How do Robert’s Rules of order and the democratic process create a way to decide society’s laws?
How does one correctly construct a Bill?
How does one construct a speech in support of a Bill?
How does one give a speech against a Bill?
How does one build alliances for and against a Bill?
How does a Bill Become a law?
Why does the democratic process take so long?

Instruction for Congress Debate: (To be added)

Oral exams Week 16
Common Core Language Standards
For Debate and Public Speaking

**Language S1:**
Students will practice the conventions of grammar and usage when speaking and writing essays.

**Language S2:**
Students will practice the conventions of punctuation when speaking and writing essays.

**Language S3:**
Students will practice understanding the effects of syntax when reading, writing and speaking in their speeches and essays.

**Language S4:**
Students will develop strategies for understanding words and phrases when reading, researching and debating.

**Language S5:**
Students will understand the differences between figurative and literal language in reading texts. Students will also debate the meaning of words within the resolutions being debated.

**Language S6:**
Students will acquire and use academic words of debate and speech as well as the specialized words of the various resolutions of debate and individual speeches and papers.
Common Core Reading Standards
For Debate and Public Speaking

Reading S1:
Students analyze text literally and interpretively
Synthesizing
Summarizing
Paraphrasing
Identifying and citing credible sources and evidence

Reading S2:
Students determine the main idea of an article to use to support a debate position

Reading S3:
Students analyze and evaluate various sides and explanations of issues
Students analyze the various impacts based on evaluating various explanations

Reading S4:
Students determine how a author uses words to form different meanings
Literal
Figurative
Connotative
Denotative
Technical

Reading S5:
Students analyze how an author or speakers claims are developed and organized

Reading S6:
Students compare and contrast the points of view of two or more authors
Students indentify different points of view pertaining to culture, nationality, economic and society

Reading S7:
Students examine and evaluate multiple sources from different media formats to argue for or against a debate resolution

Reading S8:
Students evaluate an argument for and against a debate resolution
Students use the US constitution, The UN Declaration of Human Rights, Supreme Court opinions and dissents and other seminal texts to evaluate claims made by for or against a resolution

**Reading S9:**
Students indentify primary and secondary sources used in forming their arguments

**Reading S10:**
Students read, evaluate, analyze and argue complex texts ranging from foreign and domestic politics, law, culture and society, as well as moral and value related

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**Common Core Speaking and Listening Standards**
**For Debate and Public Speaking**

**Speaking and Listening S1:**
Students will work collaboratively with diverse debate partners and groups to understand and accurately present a particular side of a resolution being debated. This will be done for both sides of several resolutions.

**Speaking and Listening S2:**
Students will evaluate and assimilate information presented in a debate with both prepared and unprepared speeches and question answers crossfire sessions.

**Speaking and Listening S3:**
Students will evaluate themselves and other speakers in debates and individual speeches for organization, argumentation and forensics.

**Speaking and Listening S4:**
Students will organize and present a debate case, rebuttal, summary and final focus speeches so that their opposing team and audience of fellow students and teachers follows the arguments clearly.

**Speaking and Listening S5:**
Students will be able to display visual data during individual speech presentations.

**Speaking and Listening S6:**
Students will give a variety of speeches including a persuasive debate speech, impromptu speech, extemporaneous speech, speeches based on evidence and those based only on logic.

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**Common Core Writing Standards**
**For Debate and Public Speaking**

**Writing S1:**
Students write case and rebuttal speeches, and persuasive essays that support claims with coherent logic and evidence.

**Writing S2:**
Students will write a research paper that examines a current controversial and debatable issue that the student has debated for and against in a class debate.

**Writing S3:**
Students will write a personal essay that supports or negates an issue. The essay will focus on an autobiographical or biographical narrative.

**Writing S4:**
Students will develop the skills of organization and style appropriate for a persuasive essay, personal essay and research essay.

**Writing S5:**
Students will plan, analyze, edit and receive constructive feedback on the persuasive essay, personal essay and research essay.

**Writing S6:**
Students will learn how to use the internet effectively to gather information and evidence to be used in class debates and papers. Students will also collaborate with a partner for class debates and interact with an opposing team.

**Writing S7:**
Students will conduct both short and sustained research on current issues of political and societal relevance.

**Writing S8:**
Students will gather information and evaluate evidence for credibility and accuracy by debating in class.

**Writing S9:**
Students will use information and evidence in case and rebuttal speeches for class debates and papers.

**Writing: S10:**
Students will routinely research and write shorter speeches for extemporaneous Parliamentary and congressional debates and longer speeches for Public Forum debates. Any of these speeches can be used for the persuasive essay, personal essay and research essay.
An Incomplete History of High School Debate in Vermont

By Bill Haines and David Gale

The Beginnings
According to David Gale’s recollection [David is the dean of high school debate and recently retired coach at Otter Valley Union HS] Vermont debate probably got its start in 1932 although it may have gone further back. (See appendix for the debate champions from 1932 to the present.) Edwin Lawrence, a Rutland lawyer, donated a silver rotating trophy for the high school championship that went from 1932 to 1989. It was retired by Otter Valley Union High School in 1989, as Otter Valley won the trophy three times in a row which met the original condition for retiring it. Apparently the story goes that the debate figure on top of the trophy kept getting knocked off. Also the 1960 winner (Burlington HS) was undecipherable owing to repeated polishing. It was time for a new award. Somewhere along the line it was decided to award it to the active school that had won it the most times thus allowing the debate figure at the top to remain before it got lost. It should be noted from the available records that Burlington HS won in 1958-1960, Otter Valley won consecutive years in 1969-1971, Burlington again won from 1975-1977. Otter Valley then won the longest consecutive streak from 1981-85.
The University of Vermont’s involvement

It’s suspected that Edwin Lawrence may have debated when he was in high school. Edwin Lawrence donated $750,000 to the University of Vermont for their speech program and the Chair of Speech at UVM that is held by Dr. Snider currently. Lawrence also gave Middlebury College $250,000. David Gale met Mr. Lawrence on two occasions in the 1950s when David was a debater. It was during this period that Lawrence and Doc Huber, UVM debate coach at the time, developed a strong friendship and interest in promoting debate at the high school level. (Is this accurately stated?)

(What more do we know about Edwin Lawrence - why his interest in debate, and what or why of his contribution to high school debate in Vermont? Also, we need to mention Doc Huber’s contributions to Vermont high school debate)

There was a novice rotating trophy named in honor of Wilburn F. Parker (Who is he?) which has been lost. At some point the Burlington Free Press gave a permanent school trophy to the top teams, then the Vermont Debate and Forensics League and the Vermont Headmaster Association took over and presented a Varsity Champion and Runner-Up as well as a 1st and 2nd Novice policy debate trophies. The University of Vermont, under Doc Huber’s leadership and continued by Dr. Tuna Snider, hosted the state championships (1960s well into the 1990s), it provided the facilities as well as the UVM debaters and faculty to judge the competition. UVM also provided individual speaker awards for many years. From 1968 to 2003 UVM hosted workshops for high school debaters in policy debate. In hardship cases UVM provided financial assistance. The UVM relationship has continued with teams providing demonstrations at member schools, hosting in-service workshops and providing coaches for local high school teams as well as debate judges for Vermont tournaments. (Do we have specific dates for these happenings?)

The 1960s

Somewhere in the mid 1960s the Vermont Debate and Forensics League assumed its present form and became an affiliate of the Vermont Headmasters’ Association. In 1965 the VDFL began the Coach of the Year Award (See appendix for a listing of the award) for that coach whose teams had the best combined novice and varsity finish at the state tournament. In 1964 the following schools had active policy debate teams: Burlington, South Burlington, Lyndon Institute, Champlain Valley Union (Hinesburg/Shelburne/Williston), Rice Memorial (Burlington), Mount St. Joseph (Rutland), Sacred Heart (Newport), Waterbury, Spaulding, Springfield, Brattleboro, Mount Anthony (Bennington), Black River (Ludlow), North Country Union (Newport), Montpelier, and Otter Valley Union (Brandon). Chelsea became active a few years later.

The Vermont Debate and Forensics League

The VDFL, while still promoting debate and forensics, has added the positions of co-presidents, one for debate and one for forensics. The state tournaments for both events are held in Montpelier at the Vermont State House in February and bring together some 120 coaches, students and judges for each day long competition. VDFL now has a close affiliation with the Vermont Principals’ Association and includes one team from New Hampshire. Recently (2010) the VDFL affiliated on the national level with the National Catholic Forensics League and a number of Vermont schools continue to maintain their affiliation with the National Forensics League. Both affiliations allow student champions to participate at the regional and national levels in their events. (see appendix for more details.)

Policy Debate
Prior to 2004, the format in Vermont was policy debate.* The first affirmative speaker provided a ten minute constructive speech outlining the problem advanced by the resolution. The first negative speaker generally gave counter arguments indicating that the status quo was fine, and that the first affirmative had failed to be convincing about the need for a change. The third and fourth speakers advanced their partner’s arguments, the 2nd affirmative laying out a plan for change indicating how the plan would solve the problem and explaining that it was workable. The 2nd negative then countered. The debate concluded with five minute rebuttals by each of the four debaters. Emphasis was on the policy plan proposed by the affirmative team who had to show both the need and the solvency. There was no cross-examination until the late 1960s when the format changed to eight minute constructive speeches, three minute cross examination, and four minute rebuttals. Eight to ten minutes of preparation time was available to debaters during a round. This also introduced switch side debate requiring debaters to be proficient on the affirmative as well as the negative side of the policy question. Tournament formats then required teams to alternate affirmative and negative rounds and closed with an elimination round. If teams had met before in the tournament, they flipped a coin for sides. The affirmative team had the first and last speeches.

*There were several years in the early 1990s when Fair Haven Union HS introduced and hosted the Lincoln-Douglas Debate style in addition to policy debate

Some noted the characteristic of debate during this time. There were the mounds of evidence debaters carried with them, all gleaned from their individual research and source materials. Some students were observed with crates of file folders being hauled into classrooms on wheeled dollies. As the year progressed, the reams of evidence grew greater as the topic remained the same throughout the debate year which lasted from October through March. In the late 1970s “speed” or “spread” debate made its appearance. Vermont was slow to adopt this style, as there was a scarcity of judges able to follow the debaters for the local tournaments. Often those changes came from college workshops held during the summer months where college coaches and debaters schooled high school students in the finer points of policy debate, as it was developing on the college level. New types of arguments were developed to provide an advantage over other teams. Schools that sent students to these college workshops to learn cases and arguments generally had a significant advantage when the Vermont debate season began.

**Regional Participation**

From the mid 1960s to the present Vermont debaters have participated in regional and national tournaments. Bronx Science, Lexington, MA, Manchester by the Sea, Newburgh, NY, Lakeland, NY, Monticello HS, NY, Hendrik Hudson HS, MY, Dartmouth College, University of Main, University of New Hampshire and University of Mass at Amherst as well as Harvard University have hosted Vermont schools in their tournaments. As many as twenty-seven states were represented at these events. [Along with Otter Valley, Burlington HS, Springfield HS, Chelsea HS, Fair Haven UHS, Hartford HS, Rutland HS, and Woodstock UHS have participated at various times.] On the national level Vermont schools have participated in both the National Forensic League district and national tournaments, in the Catholic Forensic League National Tournament and the Tournament of Champions. (see appendix for a listing.) Success was largely dependent on adapting to the faster paced more technical style while recognizing the experience level and preferences of debate judges. In addition to meeting debaters from a variety
of states and locales, there was the exposure to a much higher level of competition where reasoning and adaptation to the different judging standards brought success or failure.

**Public Forum Debate**

By early 2000 it was evident that policy debate was dying in Vermont. While Otter Valley Union High School and Burlington High School had strong policy programs and were participating at the national level, other Vermont schools could not engage enough students to be competitive. Policy debate required total dedication by the student meaning very limited or no participation in other co-curricular activities. Discussion started among the coaches interested in preserving Vermont debate about switching to the parliamentary style suggested by UVM or the new Ted Turner debate style being advocated by the National Forensics League. The active coaches decided on the Ted Turner style, now referred to as Public Forum Debate. This was a major switch from policy debate in that the requirement now was to take a monthly topic of national concern and debate the pro and con merits of the resolved. Gone were the plan, solvency, funding, and listing of advantages that were the essential parts of policy debate. Now the thrust of debate in Vermont is a reasoned look at current national and international issues. Yet much the same skills are involved – research, developing an argument, providing evidence, responding to criticism, developing persuasive oral communication, and the use of critical thinking.

In 2004-05 Vermont began Public Forum Debate and held its first state tournament at the State House in February, 2005. The 2005 State Tournament included Champlain Valley UHS, Hartford HS, Lake Champlain Waldorf HS, Milton HS, Montpelier HS, Otter Valley UHS, and Sharon Academy. Twenty-six debaters presented four minute constructive speeches, engaged in three minute cross-fire encounters, and presented one minute summaries on the resolved that student aptitude should be assessed through standardized testing. It was a successful transition, and eight years later the state tournament brought together seventy debaters from eleven high schools to determine whether the benefits of the 9/11 security measures outweigh the harms to personal freedom. Additions to the initial public forum debate schools are Burlington HS, Burr and Burton Academy, Lamoille Union HS, Bellows Free Academy – St. Albans, South Burlington HS, Mount Mansfield UHS, Lake Champlain Waldorf School, Colchester HS, Union 32 HS, Vermont Commons School, Woodstock Union HS, Vergennes UHS, and Hanover (NH) HS. In addition, the program has been greatly aided by the support of the Vermont Bar Association, Vermont-NEA and the Vermont Principals’ Association.
Workshops, Paperwork and
Evidence Policies

VDFL Policy for the use of evidence in Public Forum Debate

- Evidence is any facts attributable to a specific, identifiable and authoritative source. If the information is not attributable to a specific, authoritative source, it is the opinion of the student competitor.
- When giving evidence in a round, competitors are expected to orally give, at minimum, the author’s last name, and the source. If the debater continues to give evidence from the same source, then it is only necessary to give the author’s name.
● In addition to the oral citation, debaters also need to have in written form, the full MLA or APA citation of the evidence and if taken from a website, this should include the name of the website, and the full URL address. Again the full citation need not be read unless asked for by a competitor.

● Any evidence, whether directly quoted or paraphrased, must be cited in the above prescribed manner, but if the debater is mentioning a general or theoretical concept then it is not considered evidence and as such does not have to be cited. For example: If a debater were to reference “social contract theory” in general, a source citation is not required. However, if s/he references John Locke’s social contract theory, evidence citation would need to be available.

● There is no requirement to read every word of a source in the round. Debaters may omit words in their speeches as long as the meaning and relevance of the evidence remains unchanged.

● Debaters are only required to produce an oral citation during the round. It is the VDFL policy that no papers pass between opposing teams.

● It is strongly recommended that the debaters make a copy of the original evidence to keep with them during the tournament. If there is challenge to this evidence, then it is easily dismissed if the debaters have a copy of the original evidence.

www.speechanddebate.org/nationals