

Congressional Debate

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What is Congress?

- **Congressional Debate** is a state and national **debate** event that highlights **both speaking style** and the **skill of argumentation**
- **10-20 competitors** in a round, **1 presiding officer**, **1-5 judges** (up to **30 competitors** and **9 judges** at Nationals)
- **3 minute** speeches on **alternating sides** (for/against the bill or resolution being debated)
- Each speech followed by **1 minute** of **cross-examination**, where the speaker is asked questions
- **1-2 weeks** to prepare speeches on around **5 topics** per tournament (**1 month** for about **40 topics** at Nationals)

Why should I do Congress?

- **Easy** to pick up, **hard** to master
- Provides the **confidence** to speak in front of a large group of people
- Instead of being **assigned** a side on an issue, you get to **choose** which side to argue
- Teaches you how to **think on your feet** and quickly formulate **arguments** and **refutations**, all while maintaining good speaking **style**
- Lots of **topics** concerning the US and the world

Basic Speech Outline

Attention Getter: **Interesting fact, statistic**, or simply a **preface** to the speech (no anecdotes)

Intro: I urge a vote on the **affirmation/negation** today for my two/three (or however many) main contentions: (**roadmap** of your points)

Body (Main Points)

Conclusion: And therefore, I urge a vote on the **affirmation/negation** of today's legislation.

Refutations

- Standard - *Senator X stated _____, but he is wrong because _____.*
- Better, more engaging way - *Senator X, you stated _____, but I must disagree because _____.*
- Also great - *I challenge any affirmation/negation speaker to prove _____.*