

Timer Orientation for Debate Rounds

To help keep the debate rounds running smoothly, a timer is appointed to each round who will keep track of each speaker's time using a timer device and timer sheet.

Any parent is welcome to time. Siblings 10 years of age and older are welcome to time as well. Please review the following orientation in preparation for timing before the round begins.

The Speeches: Times and Order

The first 4 speeches in a round are the Construction speeches. Each Construction speech lasts a maximum of 8 minutes (Debaters can end sooner, but that is discouraged.)

In between the first 4 speeches will be Cross Exams, where an opposing team member questions the podium speaker. The Cross-ex is 3 minutes maximum (Debaters can end sooner, but that is discouraged.)

The order and times of the Construction speeches therefore look like this:

1AC 8min, Cross-Ex 3min, 1NC 8min, Cross-Ex 3 min, 2AC 8 min, Cross-Ex 3 min, 2NC 8 min, Cross-Ex 3 min

The last 4 speeches in the round are the Rebuttal speeches, each Rebuttal speech is 5 minutes maximum time.

The order and times of the Rebuttal speeches look like this:

1NR 5 min, 1AR 5min, 2NR 5 min, 2AR 5 min

Team Prep Time: 5 minutes each

During the round, each team has 5 minutes of preparation time, which they can take like a "time out" anywhere in the round except before Cross-Ex or during a speech time.

That means five minutes total each for the Affirmative and the Negative subtracted throughout round, used between speeches and by the team who is next to speak in preparation for their speech.

The team should announce they desire "Prep Time" to the timer. The team may state a set amount of time or request that the timer call out every 30 second or when the team has reached a certain amount of prep time left...such as 2 minutes total prep time left.

Make sure to cross off the prep time for the appropriate team as it is used. It is important to keep track of Prep Time correctly.

Timer Signals: Hand and Vocal

The debaters should be signaled periodically during a speech to help them gauge their speech times.

The signal can be physical (hand raised) or verbal (countdown time called, example "4 minutes"). The debaters may tell you which style they prefer. If nothing is mentioned, assume a silent physical hand signal is to be used.

Signals should typically occur as follows (debaters are free to ask for different time countdowns):

For 8 minutes speeches: at 4 minutes, 2 minutes, 1 minute, 30 seconds, then 10 second countdown.

For 3 minute Cross Ex: at 1 1/2 minutes, 1 minute, 30 seconds, then 10 second countdown.

You should hand signal and verbally say the time at the 30-second signal and the 10-second countdown.

Call "Time" when the full time has passed. Make sure that you say "time" loud enough for everyone to hear.

For hand signals, your hand should be raised high enough for the debaters to see, however do not wave or make large gestures. Hold the hand for only about 10 seconds, otherwise it can confuse the debater as to his overall time. The debaters are responsible to look at you.

If the speaker continues to speak beyond their allotted time, you should leave the time piece running until the speaker finishes. If the judge asks, tell them the total time the speaker spoke.

Using the Timesheet

Write the names of the teams on the Timer Sheet before the round starts.

As the round progresses, carefully mark the time down after each speech on the Timer Sheet.

To keep track of Prep Time, cross off the prep time blocks, in increments of 10 seconds, or show the math of how the prep time was used on the Timer Sheet.

There will be a pencil in the room for the timer to use. Please leave the pencil and the Timer Sheet on the table when your round is over.

Debate Room Etiquette

Do not interrupt the round. If something needs to be addressed, the judge is responsible.

Do not take flash pictures during the round.

Turn cell phones off.

No talking or whispering is allowed by the Timer (or audience).

Avoid having to leave for a bathroom break in the middle of a round if you are timing.