

students understand it and remember it. If the judges understand and remember your case, they are more likely to be persuaded by it, and to award you the debate. Think of how your best teacher does plenary, and try to emulate her or him.

To be successful in this role, you have to be an excellent listener and a quick thinker. You must be able to take in everything that is said in the debate and organise it in a clear, logical way under pressure of time. Efficient note taking skills are useful here (also very useful in your school studies!). You also have to be good at identifying the points of clash and focusing rigorously on them in your summary.

Summary speaker (Mace) / Third speaker (Extended Mace)

Everything said above about Government / Opposition Whip applies, with the addition that you must respond to / rebut speeches from the floor.

One other responsibility of all speakers, and a key aspect you will be marked on, is making points of information (see the section on points of information in Chapter 3, 'The Basic Skills'). You should aim (subject to not being guilty of 'badgering') to make one or two points of information to every speaker. Even if they are not accepted, the judges will see that you are trying, and will reward you accordingly. Equally, if you do not make any, they will penalise you for this.

Whatever your role, keep rigorously focused on the main point of the debate; don't allow yourself to be sidetracked into marginal issues. If the debate is about making it compulsory for 50% of MPs to be female, and you find you are spending 50% of your time discussing the cost of removing urinals from toilets in the Houses of Parliament, you are not really focused on the main point, which is about whether using quotas is the best way to tackle discrimination.

Working as a team, and fulfilling the role you have been given, are both key parts of any debating mark scheme. This is right, because both are essential parts of making the most persuasive case possible

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