

Where you have more than one judge in a debate, they will make notes separately, and confer out of earshot of the debaters before they give their verdict.

Although judges are people who, er, judge you, they are also people who help you.

How?

Like teachers returning homework, judges will almost always give feedback before they deliver their verdict. Listen very carefully to this feedback, taking notes if possible; it will tell you what you are doing well, and what you need to work on. If they don't give feedback, or if there is part of the feedback that you do not understand, it is quite acceptable to ask them politely if they would mind telling you more. However, be very careful not to do or say anything that could be interpreted as challenging their verdict. Judges are human and can make mistakes, but it is a fundamental point of debating etiquette that, while you may respectfully ask for clarification, a judge's verdict once given is final.