

*Do you have an interest in philosophy?* Lincoln-Douglas debate, because of its focus on value resolutions, rewards those who have a good grasp of philosophical concepts. By committing to Lincoln-Douglas debate, you are likely to learn a great deal about the great philosophers from Aristotle to John Locke.

*Do you have an interest in media debates?* In that case, public forum debate is probably your best choice. This format has actually been modeled after media debate formats such as on *Crossfire* and the *McLaughlin Group*.

*Are you interested in trying to earn a college debate scholarship?* If so you should determine the type of debate offered by the college of your choice. Colleges participating in parliamentary debate will be more impressed by your success in Lincoln-Douglas or public forum debate. Colleges participating in the Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA), American Debate Association (ADA), or National Debate Tournament (NDT) styles will be more impressed by your success in policy debate.

*Do you see debate competition as a way to improve your skills as a public speaker?* Although all debate competition will improve your confidence in public speaking, public forum and Lincoln-Douglas debate are clearly superior to policy debate in this area. Policy debaters generally talk more rapidly than is advisable for effective public speaking.

*Are you starting to debate in the middle of the school year?* If so, you would find more competitive success in public forum or Lincoln-Douglas debate than in policy debate. This is true because policy debaters utilize the same topic all year long. If you are starting in the middle of the year, other students will have a considerable head start in researching the topic. Public forum topics change every month. If you are starting in December, for example, you would be starting to debate a new topic at the same time as your competitors.

*Do you see debate competition as preparation for a future in the law?* Policy debate, because of its intensive focus on research and preparation of argument briefs, offers superior training for the future law student.

*Is there another person at your school who is interested in becoming your debate partner?* If not, you should consider Lincoln-Douglas debate; in this debate format, you compete as an individual. If you have a partner who shares your goals and work ethic, you should consider policy debate or public forum competition.

*Are you willing to attend a summer debate institute?* Many colleges and universities sponsor summer debate workshops. These workshops provide excellent training, but they also require a commitment of time and money. The most successful competitors in policy and Lincoln-Douglas debate typically attend a summer institute. The same is not