

CHAPTER 5

AN INTRODUCTION TO POLICY DEBATE

Policy debate involves debating in teams, meaning that two students from one school debate two students from another school. Each member of the team delivers two speeches, the first of which is called a *constructive speech*. The constructive speech is so-named because the contestant is “constructing” his or her case; new arguments are allowed in constructive speeches. The second speech given by each debater is called a *rebuttal speech*; in this speech no new arguments are allowed. In a situation analogous to an attorney’s closing argument in a court case, the rebuttal attempts to answer the arguments of the other side and to reestablish the debater’s own case arguments.

THE FORMAT FOR POLICY DEBATE

A single *round* of policy debate includes eight speeches and four cross-examination periods.

First Affirmative Constructive Speech (1AC)	8 minutes
Cross-Examination by 2nd Negative Speaker	3 minutes
First Negative Constructive Speech (1NC)	8 minutes
Cross-Examination by 1st Affirmative Speaker	3 minutes
Second Affirmative Constructive Speech (2AC)	8 minutes
Cross-Examination by 1st Negative Speaker	3 minutes
Second Negative Constructive Speech (2NC)	8 minutes
Cross-Examination by 2nd Affirmative Speaker	3 minutes

Constructive Speeches

First Negative Rebuttal (1NR)	5 minutes
First Affirmative Rebuttal (1AR)	5 minutes
Second Negative Rebuttal (2NR)	5 minutes
Second Affirmative Rebuttal (2AR)	5 minutes
Total Preparation Time for Each Team	5 minutes*
Total Time Required for Completion of One Round:	74 minutes

**Some tournaments have differing amounts of preparation time; 5 minutes is the time allotted in National Forensic League tournaments, including the national final tournament.*

Rebuttal Speeches