

CHAPTER 11

AN INTRODUCTION TO LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

Lincoln-Douglas debate is one-on-one debate, meaning that a student from one school debates a student from another school. Speakers who are affirmative deliver three speeches. The first of these speeches is called a *constructive speech*, so-named because the contestant is constructing his case. The affirmative debater delivers two rebuttal speeches in which no new arguments are allowed. The purpose of these rebuttal speeches is to answer the arguments made by the negative debater and to advance key affirmative arguments.

The negative debater presents two speeches: a constructive speech and a rebuttal. Why does the affirmative debater have three speeches while the negative debater has only two? The reason is that the affirmative side must have both the first and last speech. Also, the negative speeches are longer, meaning both debaters end up speaking for the same total amount of time.

THE FORMAT OF LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

A single round of Lincoln-Douglas debate includes five speeches and two cross-examination periods.

Affirmative Constructive Speech	6 minutes
Cross-Examination by Negative Debater	3 minutes
Negative Constructive Speech	7 minutes
Cross-Examination by Affirmative	3 minutes

Constructive Speeches

First Affirmative Rebuttal	4 minutes
Negative Rebuttal	6 minutes
Second Affirmative Rebuttal	3 minutes
Total Preparation Time for Each Team	4 minutes*
Total Time Required for Completion of One Round:	36 minutes

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

Rebuttal Speeches