

Structure

The distinguishing characteristic of BP is the two teams on each side of the house. Each team comprises two speakers, making four speakers for the Government and another four for the Opposition. Each debater speaks only once, usually for seven minutes. There are no reply speeches. The speaker cannot be interrupted during the first and last minutes of each speech—they are protected time. The intervening minutes are open time during which Points of Information can be offered. POIs usually take the form of a question or a short observation and should be no more than about 10 seconds in length. Debaters are expected to take at least one POI during their speech; it is considered very unwise to take more than three. However, debaters should be optimistic and offer at least three per person during each speech by an opposing speaker. Teams on the same side may not offer POIs to each other.

Order of Speakers	
Opening Government	Opening Opposition
1. Prime Minister	2. Leader of the Opposition
3. Deputy Prime Minister	4. Deputy Leader of the Opposition
Closing Government	Closing Opposition
5. Member for the Government	6. Member for the Opposition
7. Government Whip	8. Opposition Whip

Roles

The four-team format poses particular challenges for all speakers because each team of two is trying to win the debate for themselves, not in conjunction with the other team that happens to be on their side of the house.

As in all forms of debate, if two speakers on the same side disagree, or even appear to do so, their opposite numbers should point out this fact and attempt to exploit it. As well as looking for contradictions between the individual speakers on the other side of the motion, BP debaters should be particularly alert to differences between the two teams on the other