

World Schools Format

World Schools was “purpose built” for the first World Schools Debating Championship in 1988. Originally designed to be a format different from all national competitions, it subsequently became popular throughout the world and is now used at both national and regional competitions. The World Schools Debating Championship is held annually, with high school students from around the world competing in English as part of national teams.

In the championship, debates are divided into long- and short-preparation rounds. Long-preparation (“long-prep”) motions are announced several weeks in advance, giving speakers the opportunity to investigate an area in some depth. For short-prep rounds, the motion is announced an hour in advance, thus debaters are largely dependent on preexisting knowledge.

World Schools asks speakers to grapple with general issues rather than specific programs or proposals. Speakers are encouraged to address the broad themes that surround topics rather than focus on details of implementation or political expediency.

Overall, this format rewards good teamwork, preparation, participation, and persuasion. The debate is between teams, not individuals. Each speaker has a role to play in presenting the team’s case and also attacking the other side while defending their own arguments. The format encourages the use of Points of Information (POIs) to keep debaters involved when they are not speaking. World Schools marks debaters for content, style, and strategy; thus, a debater needs to have an awareness of not just what she says but how she says it.

Structure

In World Schools, six individuals speak during each debate: three for the Proposition and three for the Opposition. The debate comprises eight parts. During the first six speeches, debaters present substantive arguments and rebut the arguments of the other team. As