

first and before the final minutes of each of the first six speeches; they are not permitted during reply speeches.

Adjudication

Usually World Schools uses a panel of three adjudicators. (There may be more, but the panel must be an odd number.) After the debate, adjudicators will take a few moments to look over their notes and marks, checking that, for example, the team they instinctively thought won is also the team to which they have given the highest points. When the individual adjudicator is happy with her decision, she simply casts a vote—there is no discussion at this point. Whichever team has two or more votes wins the debate. It is then standard practice for the adjudicators to leave the room to discuss the debate (or stay in the room and ask the debaters to step outside). The purpose of this discussion is not to affect the vote, which must not be changed, but to make suggestions for a short speech to be delivered by the chair of the panel explaining their decision. It's worth taking notes on this speech to look for themes that start to arise from multiple adjudicators. Although adjudicators tend to give positive feedback to the individual speakers and negative feedback more generally, if you hear comments about one topic for three or four panels in a row, it's safe to assume that they're talking about you, and whatever they are highlighting is an area that you should work on.

On a practical note, speakers should be aware that adjudicators will usually make a note of an initial score at the end of a speech but can then alter it by a couple of points in either direction depending on the debater's subsequent involvement in the debate. Thus, the First Proposition speaker who sits down after eight minutes and considers her job done can be in for a rude awakening: a failure to offer Points of Information will cost her; if, however, she remains engaged throughout, her score may rise.

Finally, it's worth being aware that, although in theory each speech is marked on a scale of 0–100 (except reply speeches, which are 0–50), in practice marks will always be in the 60–80 range. It is not uncommon for some adjudicators to give marks only ranging from 65–76 because they are “saving” the other marks for speeches that, apparently, they never hear. Although the split remains 40%, 40%, 20% of the total marks they are handing out, this takes place within a surprisingly narrow range, so debaters need to be an active force throughout the debate to chase every available point.