



Parliamentary Debate Rules

I. Statement of Purpose

Parliamentary debate is an extemporaneous form of debate with rotating topics. A Parliamentary debate asks competitors to develop and defend positions on a wide range of issues. The purpose of Parliamentary debate is to instill in Christian home school students the skills of presentation, critical thinking, research, and analysis of current events. That endeavor can only be accomplished in an environment of honorable competition that cultivates maturity, wisdom, grace, poise, and brings glory to our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Parliamentary Debate Team Eligibility

Each debater must have reached age sixteen (16) by October 1st of the competition year, or have competed for two or more years in another debate format, or receive consent from her/his coach. A parliamentary debate team consists of two competitors. A team may not switch partners within a single tournament.

III. Parliamentary Debate Teams and Objectives

- A) The Parliamentary debate round consists of two teams.
 - 1) The Government team is comprised of the Prime Minister and Member of Government.
 - 2) The Opposition team is comprised of the Leader of Opposition and Member of Opposition.
- B) The Government team shall affirm the resolution.

IV. Resolution Announcement and Preparation Time

- A) The resolution shall be announced at a specified time before each round.
- B) The official start of preparation time shall be announced with the topic.
- C) Once the resolution has been announced, each team will have twenty (20) minutes to prepare for the debate and walk to their competition room.
- D) Debaters are responsible for monitoring their preparation time and should arrive promptly in their event room before the allotted preparation time has expired.
- E) Competitors may prepare using whatever resources they have available during preparation time, including electronic devices.

V. During the Debate

A. Speech Order:

Speeches shall proceed in the following order with the indicated maximum speech times:

Prime Minister Constructive	7 minutes
Leader of Opposition Constructive	7 minutes
Member of Government Constructive	7 minutes
Member of Opposition Constructive	7 minutes
Leader of Opposition Rebuttal	5 minutes
Prime Minister Rebuttal	5 minutes

B. Constructive and Rebuttal Speeches:

- 1) The Prime Minister shall state the resolution during the first speech.
- 2) Debaters may introduce new arguments during all constructive speeches.
- 3) No new lines of argumentation may be presented in rebuttal speeches. Rebuttal speeches may include new examples, analysis, and analogies offered to support or refute previously introduced lines of argumentation.

C. Use of Information:

- 1) Debaters may refer to any information that is within the realm of knowledge of educated and informed citizens.
- 2) Judges will disallow specific information only in the event that no reasonable person could have access to the information.
- 3) The use of additional materials is allowed within the following parameters: No materials may be brought into the debate round for a debate team's use except those handwritten by the two debaters during preparation time, a printed copy of the resolution if provided by the tournament director, and a copy of the Stoa Parliamentary Rules.
- 4) During the debate, electronic devices may only be used for timing. They may not be used to send or receive information from any source.

D. Points of Information:

- 1) An opponent may request a point of information—orally, by rising, or by raising a hand or other similar attention-grabber—at any time after the first minute and before the last minute of any constructive speech. All other points of information are out of order.
- 2) No points of information will be allowed in rebuttals.
- 3) The debater holding the floor has the discretion to accept or refuse points of information, and interact with the point as desired.
- 4) The speaking time of the debater with the floor continues during the point of information exchange.
- 5) A point of information may be phrased as a question or a statement.
- 6) Any follow-up question or statement by the opponent should be considered a new point of information.

E. Points of Order:

A point of order is a serious charge and should not be raised for minor violations.

- 1) **How to Initiate:** If at any time, a debater believes that his or her opponent has violated a rule, the debater shall orally state “Point of Order” and any speech time in progress shall pause for the exchange. The debater must state and explain the rule violation.
- 2) **How to Respond:** The other team must yield the floor if a speech is in progress and may make a brief response that may:
 - a) Agree that something is out of order; or
 - b) Disagree, and briefly explain why.
- 3) **How to Facilitate as Judge:**
 - a) After the exchange, the judge has discretion and may respond. An example of each of the three types of responses are below:
 - i) Point Well Taken / I Agree / That was Out of Order
 - ii) Point Not Well Taken / I Disagree / That was In Order
 - iii) Point Under Consideration / I am Not Sure / I’ll have to Think About it.
 - b) If there is a panel of judges, after the debater briefly explains the point of order and their opponent briefly replies, the panel may either (1) take a vote on the objection, or (2) inform the debaters that the panel will take the point of order under consideration and the round shall continue.
- 4) The speaking time of the debater with the floor stops during the Point of Order exchange.

F. Indicators of Agreement and Disagreement:

- 1) Judges, observers, and debaters may indicate agreement/disagreement with the speaker through gestures or audible acknowledgement.
- 2) Agreement/disagreement indicators must neither interrupt the speaker nor cause undue distraction to the judge.
- 3) The judge shall exercise personal discretion and may ask audience members to limit or stop their signs of support or disapproval, and to leave if they do not comply.