

THE NCFCA COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO POLICY DEBATE

Parent's Guide

National Christian Forensics and Communications Association

By Christy Shipe

First Edition, August 2017

Institute for Excellence in Writing, L.L.C.

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PREFACE

Twenty years ago, homeschool debate got its start under the leadership of the Home School Legal Defense Association. I was privileged to run that program for HSLDA and write a policy debate textbook to help beginners get started in the activity. That textbook has since gone through several editions, and the book you are now holding in your hands is the latest reworking of what used to be called *An Introduction to Policy Debate*. With the blessing of HSLDA, I am pleased to now be writing this new edition for the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association, the league that developed out of the original HSLDA debate program. I currently serve on the Board of Directors of the NCFCA and am proud to be an advocate for and educator in the league. I'm also excited about partnering with a new publisher, the Institute for Excellence in Writing. IEW has been a strong supporter of the NCFCA and is a natural partner in helping spread the important activity of debate to Christian students.

Whether you are a student, educator, or parent, I want to preface this book with a few very important principles that I hope will strongly guide your understanding of debate. First, it is of the utmost importance that the Christian's goal in learning debate should be to gain life skills in order to glorify God. Competition is an excellent training ground for enhancing those skills, but winning competitions is not the ultimate goal of learning debate. God must get the glory, not us. Do your utmost to focus on serving God and bringing Him glory as you engage with the activity of debate.

Second, as you focus on serving and glorifying God, you will naturally begin to love the other people who are also involved in debate because God is love. Anyone who loves God must love his brother as the Scriptures tell us (1 John 4:21). Part of loving others in debate means showing them common courtesy during competition and refusing to engage in practices that are rude or insensitive. Some of these practices include presenting new arguments in rebuttals when the other team won't have a chance to answer, bullying opponents during cross-examination, and mishandling evidence. This one question should guide everything said and done in the debate round: Is it loving?

Third, understand that the theory of debate is debatable! While competitors have great freedom in the round to debate what is acceptable theory and practice, please understand that the best way to keep that freedom is by being responsible. If competitors will keep love as their guide, then a robust and diverse practice of debate will flourish. If instead competitors begin to adapt a style of tactics designed to gain an unfair advantage in the round, they may find those freedoms will not last long.

Finally, please keep the activity of debate in perspective. Once again, competition serves the greater goal of gaining life skills. Some families are tempted to make attending competitions and winning debates the primary goal of their high school years. It is easy to allow any kind of competition to become an identity rather than a skill. When things go well, everyone feels good about themselves. When things don't go well, everyone is upset. It is easy to become angry and place blame on others. Please keep this activity in its right place—it is an educational process designed to teach students communication skills. Whether competitors win or lose, they are still gaining the life skills that God can use for His glory.

More than ever, we need Christian young people who can communicate God's love and truth to a confused world. My prayer is that every student who learns debate will use those skills to further the kingdom of Christ.

Happy debating!

Christy Shipe

June 21, 2017

INTRODUCTION: The NCFCA Comprehensive Guide to Policy Debate *Parent's Guide*

You and your child are about to embark on a grand adventure! Welcome to NCFCA policy debate! NCFCA understands that pursuing education is important, but a head full of knowledge is only beneficial if the knowledge can be communicated effectively. To that end we want to encourage you in your desire to grow the skills of critical thinking and gracious, articulate communication in your child. We want to empower you with practical instruction built on a strong biblical foundation as you are actively preparing your children to be culture shapers and sharpened tools in the hands of a mighty God.

The NCFCA Comprehensive Guide to Policy Debate is carefully constructed to propel students toward learning critical thinking skills and godly communication. This 12-week policy debate course is designed for both novice and experienced students. The *Coach's Manual* provides leaders with all the tools needed in order to guide students through the lessons each week. It contains lesson plans, the answers to the discussion questions in each lesson, the activities for each week, worksheets and answers, and helpful information for explaining policy debate to students. It also contains the material in the *Competitor's Handbook* for easy reference while preparing and teaching each class.

The *Competitor's Handbook* has the material students need to complete each lesson. It has weekly readings, discussion questions to answer, and homework assignments. The author presents the material in an easy-to-understand way, so students can grasp the fundamentals of debate and begin building their critical thinking and communication skills.

This *Parent's Guide* provides parents with a brief overview and summary of each lesson in the *Competitor's Handbook*. The purpose of the *Parent's Guide* is to give you the information you need to be able to help your child as he goes through the curriculum. It is an overview, so we do encourage you to learn along with your son or daughter; read the material in the *Competitor's Handbook* for deeper understanding of the material presented here.

This guide will give you a basic understanding about what policy debate is, but parents have another important role when it comes to helping their children prepare for competition. Your guidance and expertise is critical to helping young people develop their communication skills, and it is imperative that we keep in mind the fact that the competitors are our children, ages 12-18. They are on a learning journey, so give encouragement, guidance, and feedback as they do their research. They need to learn to cut their evidence, organize their files, and write their cases and briefs. Remember, the students are the ones who are debating, so the more work they do, the better they will understand the topic and be able to compete well. They will build on these skills each year, and parents can help give them the wings they need to succeed in competition, as well as in life outside of competition.

We are glad to have you join us in our commitment to train students to be effective communicators and to use their skills to impact people for Christ. We look forward to seeing you at local and national tournaments this year!

POLICY DEBATE CLASS

LESSON 1

LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION TO DEBATE

Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.

– John Milton, *Areopagitica*

SUMMARY

This short lesson explains what academic debate is and why the skills it teaches are important for Christian students to learn.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to define academic debate.
- Students will learn the cross-examination debate team format (order of speeches).
- Students will identify the skills developed by studying debate.
- Students will understand what the Bible says about speech and debate.
- Students will be able to explain how they can love God and love others by developing the skills that debate teaches.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

Before Lesson 1:

- *Reading.* Read Lesson 1.

Novice students:

- *Research.* Begin reading about the general topic area. Bring one book or article on the topic to the next meeting.
- *Reading.* Read Lesson 2. Be ready for a quiz on logical fallacies and the Toulmin Model.
- *Partner Survey.* Fill out the Team Debate Partnership Questionnaire on page 82 and bring it with you to the next meeting.
- *Activity.* Bring one advertisement and one opinion piece to the next meeting. Opinion pieces can be found in any newspaper in the opinion or editorial section.

Experienced students:

- *Research.* Begin reading about the general topic area. Bring three books or articles on the topic to the next meeting.
 - *Reading.* Read Lesson 2. Be ready for a quiz on logical fallacies and the Toulmin Model.
 - *Partner Survey.* Fill out the Team Debate Partnership Questionnaire on page 82 and bring it with you to the next meeting.
 - *Activity.* Bring one advertisement and one opinion piece to the next meeting. Opinion pieces can be found in any newspaper in the opinion or editorial section.
-

Debate is simply the art of persuading by reasons, which is a common part of our experience as human beings. Academic debate is an educational way for students to learn the skills needed in order to speak persuasively in real life.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEBATE

- Academic debate is a tool that can be used to love God. The study of debate is one way that your student can greatly develop his critical thinking skills and thus improve the ability of his mind to love the Lord.
- Debating with a biblical worldview means submitting one's mind to the lordship of Christ. Therefore, all thinking, reasoning, and conclusions are based upon the highest truth that exists, which is the Word of God.
- Submitting to the lordship of Christ also means that debate skills will be used to love rather than to hurt others. Students should not use debate skills to disrespect parents, show off to friends, or cut someone down.
- Instead, God wants to use each student and the communication skills they will learn in debate to reach others with the truth of the gospel, to build up others, to demolish lies and replace them with truth, and to stand up for those who cannot defend themselves.
- Through debate, students also learn how to ask penetrating questions, develop the ability to respond graciously and accurately to an opponent's attacks, organize information, and communicate complex ideas in simple ways.

The real prize of debate is learning skills that will last a lifetime, not necessarily winning the debate round.

- It is important to think of debate as learning a life skill, rather than playing a game. Debate practiced as a game tends to train speakers who can only communicate well with others who understand the rules of the game. Debate practiced as a life skill, on the other hand, tends to train speakers who can communicate with anyone regardless of their knowledge of debate theory.
- NCFCA debate teaches students to focus on learning real-world communication that will make sense to the average person, rather than adopting sophisticated styles and strategies that only a debate expert could understand.

DEFINING DEBATE

- This curriculum deals with a specific type of academic debate, namely, cross-examination debate.
- There are two kinds of cross-examination debate: value debate and policy debate. Policy debate involves a current policy challenge facing our country—such as health care, taxes, or education—and gives debaters a chance to enter into the national debate and come up with their own plan to solve the problem.
- Value debate, on the other hand, involves a discussion of the values that often underlie policy decisions such as safety, liberty, or life. While NCFCA offers both styles of debate, this curriculum deals exclusively with policy debate.

The Debate Resolution

Team policy debate involves two teams debating a specific topic chosen by the debate association. Most debate leagues choose only one policy topic for an entire debate season. You can view some examples of policy topics debated in the NCFCA at <http://www.ncfca.org/what-we-do/speech-and-debate-competition/debate/past-debate-resolutions>.

The resolution is always worded toward the affirmative side of the debate. The broadness of the resolution means not every affirmative team will make the same kind of change. There will usually be at least twenty possible changes that can be made to affirm a resolution.



<https://goo.gl/Ompzbx>

Tournament Terminology

Rounds

A round is two teams arguing a single topic in front of a judge. Tournaments usually have six preliminary rounds for all teams entered into the tournament and then elimination rounds in which the teams with the best records in the preliminary rounds compete.

Speaking Order

Since there are two speakers for each side in team debate, each speaker is numbered. On the affirmative side, the speakers are named the first affirmative speaker and the second affirmative speaker. On the negative side, the speakers are named the first negative speaker and the second negative speaker.

Speeches

The speeches are named, as well. There are constructive speeches (where arguments are first made or constructed), cross-examinations (where questions are asked), and rebuttals (where arguments made in the constructive speeches are refuted and refined).

Here is the format used for a team policy debate round:

First Affirmative Constructive (1AC)	8 minutes
Cross-Examination (by the 2N)	3 minutes
First Negative Constructive (1NC)	8 minutes
Cross-Examination (by the 1A)	3 minutes
Second Affirmative Constructive (2AC)	8 minutes
Cross-Examination (by the 1N)	3 minutes
Second Negative Constructive (2NC)	8 minutes
Cross-Examination (by the 2A)	3 minutes
First Negative Rebuttal (1NR)	5 minutes
First Affirmative Rebuttal (1AR)	5 minutes
Second Negative Rebuttal (2NR)	5 minutes
Second Affirmative Rebuttal (2AR)	5 minutes

The speeches are commonly referred to by their abbreviations, given above. Each speaker has different responsibilities and different requirements, which will be discussed in Lesson 9.

Notice the order of the cross-examinations. The 1A is cross-examined by the 2N, the 1N is cross-examined by the 2A, and so on. The reason for this order is simple. After each constructive speech, the member of the opposite team who does not have to speak next must cross-examine the person who just spoke.

Sides

The two teams who meet in the debate round will be assigned a side to take in the debate. During a debate tournament each team will take turns arguing on both sides of the resolution so that debaters thoroughly learn each topic.

Affirmative and Negative

The team arguing in support of the resolution is called the affirmative team, and the team that argues against the resolution is called the negative team.

Debate case

When the affirmative team chooses what kind of change it wants to make, it will write a case making that change.

Case areas

All of the possibilities for affirming the resolution are called case areas by debaters. Debaters will not know ahead of time which teams they will face in the tournament and so must be prepared to argue on the negative against all of the likely case areas as well as defend their own affirmative case.

Judging Debate

After the round is over, the judge will fill out a ballot with the following information: 1) which team won or lost the round, 2) speaker points for each individual speaker in the round, and 3) comments about the reason for the decision, including constructive comments for the debaters. A sample ballot is given on the next page.

Win/Loss

Usually, the judge votes for either the affirmative or negative team. In rare cases NCFCA allows the judge to give a double loss if the judge cannot in good conscience vote for a team whose behavior was blatantly rude and abusive throughout the round, even if its arguments were sound.

In most double-loss situations, one team did an extremely poor job of argumentation, and the other team was so rude that the judge could not vote for either team.

The best way to know how to defend what you believe is to thoroughly understand all of your opponent's arguments. By learning to debate both sides of the resolution, you will learn the skills necessary to defend what you truly believe.



Aff Smith T./Jones L.

Neg Miller J./Lewis J.

Regional Qualifier

Room F103

Round 2 12:00 PM

Affirmative

Name
1A Laurie Jones

Speaker Rank
Best Last
1 2 3 4

Speaker Points	Poor.....	Excellent
Persuasiveness	1 2 3 4 5	
Organization	1 2 3 4 5	
Delivery/Conduct	1 2 3 4 5	
Evidence	1 2 3 4 5	
Cross-Examination	1 2 3 4 5	
Refutation	1 2 3 4 5	

Total
22

Comments
*Great 1AC!
Need to work on organizing
1AR to cover most important
issues in the round. Overall,
good job!*

Name
2A Todd Smith

Speaker Rank
Best Last
1 2 3 4

Speaker Points	Poor.....	Excellent
Persuasiveness	1 2 3 4 5	
Organization	1 2 3 4 5	
Delivery/Conduct	1 2 3 4 5	
Evidence	1 2 3 4 5	
Cross-Examination	1 2 3 4 5	
Refutation	1 2 3 4 5	

Total
25

Comments
*Excellent 2AR. Your
summary of the issues
won the round for your
team. Work on speaking slowly.*

Negative

Name
1N Jason Miller

Speaker Rank
Best Last
1 2 3 4

Speaker Points	Poor.....	Excellent
Persuasiveness	1 2 3 4 5	
Organization	1 2 3 4 5	
Delivery/Conduct	1 2 3 4 5	
Evidence	1 2 3 4 5	
Cross-Examination	1 2 3 4 5	
Refutation	1 2 3 4 5	

Total
20

Comments
*Nice 1NC,
good response to aff case.
Work on keeping control
of CX as the questioner.*

Name
2N John Lewis

Speaker Rank
Best Last
1 2 3 4

Speaker Points	Poor.....	Excellent
Persuasiveness	1 2 3 4 5	
Organization	1 2 3 4 5	
Delivery/Conduct	1 2 3 4 5	
Evidence	1 2 3 4 5	
Cross-Examination	1 2 3 4 5	
Refutation	1 2 3 4 5	

Total
18

Comments
*Your passion
showed in the 2AC but
you seemed confused in
the 2NR. Relax, smile!*

Affirmative



Decision



Double Loss

Negative



Reason for Decision

*Aff convinced me that a change is needed
in our current system. Although neg
proved that there would be some complexity
with administration, aff proved that their
plan will work better than the status quo.*

Judge Name

Judy Barr

Date

Jan 3, 2014

CTaP - TP Ballot

Speaker Rank and Speaker Points

Speaker rank and speaker points are awarded to each debater in the round during the preliminary rounds of a debate tournament.

Each speaker is ranked relative to the other debaters in the round. The best speaker in the round is given a rank of one, the second speaker a rank of two, and so on.

Comments

Judges are not allowed to share their decisions or discuss the round with the debaters during the tournament. Instead, they will write whatever comments they have to share on the ballot.

GETTING STARTED

The first year in debate is extremely confusing. Expect it. The confusion and chaos affects everyone in debate.

Contributing to this confusion are differing ideas about debate theory and practice. Even though there are certain ideas about debate which are fairly standard, there are others which are very controversial. Perspectives on these controversial ideas may vary from coach to coach or debater to debater.

As your student starts his journey into the art of debate, be patient, and encourage him to be patient with himself. Many new debaters and their parents are overwhelmed by all there is to learn. Learning the terminology, how to research some of the most complex issues of our day, and then how to communicate that in a winsome speech is a process that takes time and practice. Keep the life goals of debate in mind for yourself and your student. The hard work is worth the rewards.
