

Score	Description	Argumentation	Refutation	Structure	Presentation
<b>59 and lower</b>	<p>This rubric supplements format and judge certification training and other judging guides.</p> <p><b>59 should be reserved for students who are unsuccessful as debaters as well as otherwise uncooperative, mean-spirited, or disruptive during a debate. This is a most unusual circumstance. Lower points often exclude debaters from awards. If a judge gives a student a score lower than 60, she/he is indicating that the debater, based on this one performance, should be ineligible for any individual or team tournament award.</b></p>				
<b>60-64</b>	Clearly below average for an experienced debater. This score may be slightly below average for a new or anxious speaker. Lower markings simply indicate that a student has yet to master any of the core elements of debate. A lower score does not indicate a 'failure' on the students' part. It is simply an evaluation of the debate.	Does not use the A-R-E (assertion–reasoning–evidence) format for arguments. Offers assertions with little reasoning. There is little or no evidence to support arguments. The speaker has likely copied arguments from other sources (notes, teammates) but does not understand the issues. Does not amplify partners' arguments.	Does not reply to the overwhelming majority of major points from the other side. Repeats her own arguments without expanding them or comparing them to the arguments from the opposing side. The result is that there is little 'clash' in the debate.	Disorganized. Does not have a narrative structure to the speech (introduction–body–conclusion). Arguments are not clearly distinguished from one to another. Does not reply to opposing issues in an orderly way, making the speech difficult to follow. Does not use the allotted speaking time.	Distracted, anxious and halting in delivery. Makes little eye contact – excessive use of notes inhibits establishing a connection with the judge. Mumbles or has numerous vocal pauses: 'umm,' 'you know.' Disrupts the effectiveness of partners' speeches (interruptions, excessive passing of notes). Either accepts or rejects <i>all</i> POIs.
<b>65-69</b>	This is a below average performance for an experienced debater but may be a more common 'average' score for beginning debaters. The speaker is modestly successful in one major performance element (public speaking, organization, argumentation, refutation, interaction such as POIs and heckling) but is ineffective in other major elements.	Does not generally use the A-R-E format, although there may be an exception for a few arguments. Uses little evidence such as contemporary and historical examples, statistical information or expert testimony. Has inconsistencies, logic gaps, or one or more fallacies in major arguments. Little integration of issues from teammates.	Does not clash with or reply to the majority of arguments from the opposing side. This debater is more apt to repeat previous ideas rather than develop, analyze or compare them. The speaker does not use advanced refutation techniques, for example, evaluating opportunity costs and opponents' underlying assumptions.	The full speech is not well organized, although one or more individual points may be appropriately organized. Lacks an attention-getting introduction and a powerful conclusion. Difficult to follow for a significant amount of time. Unclear when moving from one point to another. May use full speaking time, but ineffectively allocate time to key issues.	Loses clarity for sustained periods. Poor eye contact and infrequent use of gestures. The speaker does not sound confident or convincing. Rarely attempts a POI and is distracted by POIs from the opposing team. Does not work effectively with teammates or participate in positive or negative heckling.
<b>70-74</b>	This is a near average performance for an experienced debater and a slightly above average performance for a new debater. The speaker is inconsistent – some speech elements are done well and others are unsuccessful. The speaker may be somewhat unclear about her role, succeeding but leaving opportunities for the other side to exploit.	The speaker clearly understands argumentation but only occasionally uses A-R-E. The speaker is also likely to confuse reasoning and evidence, offering only one of the elements rather than both. The speaker does not make effective argumentative POIs or heckles. Significance established for only 1-2 issues. May struggle to identify the debate's major issues.	The speaker is much more likely to discuss her/his own arguments than answer an opponent's arguments in a direct and forceful way, although there is some refutation of limited effectiveness. The speaker offers more general refutation rather than a combination of general and specific counters. May compare some competing issues but does not do so consistently.	The speaker has a basic structure (introduction, body, conclusion) but strays from it during the presentation. The speaker is likely to be able to organize her/his own arguments but loses structure when trying to address opponent's points. The speaker gets distracted or slows the pace too much when confronted with POIs/heckles. Could allocate time more effectively.	Speaks clearly but there are noticeable pronunciation or other verbal errors that are sufficiently distracting for the audience or disrupt the natural flow of the speech. The speaker makes POIs but they are generally obvious questions, not carefully considered or analyzed arguments. Does not attempt or succeed at effective heckling. Good but not outstanding nonverbal communication.

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<b>75-79</b>	An average to above average performance. The speaker is competent and does some things well but is just as likely to make errors. This is a good speech – the speaker is capable and confident, although style and substance may be inconsistent. The speaker knows her role and tries to accomplish it.	The speaker follows the A-R-E form consistently, although some assertions lack sufficient reasoning and many lack strong evidence. It is more likely that the speaker repeats reasoning as evidence. Competently identifies and compares obvious major issues but does not develop nuance or complexity.	Understands her own positions but spends too much time repeating those ideas rather than developing them. Unlikely to establish qualitative (matter of degree) and quantitative (number affected) significance. Unlikely to compare with opposing views. Uses direct refutation well but offers little advanced refutation.	Organized and generally effective. Attempts a narrative structure but is not able to consistently adhere to it at one or two points of the speech. Loses some clarity integrating opposing arguments. Uses time effectively – the speech is balanced with an appropriate mix of arguments and refutation.	Speaks in a clear, comprehensible way. Effective nonverbal communication (eye contact and gestures). Style is competent but not supremely confident. May speak in a monotone. Attempts 1-2 POIs and gives reasonable but unspectacular answers to POIs. Attempts effective heckling.
<b>80-84</b>	This is a solid, clearly above average performance. A consistently good debate speech. The speaker appears to be comfortable, eager to participate and confident. Inconsistencies in the performance are likely to be minor distractions. Sufficiently strong presentation that an ineffective reply will be a serious risk for the opponents.	Makes effective arguments throughout the speech. Using the A-R-E format, the speaker consistently applies reasoning and, more often than not, also presents evidence to support issues. Appears prepared to discuss the important issues of the debate. The speaker uses argumentative POIs and heckles, although only once or twice.	Maintains her own or team's positions, supplementing them with thoughtful analysis and examples. Has more difficulty with the opposing team's arguments but is able to effectively refute most of the major arguments of the other side. The speaker primarily uses only direct refutation (simple disagreement) but is effective.	Simple, effective narrative structure for own arguments but has some difficulty integrating multiple counter-positions into speech. Uses speaking time effectively – uses the full amount of time and appropriately allocates time to the important issues. The speech is sufficiently organized so that listeners not taking notes could follow it.	Speaks in an engaging manner – clear but only occasionally highly entertaining and powerfully persuasive. Confident and credible. Concise POIs have clear relevance to the debate. Occasional verbal pauses (“ummm...”) do not distract. May be ineffective or confusing at 1 or 2 notable times. Strong eye contact.
<b>85-89</b>	This is an extraordinarily fine speech from a consistently strong debater. Most listeners would say it was ‘outstanding.’ Confident and capable – this speech is an effective model for new debaters learning public speaking and debating. May offer innovative approaches to presentation and argumentation.	The speaker is able to establish clear positions that demand a sophisticated reply. The speaker uses A-R-E with highly effective reasoning and consistent application of different varieties of evidence. Explains and analyzes evidence. Establishes qualitative and quantitative significance for all issues.	This speaker uses direct refutation and advanced refutation techniques, including opportunity cost evaluation, strategic agreement, and turn/capture of opponents' positions. Outstanding expressions of significance and impact assessment with opposing side's major arguments.	Logical organization that is easy to follow and flow. Likely to have effective intro and conclusion. Able to organize own positions and opponents' into a well-integrated speech. Can use all speaking time but may not because of efficiency. May use non-linear structure without losing clarity.	An animated speaker able to present a clear and convincing case. Persuasive and credible. Excellent integration of public speaking skills, including non-verbal skills and verbal ones. Strong public speaker in all but one notable respect. Strong POIs and replies to POIs. Infrequently distracted by the other team.
<b>90-94</b>	Near brilliant. This is an outstanding debater delivering a highly successful speech in ALL respects. Would be a rousing speech for a general audience and a substantive presentation for an audience of field experts.	Not only is the speaker able to make powerful arguments, but does so on the spot. The issues are detailed and complex, with substantial evidence to support sound reasoning. Evidence is detailed and well analyzed.	Understands how arguments interrelate. The speaker investigates inconsistencies among opponents' claims. Identifies and exploits opportunity costs and underlying and hidden assumptions.	Strong narrative or clever alternative structure. Persuasive introduction and conclusion. Speech is sophisticated and yet easy to follow and understand. Seamlessly integrates arguments from both sides.	Effectively uses rhetorical devices like humor, effective pausing and vocal inflection to add substantial depth to the speech. Thoroughly engaged – the speaker attempts many clever POIs. Highly effective heckling.
<b>95 and higher</b>	A MAGNIFICENT performance. Difficult to identify any error. A 98-100 is <u>flawless</u> – a combination of Winston Churchill, Barbara Jordan, and Denzel Washington. Maybe one speech in years will score this highly.	Sophisticated understanding of issues and strategies. Develops arguments with multiple causes and consequences. Clever impromptu argumentation. Uses different types of evidence and introduces and analyzes more evidence as the debate develops.	Integrates advanced refutation into argumentation, using ideas from opponents to advance the speaker's own side. Uses POIs and heckling as opportunities for powerful refutation. Accounts for or has an outstanding reply to every important opposing point.	Develops a clear, well-organized (effective narrative or other structure) and efficient speech. Despite argument complexity, nearly any listener could follow the speech. Speaker is capable of restoring order to even a confusing debate.	Has exceptional subject knowledge, delivered in a highly entertaining and informative manner. Brilliant verbal and nonverbal skills, including eye contact, volume, pace, clarity, and humor. Speech would make an ideal demonstration.