

Debating – How it works

A debate takes place between two teams each consisting of two pupils. The debate contains six separate speeches and a period of comment from the audience (the floor debate).

The proceedings are opened by the chair (they are not a competitor and can be the teacher or other students) who introduce the teams in the debate and announces the topic.

The chair will call each debater in turn to make their speeches, starting with the first speaker for the proposition. Order of speeches is as follows:

First proposition speaker (speeches up to 5 minutes)

First opposition speaker

Second proposition speaker

Second opposition speaker

When each of the debaters has made their speech, the chair asks for comments from the floor. These may be phrased as statements or questions, but they will not be answered directly by the teams. They have an opportunity to refer to floor points in their summary.

Floor debate (approximately 3 minutes)

When the floor debate has been brought to a close, the chair will invite one member from each team to make a summary speech.

Opposition summary speaker (Up to 3 minutes)

Proposition summary speaker

During the main speeches the first and last minute of the speech is protected time. The middle three minutes can be interrupted by the opposite team to offer a point of information. To make this request, the debater must stand up and say, "On a point of information". The speaker holding the floor may choose to accept or tell them politely, "No thank you". Point of information may not be offered during the summary speeches.

The floor takes a vote at the end of the debate to decide which side wins.