

Public Forum Debate

(adopted from the NFL)

Public Forum Debate is audience friendly debate that focuses on advocacy of a position derived from the issues presented in the resolution, not a prescribed set of burdens. A Public Forum Debate round begins with a flip of a coin between the competing teams to determine sides and speaker position. Public Forum tests skills in argumentation, cross-examination, and refutation.

1. Topics: Specific topics for district and state tournaments will be published in the *Rostrum* and at www.nflonline.org.

2. Procedure: Prior to EVERY round and in the presence of the judge(s), a coin is tossed by one team and called by the other team. The team that wins the flip may choose one of two options: EITHER the **SIDE** of the topic they wish to defend (pro or con) OR the **SPEAKING POSITION** they wish to have (begin the debate or end the debate). The remaining option (SIDE OR SPEAKING POSITION) is the choice of the team that loses the flip. Once speaking positions and sides have been determined, the debate can begin. Each speaker shall have four minutes for constructive argument, alternating between pro and con. (Please keep in mind that the debate may begin with a con speech.) Following the first two constructive speeches, the two debaters who have just given speeches will stand and participate in a three-minute "crossfire". [In "crossfire" both debaters "hold the floor"] However, the first question must be asked by the speaker who spoke first. After that question, either debater may question and/or answer at will.] At the end of the first "crossfire", the four-minute constructive arguments are continued by the students yet to speak. At the conclusion of the last two constructive arguments, another three-minute "crossfire" takes place between the two debaters who just spoke using the crossfire procedure discussed above. Following the four constructive speeches and two "crossfire" segments, the 1st speakers for each team will each give a 2-minute summary continuing established alternation. At the conclusion of the summary speeches, all four debaters will remain seated and participate in a three-minute "Grand Crossfire" in which all four debaters are allowed to cross-examine one another. The first question must be asked by the speaker who gave the first summary speech. At the conclusion of the "Grand Crossfire", the second speakers will each give a 1-minute "Final Focus" speech. The "Final Focus" is a persuasive final restatement of why a team has won the debate.

Public Forum Timing Schedule

First Speaker - Team A = 4 Minutes

First Speaker - Team B = 4 Minutes

Crossfire = 3 Minutes

Second Speaker - Team A = 4 Minutes

Second Speaker - Team B = 4 Minutes

Crossfire = 3 Minutes

Summary - First Speaker - Team A = 2 Minutes

Summary - First Speaker - Team B = 2 Minutes

Grand Crossfire = 3 Minutes

Final Focus - Second Speaker - Team A = 1 Minute

Final Focus - Second Speaker - Team B = 1 Minute

Prep Time (per team) = 2 Minutes

3. Plans/Counterplans: In Public Forum Debate, a plan or counterplan is defined by the NFL as a formalized, comprehensive proposal for implementation. Neither the pro or con side is permitted to offer a plan or counterplan; rather, they should offer reasoning to support a position of advocacy. Debaters may offer generalized, practical solutions.