

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

District 9790

Ian Murphy Memorial Debating Competition

Debating and the adjudication of debates

1. The task of the adjudicator is to decide which of two teams has performed the better in a given debate. He/She does this by allotting a mark to each team out of a maximum of 300, of which 100 marks are apportioned to each speaker on the following basis:

MATTER.....Maximum 40 marks

MANNER.....Maximum 40 marks

METHOD.....Maximum 20 marks

Matter is the substance of the speech; (what is said)
Manner is the style of the speaker; (how it is said)
Method is the form of the speech; (how it is set out)

2. Adjudicators are requested to act independently and to decide the winner by a majority vote rather than being influenced by the strongest adjudicator.

Summary guide to adjudicators

Matter – 40 points

1. Has the speaker (if first speaker) properly defined and explained the subject?
2. Has the speaker (if second or third speaker) properly understood and adequately explained or clarified the real issues (wherever necessary)?
3. What substantial arguments has he/she advanced?
4. Were they answered successfully or unsuccessfully or ignored?
5. Were the arguments supported by:
 - (a) Evidence or facts
 - (b) Personal experience
 - (c) Suitable authorities or quotations
 - (d) Graphic illustration
 - (e) Mere assertion
6. Is the side showing some preponderance of argument?
7. Is he/she coming to grips with basic arguments of his/her opponents?
8. Has the argument been clear and constructive?

Manner – 40 points

Did the speaker influence the audience?

1. **SOUND:**
 - (a) Volume – could be heard comfortably?
 - (b) Clarity – was he/she speaking clearly with good pronunciation, good speaking rate and grammatical correctness?
 - (c) Variety – suitable variation of volume, pace, tone, humour and effective pausing?
 - (d) Audience contact – did he/she show sincerity?

2. **APPEARANCE:**
 - (a) Stance – was it comfortable and assured, or did it hinder audience concentration?
 - (b) Facial expression – did he/she look at the audience and use his/her features expressively?
 - (c) Gesture – was it effective or stiff, or inappropriate?

3. **USE OF NOTES:**

Were they – unobtrusive? – not used? – unsuitable? – a positive eyesore?

4. Fundamentally, what was the general impression he/she made?

Method – 20 points

The architecture of a speech and the use of the team case.

1. Individual speech:
 - (a) Was it arranged in logical order?
 - (b) Did it have effective openings and endings?
 - (c) Did it contain logical argumentation, e.g., from general to particular arguments, or vice versa?
 - (d) Was the speech relevant or did he/she waste time?
 - (e) Did he/she use or exceed his/her time?

2. The individual's contribution to team work:
 - (a) Did the speaker carry out his/her duties as a first, second or third speaker?
 - (b) Did he/she contribute to the team "line" and strengthen it?
 - (c) Did he/she help to retain the initiative or to wrest it from the opposition?
 - (d) Did he/she see the substantial dangers to his/her team and succeed in remedying the defects in the case?

General principles to be applied:

1. Teams must demonstrate that they have listened to their opponents and dealt with the arguments raised by them. Three pre-prepared speeches do not constitute a debate.
2. The adjudicator must divorce matter from manner and method and mark each separately. This is the greatest source of error.
3. The adjudicator must act as a reasonably commonsense member of the audience and not as an expert or a person merely to be entertained. His/her expert knowledge or points of view will not influence the marking.
4. A speaker's manner cannot be subdivided into a dozen sub-sections. It is the general influence and effectiveness that counts.
5. The decision of the adjudicator shall be determined upon:
 - (a) The merits of the debate and not upon the merits of the subject.
 - (b) The ability displayed by the speakers in handling the subject.
6. Debates shall have three (3) adjudicators. A majority and not a combined tally of points will determine the result.
7. The person who delivers the adjudication should be as positive as possible, pointing out the good points and suggesting aspects that could be improved in future debates.

Where three (3) adjudicators are not available, one (1) will be appointed to be sole adjudicator.