

Score	Description	Argumentation	Refutation	Structure	Presentation
59 and lower	<p>This rubric supplements format and judge certification training and other judging guides.</p> <p>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 <u>most unusual</u> 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.</p>				
60-64	Clearly below average for an experienced debater. This score may be slightly below average for a new or anxious speaker. Lower markings of this sort simply indicate that a student has yet to master any of the core elements of public speaking and argumentation. A lower score does not indicate a 'failure' on the students' part. It simply reveals an evaluation of one debate.	Does not use the A-R-E (assertion – reasoning – evidence) format for an argument. Offers assertions with little analysis or negligible reasoning. There is little or no evidence to support argumentation. The speaker has likely copied arguments from other sources or teammates but does not understand the issues. The speaker is unlikely to amplify the arguments of partners.	This speaker is unlikely to reply to the overwhelmingly majority of major points from the other side. This speaker is likely to repeat her/his 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. The speaker is likely to either accept or reject <i>all</i> POIs.	Disorganized. Does not have a narrative structure to the speech (introduction – body – conclusion). Arguments are not clearly distinguished from one to another. The speaker does not reply to opposing issues in an orderly manner. It is difficult to follow the speech, due to the lack of organization. The speaker is not using the full amount of allotted speaking time.	The speaker is distracted, anxious, and halting in delivery. There is little eye contact – excessive use of notes inhibits establishing a connection with the judge. The speaker mumbles or has numerous vocal pauses – 'umm,' 'you know,' 'whatever.' The person disrupts the effectiveness of partners' speeches (interruptions, excessive passing of notes).
65-69	This is a below average performance for an experienced debater but may be a more common 'average' score for beginning debaters. In general, the speaker is modestly successful in one major performance element (public speaking, organization, argumentation, refutation, interactive elements such as POIs and heckling, etc.) but is ineffective or unsuccessful in other major elements.	Does not generally use the A-R-E format, although there may be an exception for one or two arguments. Little evidence – contemporary and historical examples, statistical information, expert testimony – is used by the speaker. The speaker is likely to have inconsistencies, logic gaps, or one or more fallacies in major arguments. Little integration of issues from teammates.	This speaker is not able to 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.	There is little organization to the full speech, although one or more individual points may be appropriately organized. The speaker does not have an attention-getting introduction nor a powerful conclusion. The speaker is difficult to follow for a significant amount of time. The speaker is not clear when moving from one to point to another. May use full speaking time, but does not effectively allocate time to key issues.	The speaker loses clarity for sustained periods. There is poor eye contact and infrequent use of gestures. The speaker does not sound confident or convincing. The speaker rarely attempts a POI; the speaker is distracted by POIs from the opposing team. The speaker does not work effectively with teammates or participate in positive or negative heckling. The speaker does not use full speaking time yet ought to add to the speech.
70-74	This is a near average performance for an experienced debater and an average or slightly above average performance for a new debater. The speaker is inconsistent – some speech elements are done well and others are unsuccessful.	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.	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.	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.	Speaks clearly but there are noticeable pronunciation and 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

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75-79	This is an average to above average performance. The speaker is competent and does some things well but is just as likely to make significant errors. This is a good speech – the speaker is capable and confident, although there are inconsistencies in style and substance. The speaker knows her/his role and tries to accomplish it.	The speaker follows the A-R-E form consistently, although some assertions do not have sufficient reasoning and many do not have strong evidence. It is more likely that the speaker repeats reasoning as evidence. The speaker competently identifies obvious major issues but does not develop nuanced or complex issues.	The speaker understands her/his own positions but spends too much time repeating those ideas rather than developing or amplifying them. Unlikely to establish qualitative (matter of degree) and quantitative (number affected) significance. Unlikely to compare and assess 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. Effective use of time throughout the presentation – the speech is balanced with an appropriate mix of the speaker’s argumentation and answers to the opponents’ issues.	Speaks in a clear, comprehensible way. There is consistent nonverbal communication (eye contact and gestures). The speaking style is competent but not supremely confident. Speaks in a monotone rather than with a dramatic tone. Attempts 1-2 POIs and gives reasonable but unspectacular answers to POIs when holding the floor.
80-84	This is a solid, clearly above average performance. This is a consistently good debate speech. The speaker appears to be comfortable with the format, eager to participate, and confident. There are inconsistencies in the performance but they are likely to be minor distractions. Sufficiently strong presentation that an ineffective reply will be a serious risk for the opponents.	The speaker is able to make 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. The debater appears prepared to discuss the important issues of the debate. The speaker uses challenging argumentative POIs and heckles, although does not do this more than once or twice.	The speaker maintains her/his own or team’s positions, supplementing them with thoughtful analysis and examples. The speaker has more difficulty with the opposing team’s arguments but is able to effectively reply to most of the major arguments of the other side. The speaker primarily uses only direct refutation (simple disagreement) but does so consistently and effectively.	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 that it is reasonable that audience members not taking notes are able to follow the development of issues.	Speaks in an engaging manner – clear but only occasionally highly entertaining and powerfully persuasive. Demonstrates confidence and credibility. POIs offered concisely with clear relevance to the debate. There are occasional verbal pauses (“ummm...”) but they are not a distraction. May be an ineffective or confusing, unclear communicator at 1 or 2 notable times. Strong eye contact.
85-89	This is an extraordinarily fine speech from a consistently strong debater. Most listeners would identify the speech as ‘outstanding.’ Confident and capable – this speech is an effective model for new debaters to learn the craft of public speaking and debating. May offer original, 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. Qualitative and quantitative significance is established 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, which 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. Likely to use all speaking time but may not because of word economy and argument efficiency. May offer non-linear or innovative structure without loss of 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 (eye contact, gestures) and verbal ones (pace, emphasis, volume). Strong public speaker in all but one notable respect. Strong POIs and replies to POIs. Infrequently, if ever, distracted by the other team.
90-94	Near brilliant. This is an outstanding debater delivering a highly successful speech in ALL respects. The presentation 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 the speaker is able to do 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 in one compelling presentation.	A persuasive presentation that 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.
95 and higher	A MAGNIFICENT performance. It is difficult to identify any error of omission or commission. A 98-100 is <i>flawless</i> – a combination of Winston Churchill, Barbara Jordan, and Denzel Washington. It is unlikely that there will even be one speech of this ranking in years.	Sophisticated understanding of issues and opponent strategies. Develops arguments with multiple causes and diverse 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, the speech can be followed by nearly any listener. 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 for even experienced peers.