



# ISDS Debater Briefing for Selections

## **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

**This briefing document is applicable only for South, North, Senior and Central Zone selection competitions. This document doesn't serve as the briefing document for East and West Zone competitions.**

# Briefing Overview

ISDS Debater Briefing covers 4 areas



## National Selections Overview

- Overview & Timeline



## Debate Format

- Format
- Speaker Roles
- Motions



## Judging & Decision Making

- Selection Criteria
- What judges look for



## Preparatory Material

- Zonal selections tournament details
- Important links
- Our upcoming events

## Important Note!

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**Before proceeding with the ISDS Debater Briefing, go through the Zonal Selections Competition Briefing document [here](#)**

The Zonal Selections Competition Briefing Document contains important information regarding registration criteria, role of fourth team member, resources for preparation etc. and **must not be skipped**

The ISDS Debater Briefing is a guide that serves to supplement the important information available in the other document to help students better prepare for the selection process

# National Selections Overview



## National Selections Overview & Timeline



Zonal National  
Selection debate  
tournaments



Intermediate  
Round

(This often involves an  
extensive quiz, and  
potentially additional  
rounds of debate)



National Camp



We are here

October

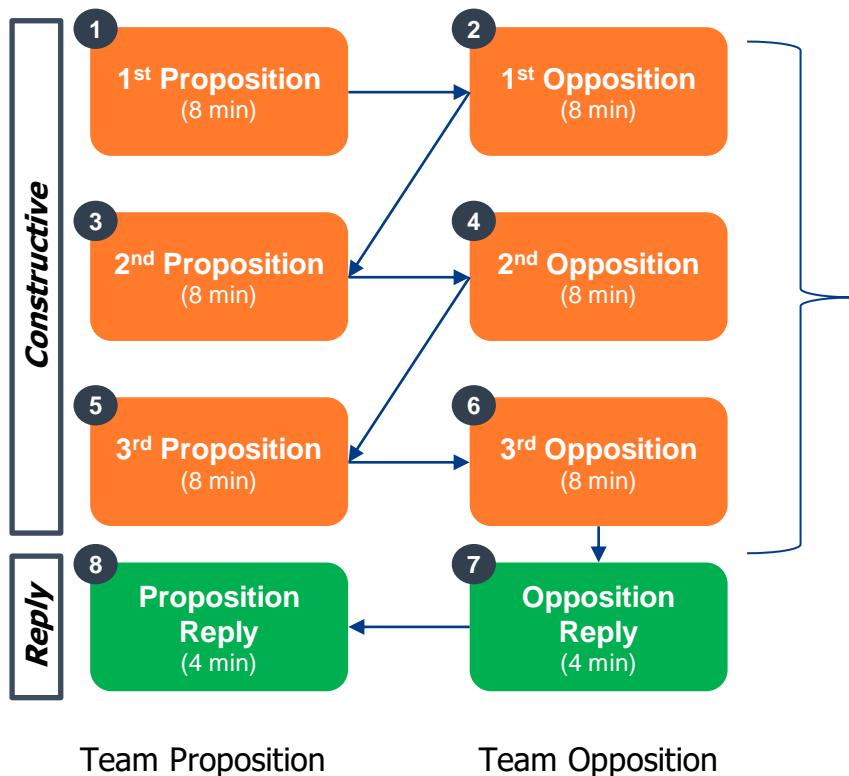
November

December

# WSDC Format



## Each WSDC debate consists of six speakers and eight speeches



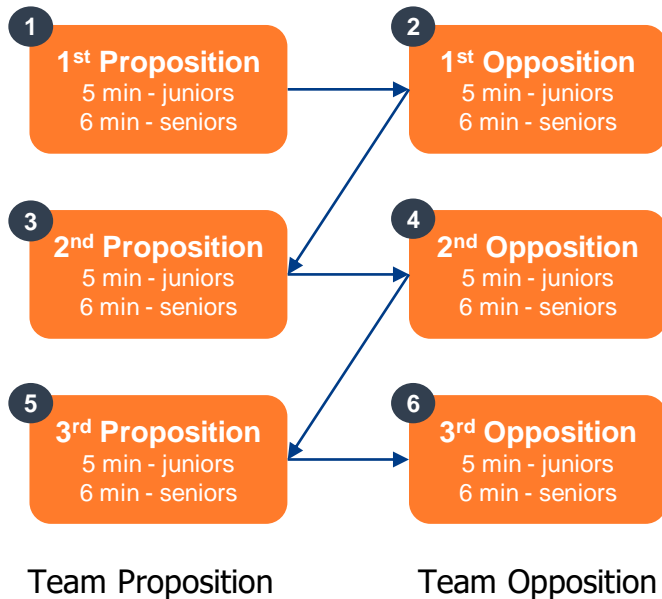
Important points to note:

- The **first six speeches** in the debate are called '**constructive**' or '**substantive**' speeches
- The **last two speeches** are called '**reply**' or '**summary**' speeches
- The **first proposition speaker opens the debate**, and they are followed by first opposition. **Speakers alternate between sides until reply** speeches
- **Opposition reply speaks first**, and is followed by proposition reply
- Only **first or second** speakers can **deliver replies**
- Teams receive 1:00 hr of preparation time for impromptu rounds, no access to internet allowed





## For our selections, we will have WSDC style debates with some changes:



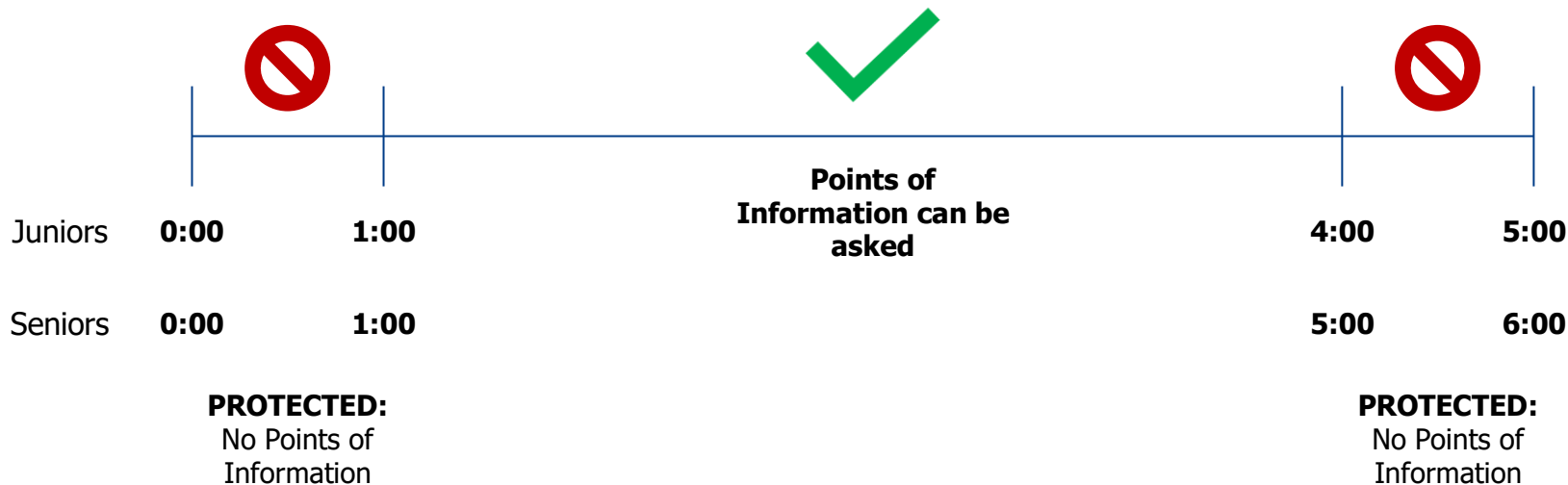
### Changes from the original WSDC format:

- No reply speech for either side
- Speech duration will be 5:00/6:00 as opposed to 8:00
- Protected time for Points of Information will be from 0:00-1:00 and 4:00-5:00/5:00-6:00 as opposed to 0:00-1:00 and 7:00 - 8:00
- Prep time for impromptu rounds will be for a total of 45 minutes, no access to internet allowed

To get a better picture of the format, [watch this debate](#)



During every constructive speech, a speaking member from the opposing team can raise a Point of Information (PoI) during designated times



A PoI is a short interjection from a member of the other team to the person of your team who is currently speaking



## POIs – Do's and Don't's

DO		DO NOT	
ASKING			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Say POI:</b> One person at a time unmutes and says POI during unprotected time or writes "POI" in the chat.</li><li>• <b>Wait to be accepted before answering:</b> They ask the POI they have IF THE SPEAKER ACCEPTS THEM</li><li>• <b>Phrase the POI as a question:</b> The PoI should be phrased as a question and not last more than 10 seconds</li><li>• <b>ONLY offer POIs every 20-30 seconds:</b> Any further questions, clarifications or POIs regardless of how much you desperately disagree can only be asked after ~20-30 seconds. As a TEAM, offer ~5 POIs across unprotected time</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blurt out the question or just post the question in chat</li><li>• Irritate the speaker by un-muting yourself or distracting them on video frequently</li><li>• Ask follow up questions unless another POI is accepted</li><li>• Go on for ages with your question</li></ul>	
ANSWERING			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Say yes if you want to accept a POI</li><li>• Accept at least one POI in your speech</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reject all POIs</li></ul>	



## Speaker roles

	PROPOSITION	OPPOSITION
Team Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speaks in favour of the spirit of the motion</li><li>• Identifies what the issues are with the way the world works currently, and explains why the motion (through their model) solves this problem in their arguments</li><li>• Will rebut opposition's case</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opposes the spirit of the motion</li><li>• Rebut the extent of the problem, or accept the problems and present their own solution (countermodel)</li><li>• Rebut proposition's case and substantive arguments of their own</li></ul>
First Speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Define the motion</li><li>• Introduce action plan ("Model")</li><li>• Introduce arguments</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rebut prop model and arguments</li><li>• Introduce own stance - status quo or counter model</li><li>• Introduce arguments</li></ul>
Second Speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deal with rebuttals to own case</li><li>• Rebut their case</li><li>• Bring 1-2 new arguments</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deal with rebuttals to own case</li><li>• Rebut prop case</li><li>• Bring 1-2 new arguments</li></ul>
Third Speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bring rebuttal to other side's case</li><li>• Explain why your case stands</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bring rebuttal to other side's case</li><li>• Explain why your case stands</li></ul>



## Speaker roles

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Speaker role fulfillment is a very important part of debating. To get a complete understanding of Speaker roles, go through our WSDC Speaker Roles Briefing [here](#)



## Motions (Topics)

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- This tournament will have 2 impromptu rounds where the motion is released 45 min before the debate and 2 prepared rounds where the motion is sent to you in advance.
- Requests for Clarifications: Once debaters have seen the motion, they may request publicly for clarification of the word(s) in the motion that are unclear to them on Zoom call or discord server. Further clarifications may be requested within the first 15 minutes of their preparation time; if one team in a debate requests clarification, their opponents shall also be provided with the same clarification.
- Requests for Clarification must come from the debaters and not from coaches/ team managers / observers on debaters' behalf.



## Motions (Topics)

- Topics for the selections can vary from anything related to current events to policies that are existing and affecting people from a long while.
- Topics for the debate will begin with the words THW which reads as This House would

**Mostly** refers to  
'governments of countries  
across the world'

**THIS HOUSE** would require politicians to have a high school graduation

(This motion can be read as "Governments across the world would require politicians to have a high school graduation")

It's important to be clear on how to approach a debate motion, to get a clear understanding of this, go through our WSDC Speaker Roles Briefing [here](#)

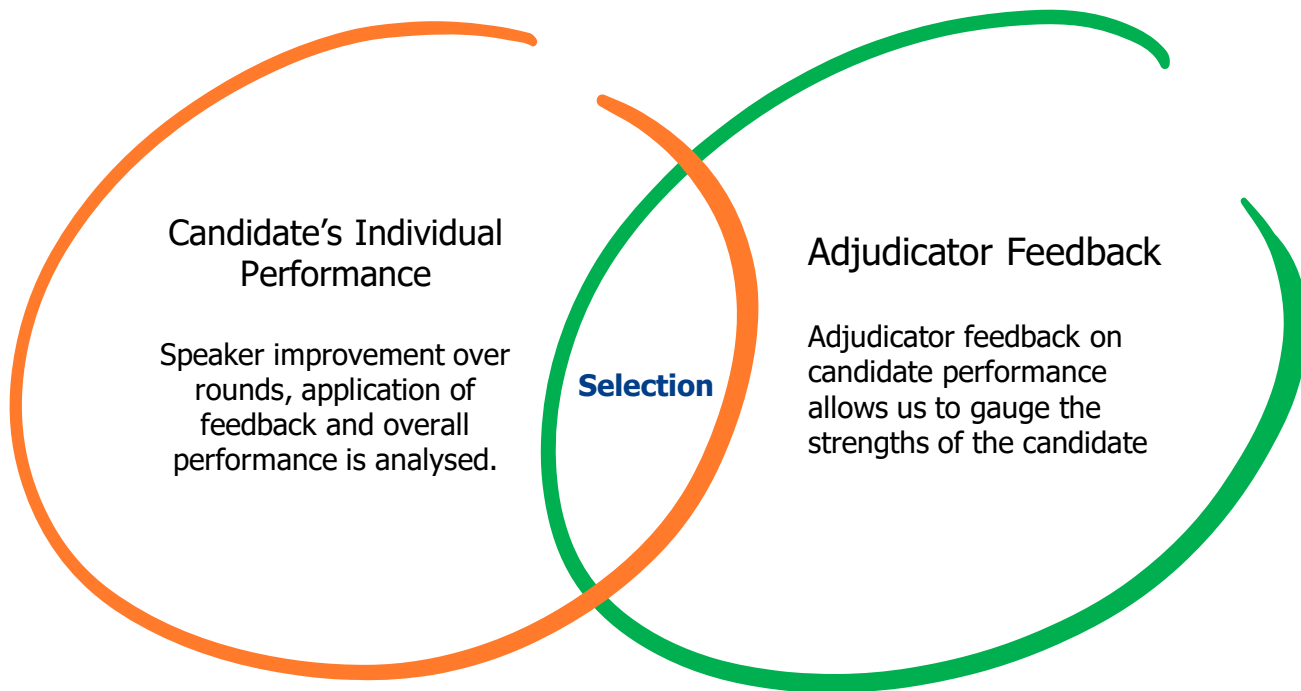
# Judging & Decision making





## Selection Criteria

Selection will not be based on number of rounds won or lost





## Selection Criteria

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Student performance will be recorded by adjudicators in the form of a speaker score

Along with giving a verdict and feedback, a judge also marks all speakers in the round with a speaker score.  
This score will not be disclosed to the team.

A speaker score is a score out of 100 awarded to the speaker based on the following criteria:

- **Style:** 40% (40 points)
- **Content:** 40% (40 points)
- **Strategy:** 20% (20 points)



## Selection Criteria

### Content (40%)

- Deals with **WHAT** is being presented.
- Quality of arguments, examples, rebuttal, POIs and responses to POIs.
- If an argument or rebuttal is underexplained, this indicates a content issue

### Style (40%)

- Deals with **HOW** the content is presented.
- Accents, quality of voice, looks of speakers are \*not\* part of style
- Body language, pace of speech, tonal variations, choice of language, ability to describe situations through powerful illustration, humor, etc. are part of style

### Strategy (20%)

- Deals with **WHY** content is said
- Relevance of the motion, time allocation, prioritising material in the speech, consistency between arguments and speeches, are all part of strategy
- A speech with a lot of time allocated to explaining thoroughly less important arguments is unstrategic



## What judges look for - Content

### In arguments:

- Do speakers have a diverse range of arguments about different stakeholders? E.g.: principles, different types of practical arguments?
- Do speakers have good analysis?
  - **Rigorous Logic:** Every argument is explained step by step and taken to its logical conclusion. If X happens, this leads to Y, which leads to Z harm
  - **Goes beyond assertions:** Each step in a logical chain has a reason. If X happens, it leads to Y because of A reasons. That leads to Z which harmful for B reasons.
- Have speakers explained why an argument is important and relevant to the debate?

### In rebuttal:

- Are speakers' responses to arguments well explained, and do they cover the important material from the other side? Saying something is wrong is different to proving that it is wrong using logical steps.
- Do speakers take care not to misrepresent the other side?

**Example usage is an important part of content. Across arguments and rebuttal, judges will look for whether speakers use good and well explained examples from the real world that are diverse in context.**



## What judges look for - Style

### Speakers should be easy to follow

- Well paced - speakers should not speak too fast
- Clear
  - Speakers should enunciate and avoid swallowing sentence ends, mumbling, etc. that would reduce the ability of a judge to understand them
  - Speakers should pause as necessary, and use clear signposting to move through different parts of their speeches to increase intelligibility. E.g.: Moving onto my first argument, on XXXX.

### Speakers should be engaging to listen to

- Speakers should vary up their tone (between softer and louder), and induce emotions in their speech as the content asks for it, e.g.: hopeful, sarcastic, sad, etc.
- Speakers should use convincing/powerful illustration to explain points. For example, note the difference between saying 'Poorer parents find it difficult to help their children with their studies', and saying 'When you work three jobs to put food on the table, you have very little time to explain advanced calculus to your child.'

**Fundamentally, bad style is bad content. Shouting too loudly, or speaking too quickly to be understood make it harder to understand and be engaged by a speaker. At the same time speakers only using rhetoric and quotes to the exclusion of content is also bad.**



## What judges look for - Strategy

### **Speakers should prioritise material consciously**

- Both while making arguments, and while rebutting arguments, speakers should prioritise delivering material that is most important and hard hitting in the debate and gets to the heart of the debate, and material that works well with the other material their team is running to ensure consistency
- Each speaker should also be able to identify where they are winning the debate and explain why that is critical to the round, and similarly, where they are losing the debate and close the gaps
- Speakers should also be able to highlight material dropped by the other side and explain its importance

### **Speakers should manage time well**

- Speakers' content should be such that they neither underuse their time, nor overshoot the provided time
- Repetition to make time is poor both strategically, and is bad content

### **Speakers should fulfill their roles**

- Speakers playing their respective roles on the team makes the overall team more strategically sound, and individual speeches clearer and more strategic in the round. First speakers forgetting the model and making second speakers do it reduces strategy points for the first speaker, and the amount of time second speakers can use rebutting the other team, and hence strategy points for the second speaker as well, and so on



## Speaker score ranges

Standard	Overall (/100)	Style (/40)	Content (/40)	Strategy (/20)
<i>Exceptional</i>	80	32	32	16
<i>Excellent</i>	76-79	31	31	15-16
<i>Extremely Good</i>	74-75	30	30	15
<i>Very Good</i>	71-73	29	29	14-15
<i>Good</i>	70	28	28	14
<i>Satisfactory</i>	67-69	27	27	13-14
<i>Competent</i>	65-66	26	26	13
<i>Pass</i>	61-64	25	25	12-13
<i>Improvement Needed</i>	60	24	24	12



## Understanding speaker score ranges

Mark	Standard
60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Content is not relevant to the motion and what the team needs to prove.</li><li>• All points made are claims, with no analysis, and are confusing.</li><li>• The speech is hard to follow throughout, so it is hard to give it any credit.</li></ul>
61-63	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A few marginally relevant claims.</li><li>• No analysis provided in the claims, which are mainly lines without explanation.</li><li>• Parts of the speech are clear, but significant parts are still hard to follow.</li></ul>
64 - 66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some of the points made are relevant to the debate.</li><li>• Arguments / rebuttals are made with some explanation and analysis, but with significant logical gaps in the explanation.</li><li>• Sometimes the speech is difficult to follow.</li></ul>
67 - 69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most of the points made are relevant to the debate.</li><li>• All arguments / rebuttals have some explanation, but it still has logical and analytical gaps in important parts of the argument and lacks evidence.</li><li>• Mostly easy to follow, but some sections may still be hard to understand.</li></ul>
70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No major shortfalls, nor any strong moments.</li><li>• Arguments are almost exclusively relevant, although may fail to address one or more core issues sufficiently.</li><li>• All arguments have sufficient explanation without major logical gaps and some examples, but are simplistic and easy to attack.</li><li>• Easy to follow throughout which makes the speech understandable, though style does not necessarily serve to make the speech more persuasive.</li></ul>





## Understanding speaker score ranges

Mark	Standard
71 - 72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arguments are all relevant, and address the core issues in the debate.</li><li>• All arguments have sufficient explanation without major logical gaps and most have credible evidence. Some points raised may have minor logical gaps or deficits in explanation.</li><li>• Easy to follow throughout. On occasion the style may even serve to make the speech more engaging and persuasive.</li></ul>
73 - 76	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arguments are relevant and engage with the most important issues. Arguments have sufficient explanation without major logical gaps.</li><li>• Occasionally, the speaker provides more sophisticated and nuanced analysis, making their arguments hard to attack.</li><li>• Easy to follow throughout. On occasion the style may even serve to make the speech more engaging and persuasive.</li></ul>
77 - 79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arguments are all relevant and well-illustrated, and address the core issues in the debate, with thorough explanations, no logical gaps, and credible examples, making them hard to attack</li><li>• Easy to follow throughout. The style serves to make the speech's content more engaging.</li></ul>
80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plausibly one of the best debating speeches ever given in a schools competition.</li><li>• It is incredibly difficult to think up satisfactory responses to any of the arguments made.</li><li>• Flawless and compelling arguments, made with outstanding delivery.</li></ul>

# Preparatory Material



## Getting ready for your Zonal Selection Tournament

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- Rounds will be conducted over Zoom in breakout rooms. Make sure to go through the [tech guide](#) to familiarise yourself with the naming convention
- Draws and match ups as well as venue of the debate will be displayed before the round.
- Teams will receive a verdict and feedback after each debate
- There will be 2 impromptu rounds and 2 prepared rounds for the selection. We will try our best to ensure each team gets to speak on side proposition and opposition twice. Generally however, it's a normal feature of a debate tournament to not get equal number of rounds for either side.
- For resources to help prepare for selections, ensure to go through Preparation section of [this](#) document



## Important Links

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[Technical  
Guide](#)



[Tournament  
Schedule](#)

**Website:**

[www.indianschoolsdebatingsociety.com](http://www.indianschoolsdebatingsociety.com)

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