Speaker Training

THE NETHERLANDS ONLINE WSDC 2022

This is an adapted version of the 'Speaker and Judge Briefing' from The Netherlands WSDC 2022 collated by the WSDC Board, for the purposes of Speaker Training. All credit should be given to the WSDC 2022 CAP for content.
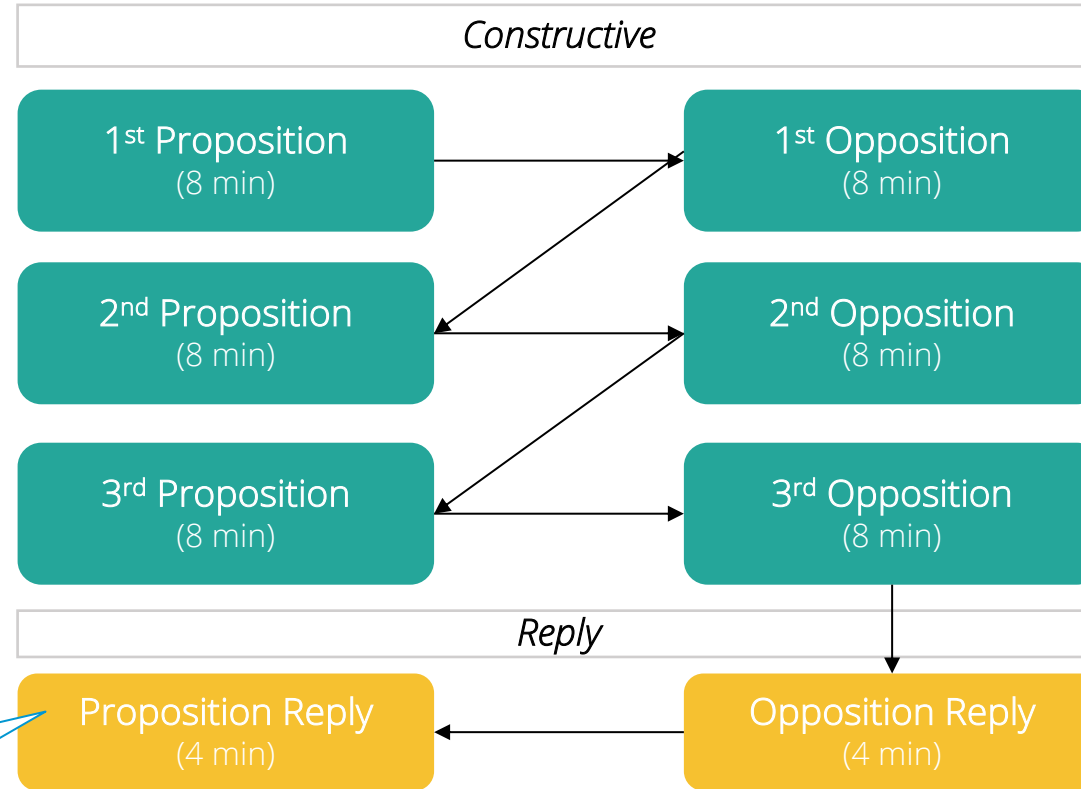
Acknowledgements

This guide draws largely from the training materials developed by the CAP of previous WSDCs (especially those of Mexico 2020 and Macau 2021), building on their accumulated work. It also attempts to provide additional clarification on issues raised by judges and coaches in recent years.

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1. Understanding the structure of a WSDC debate

Flow of a WSDC Debate

Constructive

1st Proposition (8 min)	1st Opposition (8 min)
2nd Proposition (8 min)	2nd Opposition (8 min)
3rd Proposition (8 min)	3rd Opposition (8 min)

Reply

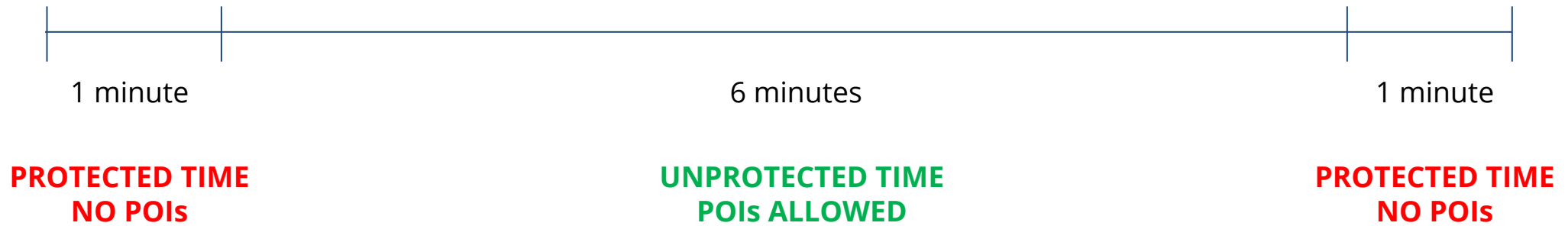| Proposition Reply (4 min)	Opposition Reply (4 min)

Only 1st or 2nd speakers can deliver the reply speech.

Points of Information (POIs) can be offered by the other team during these speeches. Points of information are offered between the first minute and the last minute

Points of Information (POIs) 1/2

1 minute	6 minutes	1 minute
PROTECTED TIME **NO POIs**	**UNPROTECTED TIME** **POIs ALLOWED**	**PROTECTED TIME** **NO POIs**

A POI is a short interjection from a speaking member of the other team to the speaker on your team holding the floor

Points of Information (POIs) 2/2

Accepting Points of Information

- Debaters should make clear right before their speech begins if they prefer their POI through audio (speaker from the other team unmutes and offers) or chat (speaker from the other team writes POI in chat)
- Speaker who has the floor has a right to refuse POIs, but in general should accept about 2 POIs
- If a speaker accepts a POI, they should give the person offering the POI adequate time to express their comment (max of 15 seconds)

Offering Points of Information
- Speakers may offer POIs any time between the 1st and 7th minute
- Only one speaker from the opposing speaking team can offer a POI at a time
- Non-speaking members of the opposing speaking team may not offer any POIs
- When offering POIs, speaker should not indicate the topic of their POI, e.g. by saying "on that point"
- If a POI is rejected, they should wait ~20 secs before offering another. Badgering the speaker is in poor taste.
- Speakers should respect the preference of the speaker holding the floor while offering POIs

What happens if a speaker takes no POIs/less than 2 POIs?
The decision of the overall round, regardless of the POIs taken by speakers should be evaluated by the content coming out in the round. However, teams that take POIs are advantaged by being able to engage the other team's material more. However, judges can reflect in an individual speaker's score the fact that they took no POIs.

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2. Interpreting motions and setting up debates

WSDC motion phrasing - This House…

- This House would ban smoking
- This House believes that judges should be elected rather than appointed
- This House supports child activists in social justice movements

- This House believes that schools should permanently expel bullies
- This House believes that democratic nations should refuse to sell arms to non-democratic nations
- This House, as an immigrant parent, would encourage their child to adopt characteristics of the dominant culture rather than emphasise their native culture

Usually the state/government

Sometimes 'This House' may more generally mean 'we as society/neutral observers' or a specific actor

Notes on motion release

- In some cases, unclear terms in the motion might be defined on an 'Information-slide' by the CA team to provide clarity and knowledge necessary for a functional debate. Any information on this slide is assumed to be true for the debate
- If there is a word (or words) in the motion that is unclear to you, you may ask the members of the CAP for a clarification within the first 15 minutes of preparation time in the Zoom main hall.
  - If a team asks for clarification immediately after the motion is announced, the clarification will be provided to all the teams. However, if it is asked afterwards, only their opposing team will be provided the clarification.

Proposition fiat

THW create schools that teach in endangered indigenous languages

- Once you read a motion, the debate rests on the assumption that the action specified in the motion can be taken – this is 'Proposition fiat'

- **NOT LEGITIMATE AND IN VIOLATION OF FIAT**
'Because politicians are racist, they will not want to set up schools like these' - This is a criticism that explains why this will be a hard policy to pass overall, but does not make a comment on the policy's merits or demerits. It is not a legitimate Opposition line.

- However, Opposition can question whether Proposition's policy will work in the way that proposition claims it will. **LEGITIMATE:**
These schools will not be well funded and therefore they will see lower quality of education - this acknowledges that the schools will be created, but questions how good they will be and what the impact of that will be on indigenous children.

Defining topics in the 'spirit of the motion'

A fair 'definition' of the motion should be offered by the first proposition speaker debate so that teams have a common understanding of the debate

As an example, This House would legalise the sale of human organs

Unreasonable for Opp — **Reasonable** — *Unreasonable for prop*

$\longleftarrow\hspace{10cm}\longrightarrow$

| Incentives for blood donation | Allowing people to receive compensation for a kidney, a portion of liver/lungs, bone marrow, etc. Critical organs can be sold by family members in cases of death | Paying to take away your heart, brain when you are alive |

Unreasonable definitions - Avoid

Squirreling: Distorting the topic and defining it in a way that violates the spirit of the motion	*"THW ban gambling"* cannot be defined as banning risky behaviors such as taking hard drugs, as a way of *"gambling with one's life"*. Gambling has an obvious meaning, which is the betting or staking of money or something of value, on the outcome of a game, a or an uncertain event whose result is determined by chance.
Disallowing side opposition room for debate	*"TH supports cosmetic surgery"* cannot be defined as supporting it only for burn victims. This would make it impossible for Opposition to do the debate.
Refusing to debate the motion at the level of specificity or abstraction the motion requires	In *"THW restrict civil liberties in the name of national security"*, a definition that defends exclusively compulsory ID cards is too narrow. Compulsory ID cards may be an example of a national security policy that is defended by the Proposition team, but the debate extends beyond this example to a more general principle.
Place-setting: arbitrarily narrowing the debate to specific places not specified by the motion	In *"THW ban commercial surrogacy",* it is not legitimate to set the debate "only in low-income nations". Examples from these countries may be used, but the debate has a global context. However, in *THW ban non-democratic countries from hosting international sporting events*, Proposition can identify reasonable criteria for what constitutes a democracy.
Time-setting: arbitrarily narrowing the debate to a time that is *not* the present when unspecified	*THBT citizens should engage in civil disobedience to protest unjust laws:* Proposition cannot define the policy in the context of apartheid in South Africa from 1948 until the 1990s, even though they may use this as an example *THBT NATO should not have withdrawn combat troops from Afghanistan:* Proposition can set the context of the debate to the period when they contemplated the withdrawal of troops (2011-2014) as it's implicit in the motion

Options for Opp teams if a definition is unfair

Accept definition and proceed with the debate

Broaden the debate back to the motion

Explicitly challenge the definition, but still **provide 'even-if'** arguments and engage proposition

Explicitly challenge the definition, explain the grounds for challenging, and supply an alternative reasonable definition, and debate only those grounds

Acceptable in later speeches

Has to be done in the first opposition speech

Notes:
- There is no obligation on Opposition to challenge - they can choose to proceed with the faulty definition.
- If you are persuaded that a definitional challenge is valid, this should reflect on your assessment of Proposition's strategy (their understanding of the debate);
- Debates are not automatically won or lost by definitional challenges

Policy debates - (mostly) This House would...

- **Type 1: This House would... - This House would ban smoking**
  - Prop teams may use a 'model/policy' to explain how they want to implement the action (not compulsory).
  - In this debate, Proposition may do this through a phased-out policy, after which point they will levy fines on smokers. During the phase out, they will reskill workers in the tobacco industry.
  - If Proposition teams do so, the debate is then between the action in the way Proposition implements it and Opposition's stance. Here, that would translate into banning smoking with the punishment Proposition suggests, rather than any punishment Opposition would prefer to oppose.
  - Opposition can propose a counter-model too (once again, not compulsory), and if they do, the motion becomes Proposition model v. Opposition model. However, opposition has the same amount of fiat that proposition does to implement their countermodel. If they require more, they should prove that they can get it.
  - In this debate, Opposition can regulate access to smoking, tax cigarettes and even restrict it to smoking zones. In this case, the debate is between this particular model, and Proposition's model.
- Some motions make what opposition has to implement clear in the motion itself, e.g.: *THW require non-violent criminals to perform community service rather than go to prison.*
  - Here opposition cannot choose to model it only as house arrest, or fines.

- **Type 2: A motion being phrased in a different way to "This House would..." can also be a policy motion as long as it prescribes an action that can reasonably be implemented in multiple ways, e.g.: THBT the US should should sanction Saudi Arabia**
  - It is useful for Proposition to explain what sanctions and how they are phased in, and what criteria Saudi Arabia needs to meet for them to remove these sanctions

This House believes that… motions

Type 1: This House believes that X… (where X is not an action being performed, but is a value judgement comparing two things):
- Examples:
  - *This House believes that labour unions are becoming obsolete*
  - *This House believes that benevolent dictatorships are better than weak democracies*
  - *This House believes there is too much money in sports*
- This type of motion does not require a policy set up (as opposed to a motion that says THW ban labour unions) and just needs proposition teams to contrast the values in the motion (e.g.: benevolent dictatorships v. weak democracies, too much money v. a world without that extent of money)

Type 2: This House Believe that X should do Y - THBT parents should adopt children instead of having their own biological children
- This debate happens from a perspective of a neutral observer. It is not necessary to show why it is in the interest of X do to Y. However, teams must show why X has a duty to do Y.
- In this debate, debaters are required to show why parents have a duty (moral or otherwise) to adopt children.
- Proposition teams may claim that adopting children is beneficial for those children, but they must also prove why aspiring parents have a duty to help those children.
- The Opposition has to show why parents do not have an obligation to adopt children (they can set up what metrics they use to measure this obligation)
- Depending on the debate, opposition may also need to go a step further to show that an obligation against Y exists, e.g.: THBT the environmental movement should use violence to achieve its goals (here, opp teams should show that they should not use violence)

This House Supports/Opposes/ Regrets... motions

Type 1: This house Regrets X - This House Regrets the use of affirmative action in universities for racial minorities
- Proposition has to prove that a world where X never existed would be better. This motion is retrospective.
- Propositions should explicitly establish what the world would look like if affirmative action hadn't existed in history. They might say for example that there will have been more willingness to invest heavily in free primary education for racial and ethnic minorities. They need to prove that this counterfactual is the likely alternative, as well as that it is a preferred alternative to affirmative action.
- Opposition can challenge the likelihood of the counterfactual, as well as the desirability of the counterfactual if they concede it. As an example, opp teams can say that in the absence of affirmative action, countries will have done nothing for racial and ethnic minorities (with reasons). They could also concede prop's counterfactual and argue that affirmative action is better than these investments, or would facilitate better these investments than prop
- Note: Teams can make future based arguments as well, because if a phenomenon/event sparked off a trend that will likely result in harms, that is still regrettable as well

Type 2: This House opposes/supports X - This House Opposes the use of affirmative action in universities for racial minorities
- Although similar to regrets debates, Proposition teams oppose X in the current context, rather than go back in time and imagine a world where X never existed.
- Proposition teams do not need to take on the burden that affirmative action never existed, or that all affirmative action should be immediately scrapped. The debate is a judgement about affirmative action as a policy.
- However, when providing arguments for this motion, it is still important to describe how a <u>future world</u> without affirmative action would play out in explaining its harms and benefits.
- Opposition teams can challenge whether the current world would look the same way that proposition says it would, or concede it and argue that this is a worse world.

This House prefers... motions

Type 1: This House prefers X to Y: THP social media sites based on a subscription model over those based on an advertisement model
- In these motions, teams must only defend the alternative set up in the motion, and not create new alternative or say they prefer a mix of both X and Y
- Proposition must argue that social media sites which rely on subscriptions as a means of acquiring profit are preferable to those which rely on advertisements. Opposition must conversely argue that social media sites based on an advertisements profit model are better than those based on subscriptions.

Type 2: This House prefers X: THP social media sites based on a subscription model
- In these types of motions, Opposition must defend the status quo, or a conceivable world the status quo trends toward
- Proposition must argue for social media sites based on subscriptions. Opposition is still bound to defend the specific comparison set up in the motion and therefore must defend the profit models of social media sites as they are in the status quo. Opposition cannot argue for abolishing social media/non-profit social media sites/other comparatives.
- However, the Opposition may claim that the current situation is changing, why this change is likely; and why it is preferable to the Proposition

Type 3: This House prefers a world in which X: THP a world where social media sites ran on subscription-based models
- These require the teams to prove that a world in which X (did not) exist is a preferable world to the status quo.
- This motion is also retrospective (similar to This House regrets) in nature and requires teams to debate how the world would have progressed had social media sites relied on subscriptions for profit. Therefore, Opposition cannot argue that there will be backlash as social media sites set prices of their services as in the alternative world, social media sites which did not set subscription prices would never have existed

Actor motions

Type 8: This House, as X - TH, as a parent, would not send their children to a private school
- Actor motions require that the debate happens from the specific perspective of the actor in the motion.
- All arguments must be linked to why a certain actor X would care about a certain action. Therefore, the arguments should be linked to the interests, benefits or harms that are to accrue to the actor in a debate.
- This does not mean that the actor is always selfish and that principled arguments cannot be made in this debate. Instead, debaters have to go the extra mile in explaining why the actor would hold on to such principles or points of views.
- In this specific motion, the debate occurs from the perspective of the parent, not from the perspective of broader society.

However, "THBT X Should" is not an actor Motion: "*THBT parents should not send their children to private schools.*"
- Debaters can still claim that the interest of the parent should be prioritized, but this time as a neutral observer and may also include other interests
- In these motion types, teams must prove why a specific actor has a duty (moral or other) to act in a certain way

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3. Team and speaker roles

Team and speaker roles

Roles	Proposition	Opposition
Teams	- Define the motion clearly in a way that is fair to both teams - Present their characterisation of the status quo - Advance constructive arguments in favour of their case - Where appropriate, identify what the problem is and present a solution to the identified problems	- Must oppose the motion - May set up their case purely on rebuttal of Proposition, though this is strategically risky - May have substantive arguments of its own, including proposing a counter-model
1st speakers	- Define the motion, relevant burden(s) and the metric(s) by which to evaluate the debate - Introduce an action plan (model), if the team chooses to tackle the motion with one - Advance and develop constructive arguments - Flag the case division between the 3 Proposition speakers	- Challenge the definition, if necessary - Clarify relevant burden(s)/metric(s) for the debate, if necessary - Provide rebuttals to the 1st Proposition - Introduce their own stance (detailed under "Team Roles") - Bring their own constructive arguments (advisable) - Flag the case division division between the 3 Opp speakers
2nd Speakers	- Deal with definitional challenges, if necessary - Provide rebuttals to the 1st Opposition - Extend and further develop constructive arguments	- Provide rebuttals to the 2nd Proposition's extension - Extend and further develop the constructive arguments, if the Opposition has any
3rd Speakers	- Small substantive arguments, if flagged in the 1st Proposition - Provide rebuttals to the Opposition's case	- Small substantive arguments, if flagged in the 1st Opposition - Provide rebuttals to the Proposition's case
Reply Speeches	- Bring a holistic overview of the debate - Compare both teams' contributions to the debate - Explain why they think their side won the debate, without adding non-derivative arguments for their side	

Specific notes on the role of third speakers (1/2)

- The role of the 3rd speaker is to respond to the other team's case.
- The third speech (from either team) may include a small part of their teams substantive case, so long as this was flagged in the case split announced by that teams first speaker.
- However it should be noted that third speakers are not required to include new arguments in their case.

CAP guide on 'new material at third'

- Both 3rd speakers should respond to what has happened in the debate before their speech. "Responding" is a broad term covering:
  - **Direct rebuttal** to an argument that the other team has made, which means providing a critique of the logic in the argument or providing new explanations for why the conclusion reached in the other side's argument s wrong
  - **Weighing of arguments** by providing analysis of the relative importance of arguments or impacts
  - **Indirect comments or analysis about an existing clash point**: providing new conclusions or impacts which can be weighed against the conclusions reached by the other team
  - **New contextual or characterisation** analysis which broaden the understanding of conclusions reached by either team
  - **New examples** which provide deeper understanding of the arguments being made or existing rebuttal
- The above-mentioned forms of responsiveness often involve new ideas, logic, examples, components of arguments or new lines of rebuttal. It is acceptable for third speakers to bring these new aspects into their speeches
- "Newness" in a third speech is not sufficient justification to discredit material at third. We encourage judges to think more critically about whether material meets the definition of "responsiveness" as outlined above and give credit to the argument when it does.

Specific notes on the role of third speakers (2/2)

CAP guide on 'new material at third'

- Newness is not permissible if third speakers introduce an independent and entirely new concept or argument in the debate that didn't exist earlier, without having flagged that upfront as mentioned in the rules
  - For example, in the motion This House prefers leaderless social justice movements, it is not permissible for the 3rd Opposition speaker, for the first time in the debate, to introduce a fully fledged argument which explains that social movements social justice movements with leaders have an easier time achieving legislative change due to an easier bargaining process with the government, without clearly responding to an argument from the Proposition.
  - However, it is permissible for the 3rd Opposition speaker to introduce a rebuttal that leaderless movements cannot bring attention to critical issues and injustice without charismatic leaders , in response to the Proposition argument that leaderless movements focus on individual stories and videos which showcase injustice
- However, if the 1st speaker clearly flagges that an argument will be made by the 3rd Speaker during their case division, this argument permissible.
  - However, this is currently rarely done by teams as it can be seen as a bad strategic decision to bring an important argument so late within the debate

What happens if a critical portion of the Opposition rebuttal is delivered by the 3rd Speaker, without any engagement from the 1st and 2nd speakers. Can the Opposition still win?

Third opp speakers can theoretically win a team a debate by responding thoroughly to an issue first and second opp speakers did not do enough on - however, this is arguably bad strategy given proposition has the opportunity to build onto the point and make it stronger, and because it reduces the thoroughness with which third speakers can respond to other issues in the round

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Specific notes on the role of reply speakers

Technical WSDC rules

- The role of the reply speeches is to sum up the debate from the team's viewpoint, including a response to the other team's overall case and a summary of the speaker's own team's case.
- The reply speaker may be either the first or second speaker of the team, but not the third.
- The reply speakers are in reverse order, with the Opposition reply first and the Proposition reply last.
- Neither reply speaker may introduce a new part of the team case.
- A reply speaker may respond to an existing argument by raising a new example that illustrates that argument, but may not otherwise introduce a new argument.

CAP guide on 'role of reply speeches'

- Reply speeches are a crucial part of the debate - **they can definitely swing the result** of a debate
- Good reply speeches do not just report on the debate that happened, but contribute to the team's overall strategy and approach in the debate, in order to shape how the debate has evolved and panned out
- New weighing of arguments, framing, contextual observations, or examples can all serve this function and are permitted and credited in replies – however, these need to be clearly derivative of the existing events in the debate