

Lesson 9: Round Etiquette & Speech Skills

In-person debate rounds

In traditional in-person rounds, debaters have the opportunity to engage with their opponents and judges face-to-face, allowing for a more personal and immediate exchange of ideas. Body language, facial expressions, and eye contact play a crucial role in conveying arguments effectively.

In-person round tips

- Before beginning the round, set up an email chain with opponents and judge (ask them first if they want to be included) for card exchanges OR look at cards from the opponent's computer.
- Before the round, set up a space in the room where debaters can stand during speeches. Ensure that the judge can easily see and hear the debater. If this isn't possible, still stand from your seat during speeches.
- Stand for all speeches.
- Show up to the room finished pre-flowing. It doesn't look good to show up and ask for more time to pre-flow.

Debate attire

The general standard for in-person debate rounds is to wear formal clothing, known as Western Business Attire.

- WBA is not necessary for a debate round, but it has many advantages:
- Wearing business attire conveys a sense of professionalism and seriousness about the debate. It shows that the debater takes the competition seriously and respects the formality of the event.
- Dressing professionally can enhance the debater's credibility and confidence. When a debater looks well put-together, it may positively influence how their arguments are received by judges and opponents.
- While people do wear WBA to online debate tournaments, it is less common and less needed.

Here are some common examples of what people wear to debate tournaments:

Girls:

- Formal dress
- Blazer + skirt/dress pants
- Sweater + skirt

Guys:

- Suit + tie
- Quarter zip + khakis

In-person crossfire

- During an in-person crossfire, you should look to the judge instead of your opponents. By maintaining eye contact with the judge, you are directly engaging with the person who will ultimately evaluate your arguments and decide the winner of the debate. It shows that you are focused on presenting your case to the most critical audience in the room. Looking at the judge during crossfire also indicates that you value their judgment and that you are committed to presenting your arguments in a professional and persuasive manner.
- You should always stand for every crossfire, even if your opponents remain sitting. Standing conveys confidence and attentiveness, projecting a more assertive and composed image to the judge and the audience.
 - The only exception to this is during grand crossfire, when all debaters stay sitting.

Speech drills

- 1) Pen Practice - Practice reading your case with a pen in your mouth. The primary purpose of this drill is to overcome mumbling or slurring words, which can make speech less distinct and harder to understand. By using the pen to create a slight physical barrier in the mouth, the speaker is encouraged to open their mouth wider and be more deliberate with their pronunciation.
- 2) Tongue Twisters - Practice saying tongue twisters, which are phrases or sentences with similar sounds, rapidly and clearly. This exercise helps improve articulation and enunciation. For example, "She sells seashells by the seashore."
- 3) Slow and Steady - Practice your case or another speech slowly and deliberately, paying attention to each word. This allows you to focus on pronunciation and clarity, reducing the tendency to mumble or rush through your speech.
- 4) Record and Review - Record your speech redos (rebuttals, summaries or final focuses you do over after a debate round to fix mistakes from the speech). Listen to the recordings and assess areas for improvement, such as filler words ("like", "um," "uh") or unclear pronunciation.