

**DEBATING ASSOCIATION OF NEW ENGLAND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
RULES FOR OREGON STYLE PREPARED POLICY DEBATE**

1. An Oregon Style debate is a debate on an issue of policy between two, two-person teams, one representing the affirmative and arguing for the adoption of the resolution, the other, the negative, contending against the issue. Cross examination is a feature of the debate style, and the debate is presided over by a judge, who is responsible for determining the winning team and assigning speaker points, rank in room and delivery of a brief oral critique (if the judge wishes), filling out the ballot, to include written comments and, most importantly, the reason for the decision. The judge may also be responsible for keeping time. The typical salutation by each debater would be “Honorable Judge, worthy opponents, esteemed colleague” or some variant thereof. There are no “points of information” or any other reason to interrupt an opponent’s constructive speech.
2. The word “should” in the phrasing of the debate resolution means “ought to be done”. Consequently, constitutionality or un-constitutionality is never an issue in the debate.
3. The affirmative team defines the terms of the debate resolution at the beginning of the first affirmative speech. The definition must be reasonable in order that there may be a fair contest. If the negative team desires to contest the affirmative definition, the reason(s) for the challenge must be stated at the beginning of the first negative speech.
4. The affirmative team has the “burden of proof” and sustains that with a case that demonstrates a “justification” (or “reason(s)”) for a change in the status quo, introduces a “plan” to effect a change, and, finally, demonstrates “solvency”, that is to say that their “plan” will address their “reason(s)” for the proposed change. The “justification” takes one of three forms: that there is a clear need to change the status quo, or that a modification to the status quo would be “comparatively advantageous” or that there is an inherent feature in the status quo that prevents the attainment of a broadly held and desirable goal.
5. The speaking order and times of speeches shall be as follows:

First Affirmative (1Aff) Constructive: 7 or 8 minutes (discretion of the host school)

Cross examination (Cx) of the 1Aff by the Second Negative (2Neg): 3 minutes

First Negative (1Neg) Constructive: 7 or 8 minutes

Cx of 1Neg by 1Aff: 3 minutes

Second Affirmative (2Aff) Constructive: 7 or 8 minutes

Cx of 2Aff by 1Neg: 3 minutes

2Neg Constructive speech: 7 or 8 minutes

Cx of 2Neg by 2Aff: 3 minutes

Preparation time for rebuttals: 3 minutes

1Neg rebuttal: 3 or 4 minutes (at the discretion of the host school)

1Aff rebuttal: 3 or 4 minutes

2Neg rebuttal: 3 or 4 minutes

2Aff rebuttal: 3 or 4 minutes

A 30 second grace period is allowed in each of the constructive speeches. When time expires in a rebuttal, the debater is allowed to complete the sentence he or she is speaking.

6. In a “harms/needs” case or in a “goals” case the 1Aff will state the “justification” (or “reason(s)”) at the beginning of their case and the plan will be presented either toward the end of the first affirmative speech or the beginning of the second affirmative speech. Typically it is the job of the second affirmative to show that the plan does meet the need. In a “comparative advantage” case the affirmative plan should be presented in the first affirmative speech because the reason/rationale for change is simply that the plan offers a comparative advantage over the status quo so the plan must be laid out at the beginning in order to argue that it does, indeed, offer the proposed advantages. The negative side must respond to the case put forward by the affirmative team and can argue either that the proposed harms are not significant and don’t demand change, and/or that the plan proposed by the affirmative will not adequately solve the harm/need and/or that the affirmative plan itself will bring about harms too great to accept, or finally, that some mechanism (a counter plan) other than the affirmative plan would be preferable to the affirmative approach to the problem. If the negative, among their several choices, decides to argue either a “minor repairs” case or presents a “counter plan”, such arguments should be made in the 1Neg speech, and a counter plan, if used, must be substantially different from, and not a mere modification of the status quo.
7. Cross-examination should be conducted in a courteous manner. “Requiring “yes” of “no” answers is prohibited. Questions should be brief and to the point. It is not appropriate to use a lengthy question to make a constructive point. The cross examiner should not interrupt an answer unless there is obvious “stonewalling” or wasting time with a convoluted answer. A simple “Thank you, I understand the affirmative (or negative) position” will suffice in such circumstances. If time expires while a question is being asked, the responder has the option of answering or not.
8. Rebuttals are for the purposes of refuting the opponent’s arguments and summarizing the debate to demonstrate that your side has prevailed on the decisive issues. Therefore, no new lines of argument may be advanced in rebuttals, and the use of evidence should be avoided, except when the 1Aff refutes the 2Neg constructive speech or when proof of a particular point has been requested.
9. Props (drawings, models, etc.) may not be used, and the use of electronic devices for other than timekeeping is strictly prohibited.
10. In the interests of anonymity and fairness, judges will refrain from inquiring of debaters their school or the extent of their experience.