

Congressional Debate Speaking Rubric

| Points | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
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| | Mediocre | Proficient | Excellent | Superior |
| Content, Organization, Evidence and Language | The speech lacked a clear thesis and organizational structure. Claims are only asserted with generalizations and no real evidence. Language use is unclear or ineffective. | While the speaker's purpose is present, the speech lacks logical organization and/or developed ideas. Analysis of evidence, if present, fails to connect its relevance to the speaker's claims. Use of language is weak. | While a clear purpose is apparent, organization may be somewhat loose (weak introduction/conclusion; no transitions between points). Diction represents a grasp of language. Much evidence is presented, but not in a persuasive or effective manner; or the speaker relies on one piece of evidence, but does so effectively. | Content is clearly and logically organized, and characterized by depth of thought and development of ideas, supported by a variety of credible quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (testimony) evidence analyzed effectively to draw conclusions. Compelling language, a poignant introduction and conclusion and lucid transitions clearly establish the speaker's purpose and frame the perspective of the issue's significance. |
| Argument and Refutation | The speaker offers mostly unwarranted assertions, which often simply repeat/rehash previous arguments. | The speaker fails to either introduce new arguments (simply repeating previous arguments) or the speaker fails to refute previous opposing arguments; in other words, no real clash is present. | New ideas and response to previous arguments are offered, but in an unbalanced manner (too much refutation or too many new arguments). Questions are answered adequately. | The speaker contributes to the spontaneity of debate, effectively synthesizing response and refutation of previous ideas with new arguments. If the speaker fields questions, he/she responds with confidence and clarity. |
| Delivery | Little eye contact, gestures and/or movement are present. Vocal presentation is inarticulate due to soft volume or lack of enunciation. | Presentation is satisfactory, yet unimpressively read (perhaps monotonously) from prepared notes, with errors in pronunciation and/or minimal eye contact. Awkward gestures/movement may be distracting. | The presentation is strong, but contains a few mistakes, including problems with pronunciation and enunciation. The speech may be partially read with satisfactory fluency. Physical presence may be awkward at times. | The speaker's vocal control and physical poise are polished, deliberate, crisp and confident. Delivery should be extemporaneous, with few errors in pronunciation. Eye contact is effective and consistent. |

Scores of less than three (3) are discouraged, and should be reserved for such circumstances as abusive language, a degrading personal attack on another legislator, or for a speech that is extremely brief (less than 45 seconds) or delivered without purpose or dignity for the cause exhorted by the legislation. Substantial written comments and description of specific incidents should accompany such scores.