

# LDEP's Introduction to Judging LD

**Thank you for agreeing to judge an LD debate round.** We at the Lincoln-Douglas Education Project hope that the experience is engaging and enjoyable. As you'll see, LD debate is about how things ought to be, not just about how they actually are. The affirmative debater tries to convince you that the resolution is true, while the negative tries to convince you that it is false. They are assigned to these positions and will switch positions in other debates today. This activity was designed to teach excellent critical thinking and public presentation skills, so debaters typically communicate an air of professionalism in their dress, demeanor and diction.

## BEFORE THE ROUND:

- Find out the exact wording of the debate resolution and write it down.
- Read and follow the instructions on the judging ballot you will receive.
- Read the LDEP Judging Guidelines if they are provided for you (perhaps on the back of this sheet).
- Ask debaters to write their names, codes, and sides (AFF or NEG) on the board if this isn't on your ballot already.
- You may chat with debaters (esp. to put new debaters at ease) before the round starts, but without favoritism.
- Debaters should *always* be respectful of one another and of you, and you should set a tone of decorum.

## DURING THE ROUND:

- Judges need to keep track of speaking times during the round. Speech times are listed on the ballot.
  - Provide time signals by hand (or using time cards) during the speeches.
    - Hold up a number of fingers for the number of minutes remaining and hold up a fist when time is done.
    - Debaters usually have 10 seconds of additional grace time to gracefully end their speech.
  - Each debater has 3, 4 or 5 minutes of preparation time (total) for each round, to use before their speeches.
    - Announce preparation time remaining at 30-second intervals, and write down how much was used.
  - If you are new to judging, you might ask a tournament official to provide a timekeeper (if one is available).
- Judges should not ask questions or otherwise interrupt the round.
  - Exception: You can encourage new debaters to say a bit more if they are ending a speech very early.
- Debaters directly question each other *only* during cross-examination, unless the tournament specifies otherwise.
  - Debaters should not expect any response from the judge (other than rules clarifications).

## AFTER THE ROUND:

- Judges typically do not reveal their decision at the end of the round (unless told to do so by the tournament).
  - Judges may give helpful comments at the end of the round, *after the decision is written on the ballot*.
    - These comments should not exceed five minutes total, to keep the tournament on time.
    - Oral comments on things that can be addressed immediately (e.g., speaking style) are most helpful.
    - Be sure to be encouraging and do not be overly critical, especially with new debaters.
- Assign points between 20 and 30, indicating the quality of each debater relative to the other debaters here. (If your region uses a 50-point scale, just add 20 to all of these recommendations.)

20-21	Poor	Among the <b>weakest 5-10%</b> of performances at this tournament
22-23	Below Average	Among the <b>weakest 25%</b> of performances at this tournament
24-26	Average	<b>Typical</b> of performances at this tournament
27-28	Above Average	Among the <b>strongest 25%</b> of performances at this tournament
29-30	Outstanding	Among the <b>strongest 5-10%</b> of performances at this tournament

- A score of 25 means, literally, average. Try to give as many points below 25 as you do above 25.
- New judges who are unsure of what points to assign may wish to assign points toward the middle of the range and to avoid the extremes.
- Points below 20 can be given to punish debaters who are rude, abusive, or who engage in some form of cheating or academic dishonesty. (These behaviors should be brought to the attention of the debater's coach or the tournament director.)
- Check your ballot carefully before you turn it in. Especially check, did you: declare a winner, assign equal or higher points to the winning debater (if required by the tournament), sign the ballot, provide useful suggestions for improvement, justify your decision thoroughly?