

11. Lincoln-Douglas Debate

[Language approved by membership at NFA 2013; incorporated by Executive Council on August 12th, 2013]

PURPOSE: A debate event designed to engage the audience through a policy-oriented dialogue.

DESCRIPTION: NFA Lincoln-Douglas Debate is a one-person, persuasive, policy debate on the traditional stock issues of policy debate (harms, inherency, solvency, and topicality). It is a communication event, in which competitors will be evaluated on their analysis, use of evidence, and ability to effectively and persuasively organize, deliver and refute arguments. Rapid-fire delivery, commonly called “spread delivery,” is considered antithetical to the purpose and intent of this event.

RULES:

a. Paradigm for Judging Lincoln-Douglas Debate - The official decision making paradigm of NFALD is that of Stock Issues: Harm (Advantage or Goals), Inherency, Solvency, and Topicality. The affirmative is required to propose a plan that meets four initial burdens. The plan need not be detailed, but should be sufficient to prove the plan’s propensity to solve the problem area.

The affirmative must prove:

- The harm of the present system or that a comparative advantage or goal can be achieved over the present system;
- The inherency which prevents solving those harms or achieving those advantages or goals;
- The proposed plan’s propensity to solve the harm or achieve the advantage or goal claimed by the affirmative; and
- The topical nature of the proposed plan as an inductive proof of the resolution. If, at the end of the debate, the negative has convinced the judge that the affirmative proposal has violated the parameters set by the resolution, then the decision in the debate should be awarded to the negative. However, the plan does not need to deal with all the possible problem areas suggested by the resolution. Topicality is a voting issue.

The negative may attack any of these issues, but need only win one to win the debate.

Additionally, the negative may argue that one or more disadvantages to the proposed plan outweigh its benefits. The negative may also present one competitive counterproposal specific to the affirmative problem area and not dealing with the form of government, economic system, or need for further study (unless specifically identified as a key issue in the resolution).

Counterproposals should be logically consistent with all other negative arguments constructed during the debate. If inconsistencies arise and the affirmative points them out, the judge should reject the arguments inconsistent with the counterproposal. Counterproposals are subject to the same burden of solvency as are required of affirmative plans.

Rebuttals are to be used to respond to the opposition’s lines of argument and to extend arguments made in constructive speeches. No new lines of argument may be presented in rebuttals. By new lines of argument, we mean those which are not clarifications or responses made to arguments made in constructive, but those which are completely new and unrelated to previous argumentation. New evidence to extend or clarify constructive arguments is permitted in rebuttal.

Speeches should be pleasant, comprehensible, and persuasive in tone, especially since not all judges will have traditional debate experience. Speech delivery and quantity of evidence should not be excessive. Since LD debate adheres to the communication principles of individual events, judges are encouraged to give a verbal warning to debaters speaking too rapidly in a round. If the speaker does not heed the warning in that particular round, the judge is strongly encouraged to give that speaker a loss for that round even if the student has otherwise “won” the debate on the basis of the stock issues. On the other hand, judges who encourage students to speak rapidly should be reported to the tournament director. At the national tournament, these judges will be pulled from the judging pool and their schools assessed judging fees for the rounds not covered. Local tournament directors are encouraged to develop their own responses to such judges.

b. Use of Evidence in Lincoln-Douglas Debate: Students should only use evidence that is accurate and thoroughly referenced in their speeches. In both prepared speeches and speeches composed with limited preparation time, debaters should use evidence that is accurately and directly quoted. The evidence should be quoted with proper respect to the context of the original source. Students may use evidence from non-written sources as long as the veracity of the evidence may be verified. Information gathered from personal and/or phone interviews, as well as information from electronic sources, may be used, provided the student does the following:

- Indicates during the performance the name of the source, date the information was collected, and method used to collect the information; and,
- Possesses a means to verify the accuracy of the evidence should it be formally challenged. Verification may include a transcript of the interview, broadcast, etc., a notarized letter of authenticity from the source identifying specific passages from the performance as accurate, and/or phone numbers at which the source may be reached to verify the veracity of the information. (This last option is not recommended as the sole option since the source may not be reachable at the time an ethical charge is made.)

The first time a source is presented, the debater should read the full source aloud when introducing the evidence. A “full source” is assumed to include author’s name, author’s qualifications (when apparent in the original), full date, and title of source. Page numbers need not be read during the debate, but should be available upon request. Once a source has been cited, evidence subsequently cited from the source need only include the author’s and/or publication’s name as well as a phrase along the lines of “previously cited.”

Both speakers in a debate are required to make available to their opponent copies of any evidence used in the round, including the affirmative constructive speech. The evidence must be returned to the speaker at the end of the debate. If the evidence is only available in a digital format, the debater is required to make a digital version of the evidence available for the entirety of the debate at the opponent’s discretion. For example, if an affirmative case is only available on a laptop, the negative should be allowed to keep the laptop for reference until the debate is over. At the conclusion of the debate, competitors and judges may review evidence read in the round and record sources. Competitors must provide access to a written version of the source citation, in either physical or digital format, upon request by the judge or other competitor in the round. Time to record sources may be limited based on tournament schedule constraints. When time restrictions prevent recording of sources during the round, round participants may ask to review sources at a later point during the tournament. Competitors wishing to photograph, film, or otherwise copy pieces of opponent’s evidence in their entirety must first request permission.

Competitors are not required to grant permission for photographing of the evidence. Judges may not photograph evidence during a round, nor may judges ask debaters for permission to do so. After the ballot has been returned judges may approach a coach for permission to photograph the evidence.

c. Violations of the Code of Ethics: If a debater, during the course of the debate, charges his/her opponent with violating an ethical standard, as established by the National Forensics Association Code of Ethics, the debate shall immediately cease. The judge will bring the students to a member of the tournament committee and the debater making the charge will fill out a formal complaint according to the provisions under (1) in the section "Violation of the Code of Ethics." The complaint will then be adjudicated as in any other complaint. If the debater making the charge during the round refuses to file a formal complaint, that debater will receive a loss for the debate. Complaints made after a round will follow the standard procedure listed in the "violation" section of the Code of Ethics.

Electronic devices may be used in the round (e.g. cell phones as timers, laptops with evidence or for notes), but competitors must agree to NOT communicate with anyone else, either inside or outside the room, during the course of the debate via their electronic devices.

d. Time Limits for Lincoln-Douglas Debate

Affirmative Constructive 6 minutes

Cross-Examination 3 minutes

Negative Constructive 7 minutes

Cross-Examination 3 minutes

Affirmative Rebuttal 6 minutes

Negative Rebuttal 6 minutes

Affirmative Rebuttal 3 minutes

Prep time per debater 4 minutes