

## Chapter 1: Introduction to Debate: 1.3 Types of Debate

### Goals

Identify the different types of debate.

Be able to distinguish the differences in the styles of debate.

### Terms

- resolution
- Lincoln-Douglas (LD) debate
- constructive speech
- rebuttal speech
- cross-examination (CX) debate
- spreading
- public forum debate
- Student Congress

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#### Do You Agree?



**Resolved** When engaged in a time of war, the United States government should be able to exercise censorship of the press.

#### **Affirmative position**

Yes, the government should have the absolute power to monitor what is being released to the public. In this time of high technology, our enemies receive the information just as quickly as does the public, which could put our troops in harm's way.

#### **Negative position**

No, the government must release information to the public that allows them to be informed regarding policies and actions of the government. This era of high technology enables information to be dispersed quickly and through a variety of means. The credibility of the government and the support of the public is directly affected by the news they are given


## Responsibilities in Debate

You sign up for debate class. You are a little nervous because, as you sit and wait for class to begin, you discover that other students have already had experience as debaters. They discuss different types of debates that you have never heard of. As the teacher passes out the schedule of assignments, you discover that you too are about to become familiar with the many and exciting forms of debate.

There are two categories of debate: informal and formal. Informal debate goes on everyday in all walks of life. Formal debate is more structured. You, as a debater, will be taking part in formal debate.

Before any debate can take place, there must be a resolution. A [resolution](#) is the topic that will be debated. Resolutions, like the one above, are written in the form of a statement. The debater must analyze the statement and determine its intent. The resolution is then separated into two areas: the affirmative, which supports the resolution, and the negative, which disagrees with it. All debates, regardless of type, must start with a resolution.

There are different time limits and speaker responsibilities for the debates. It is important to know what these rules are before competing in a debate. The length of speaking time will determine how each speech is written.

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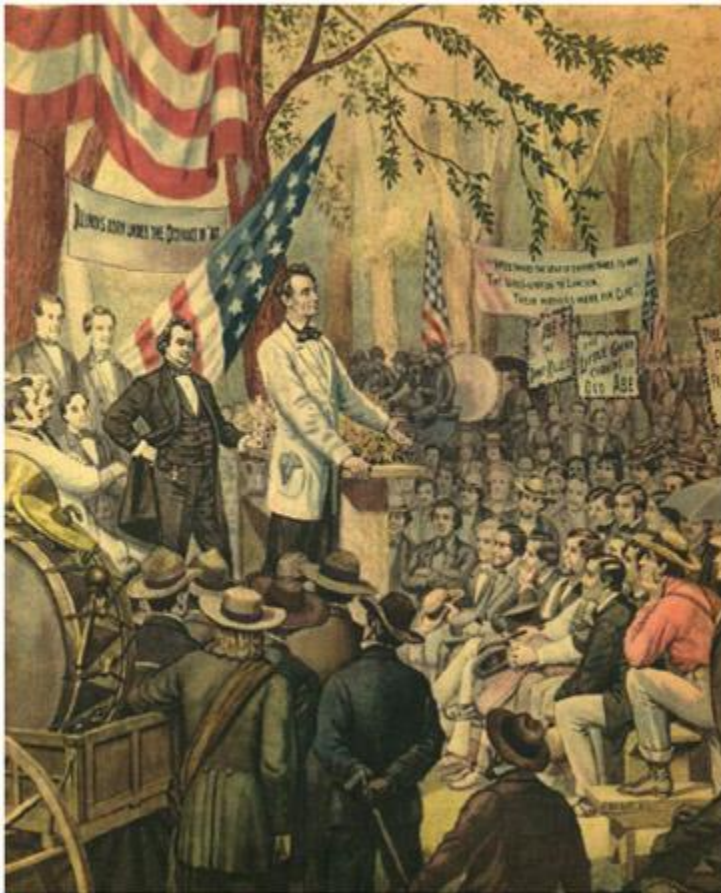
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As the debate continues, the speaker's responsibilities also change. Each speech has a specific goal to achieve. It is important to understand these rules in order to be successful. The rules should play a key part in planning and practice sessions.

## Lincoln-Douglas Debate

[Lincoln-Douglas \(LD\)](#) debate is named for the seven debates that took place between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas in 1858. Lincoln and Douglas campaigned through different parts of the state of

Illinois. They addressed issues that were important to the people. They were able to explain their points of view to the citizens. The debates were hugely popular and drew large crowds.



How is the audience reacting to Lincoln in this picture?

### Format of Lincoln-Douglas

**Lincoln-Douglas debate** takes place between two people. One person is the affirmative, and one person is the negative. Lincoln-Douglas debate is considered to be a value debate. All of the topics will revolve around worth, usefulness, or importance. For instance, a resolution might focus on the value of public education versus private education. It will be hard to find somebody who doesn't think that education, in general, is important or has worth. In this case, however, the debate will focus on one type versus another and which one is better.

There are two types of speeches that are given in the Lincoln-Douglas debate. The first type is the [constructive speech](#). This is an informative speech where the key points of the debate are presented. The second type of speech is a [rebuttal speech](#). This speech is more persuasive. In this speech, you are pointing out to the judge the areas of strengths in your speech and the areas of weaknesses in your

opponent's speech. There also is a cross-examination period where you can ask questions of your opponent.

## Time Periods for Lincoln-Douglas Debate

It is very important to pay attention to the time periods when you are debating. First, you want to make sure that your constructive speech fits within the time period. Second, you want to be able to attack all of your opponents' weaknesses and still have enough time to support your strongest issues in your rebuttal speeches. Make sure you know the lengths of time for each speech and the goals you must achieve in each speech.

Time Requirements for Lincoln-Douglas Debate		
Prep time	Three or four minutes	Prepare arguments before presenting the next speech. Because this is such a limited time, it should be used wisely.
Affirmative constructive	Six minutes	Affirmative debater presents the case that supports the resolution. All information that will be debated must be presented here.
Negative cross-examination period	Three minutes	Negative speaker asks questions of the affirmative speaker
Negative constructive rebuttal	Seven minutes	Negative speaker presents the negative stand regarding the resolution and presents a rebuttal to the affirmative's case. The key issues of the affirmative case must be attacked.
Affirmative cross-examination period	Three minutes	Affirmative speaker questions the negative speaker about his case
Affirmative rebuttal	Four minutes	Affirmative speaker points out the strengths of own case and tells why they are superior to strengths of opponent's case. Affirmative speaker then points out the weaknesses in opponent's case. No new evidence can be introduced in the rebuttal speech.
Negative rebuttal	Six minutes	Negative speaker's last chance to make an impression on the judge. First, just as with the affirmative rebuttal, the negative speaker emphasizes the strengths of own speech, as well as the areas of weaknesses within the affirmative case. Finally, the negative speaker tells why the judge should vote for him or her.

### Time Requirements for Lincoln-Douglas Debate

Affirmative rebuttal	Three minutes	Affirmative speaker's last chance to impress the judge. Must emphasize own strengths and opponents' weaknesses, and tell why the judge should vote for him or her.
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### Time Requirements for Lincoln-Douglas Debate

## Cross-Examination Debate

There are several key differences between Lincoln-Douglas debate and cross-examination debate. While Lincoln-Douglas debate is about values, [\*cross-examination \(CX\) debate\*](#) is about policy. The purpose of the resolution is to present a topic that requires change or action. The affirmative team is always a proponent of change, while the negative team is going to show that change is not needed. They also can provide a better plan as a solution to the problem. Consider the resolution that states the President of the United States should be elected by the direct vote of the people. The affirmative proposes a change or the abolishment of the electoral college as you know it today. The negative, on the other hand, shows how the current system best represents all people in all states.

There are two people to a team in cross-examination debate. Each person has very specific duties, and team members must work together to be successful. CX debate requires many hours of research to develop effective cases. The debate centers around the presentation of evidence which supports the plan that has been presented. This is a key element of this debate.

Because of the amount of evidence that is presented in CX, debaters tend to speak at a much more rapid speed than LD debaters. This is called [\*spreading\*](#). It requires a debater to speak rapidly, while still being understood by the judge and the opponents. A conversational rate of speech should be used for Lincoln-Douglas.

The time format in CX is very different from that in Lincoln-Douglas debate. Each debater will give two speeches, one constructive and one rebuttal. Take a closer look at the time requirements for CX as shown in the table on the following page. Each team is given eight minutes for prep time. This time can be used in any manner you choose according to the needs of the team.



**How is the format of a cross-examination debate different from that of a Lincoln-Douglas debate?**

<b>Time Requirements for Cross-Examination Debate</b>		
Prep time	Eight minutes	Prepare arguments before presenting the next speech. Because this is such a limited time, it should be used wisely.
First affirmative speaker	Eight minutes	Constructive speech—presents key elements of the case
First negative cross-examination period	Three minutes	Questions the opponent about the case
First negative speaker	Eight minutes	Constructive speech—presents key elements of the negative case and refutes the First Affirmative's speech.
First affirmative cross-examination period	Three minutes	Questions the opponent about the case
Second negative speaker	Eight minutes	Constructive speech—extends the negative case as well as refutes the affirmative case
Second affirmative cross-examination period	Three minutes	Questions the Second Negative Speaker about the case

Time Requirements for Cross-Examination Debate		
Second affirmative speaker	Eight minutes	Constructive speech—presents any remaining information, attacks the negative case, and extends arguments
First negative rebuttal	Five minutes	Extends arguments and shows the weaknesses in the opponents' case
First affirmative rebuttal	Five minutes	Extends arguments and shows the weaknesses in the opponents' case
Second negative rebuttal	Five minutes	Final speech for the negative case and the last opportunity to persuade the judge to vote for the negative team
Second affirmative rebuttal	Five minutes	Last opportunity to persuade the judge to vote for the affirmative team

### Time Requirements for Cross-Examination Debate

## Public Forum Debate

Public forum debate is a relatively new event. The purpose of [\*public forum debate\*](#) is to promote audience and media-centered debate. It provides another opportunity to experience debate on a totally different level. Instead of trying to implement a policy or choose a superior value, public forum debate centers around perception. Evaluating the credibility and trustworthiness of a debater, for instance, could be a factor in the outcome of the debate. The resolutions in public forum debate tend to be very much “ripped from the headlines” and they change much more frequently than with the other debate forms.

The start of this debate is rather unique. The sides are decided by a coin toss. The team that wins the flip then can choose between two options. They can decide to go first in the debate or they can decide whether to be affirmative or negative. The other team then gets to decide the remaining option. For example, suppose that the team that won the toss chose to be the affirmative team. The opponents would then get to decide if they wanted to be the first or the second speaker.

### FYI

FYI Public forum debate, which was created in 2002, was formerly known as Ted Turner Debate. *Crossfire*, a popular show on Ted Turner's CNN, was the model for the distinctive crossfire examination period featured in public forum debate.

The most unique concept of the public forum debate is the *crossfire period*. After the constructive speeches have been given, both debaters take part in the cross-examination period. The first question of this period must be asked by the person who first spoke. After the first question has been asked, either debater may answer or ask questions as they choose. The grand crossfire is a very exciting period of this debate as all four debaters take part in both the questions and the answers. This form of debate was modeled after the television program *Crossfire*. Watching any political programming—whether it is Chris Matthews' *Hardball*, *Meet the Press*, or *Face the Nation*—will help you to understand this type of debate. It is easy to see how the moderators in these programs try to make specific points during the interviews. Just like in the television programs, it is very important to keep your cool while participating in the grand crossfire. During the crossfire period, the goal is to attack the weaknesses in your opponent's case. Another difference in the grand crossfire is that all four debaters are allowed to ask and answer questions during this period. The time periods are as follows:

<b>Time Requirements for Public Forum Debate</b>		
Prep Time	Two minutes per team	
First Speaker Team A	Four minutes	Constructive Speech
First Speaker Team B	Four minutes	Constructive Speech
Crossfire	Three minutes	
Second Speaker Team A	Four minutes	Constructive Speech
Second Speaker Team B	Four minutes	Constructive Speech
Crossfire	Three minutes	
First Speaker Team A	Two minutes	Summary
First Speaker Team B	Two minutes	Summary
Grand Crossfire	Three minutes	
Second Speaker Team A	One minute	Final Focus—Persuasive Speech
Second Speaker Team B	One minute	Final Focus—Persuasive Speech

### **Time Requirements for Public Forum Debate**

## **Student Congress**



*Student Congress* is an event that continues to grow in popularity. Not only is it a fun and more relaxed style of debate, it also offers a realistic view of the actual legislative procedure. Instead of debating resolutions like you do in Lincoln-Douglas, cross-examination, and public forum debate, the goal of Student Congress is to pass legislation written either by you or your teammates.

Two types of legislation are written for Student Congress. The first is the *resolution*, which is a statement of recognition. An example of a resolution would be when a city wants to recognize somebody or something that has had an effect. For example, the city of Houston passed a resolution stating that a day would be set aside to honor the Houston Rockets for winning the National Championship. The second piece of legislation is a *bill*. Bills must have an action that is to happen and a penalty if the act is violated. Bills are written for a change in policy or to create a new policy. If you wanted to change the policy on tardiness in your school, you would write a bill that would state the reason why this is important. Bills are very specific and must follow the correct form in order to be introduced the congressional body. Sometimes the other students will like the basics of the bill, but want to make changes to it. This is done in the form of what is called an *amendment*. The amendment, like the bill, must be very specific as to what changes are to be made.

If you write a piece of legislation that has been selected for the Student Congress tournament, you will have the opportunity to give an *authorship speech*. This speech gives the background on the topic and gives the reason why it should be passed. Once the authorship speech has been presented, rebuttal speeches are given by the other members. Speeches rotate in an affirmative-negative manner.

While Student Congress is more relaxed than the other debates in structure, the manner in which students address one another is very formal. Students refer to one another as Senator or Representative. The entire Congress activity closely follows *Roberts' Rules of Order*, which provides rules and



**How do the debates in a Student Congress resemble the debates that take place in the Senate or the House?**

procedures for official deliberations and debates, while conducting the activity. Lively, energetic debates can take place during the sessions. These sessions are intended to imitate the actual meetings held by senators and representatives when they are trying to pass new legislation. Watch C-Span on television to see some sessions of Congress.

Like the other debates, Student Congress requires work and dedication on your part. It requires research first to find a topic that needs the attention of the legislative body. You then have to be able to present the problem area and tell how it is going to be corrected. Student Congress will be a worthwhile experience for the student who takes the time to prepare.

## **National Forensic League**

Many states have different debate organizations that offer membership to schools and its students. It is always important to check to see what the rules for each debate event are, as they can differ from organization to organization. Time limits and topics are two of the things that should be checked for every tournament you attend. One organization, the National Forensic

League, has done more to shape and define forensics and all of its activities than any other organization. *Forensics* is the official name for the art or study of formal debate. The National Forensic League has had a huge impact on debate events and continues to be a creative and inventive force.

In 1925, Bruno E. Jacob, a professor at Ripon College in Wisconsin, received a letter inquiring as to whether there was any type of honor society available for high school debaters. After doing some research, Mr. Jacob found that there were none. He then created a proposal and found that there was in fact, an interest, for this type of fraternity. On March 28, 1925, the National Forensic League was born. It is currently the nation's oldest and largest high school debate and speech honor society with members in all fifty states.

The National Forensic League has continued to grow and keep up with changes in technology. Debate rounds at the national tournament are now taped and can be viewed by students. The Internet has had an impact as well. It allows students and teachers to be constantly updated by visiting the web site provided for them

The National Forensic League continues to honor students' achievements. Certificates, pins, and honor cords symbolize the level of commitment by students. Most recently, the Academic All-American Award and the National Student of the Year Award have been added to the list of possible recognitions available to students.

The National Forensic League continues to provide opportunities for young people to enjoy forensic activities while encouraging and promoting the values of service, leadership, humility, integrity, and respect. National Forensic League members can be found in all fifty states, the U.S. possessions, and several foreign countries. It boasts more than a million members. Once you are a member, you remain a member for life. It is an organization that continues to promote excellence in the world of forensics.