British Parliamentary Debate
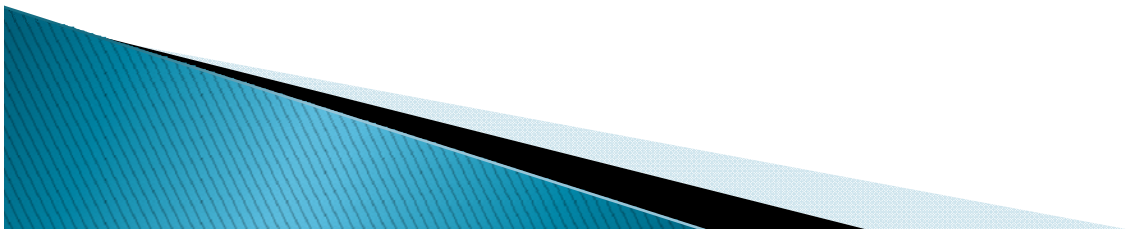
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NUEDC Kopertis X Sumatera Barat, Jambi, Riau, Kepri, 2012
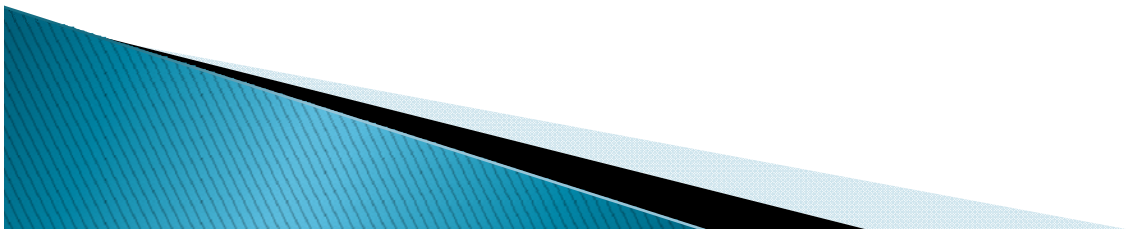
Overview
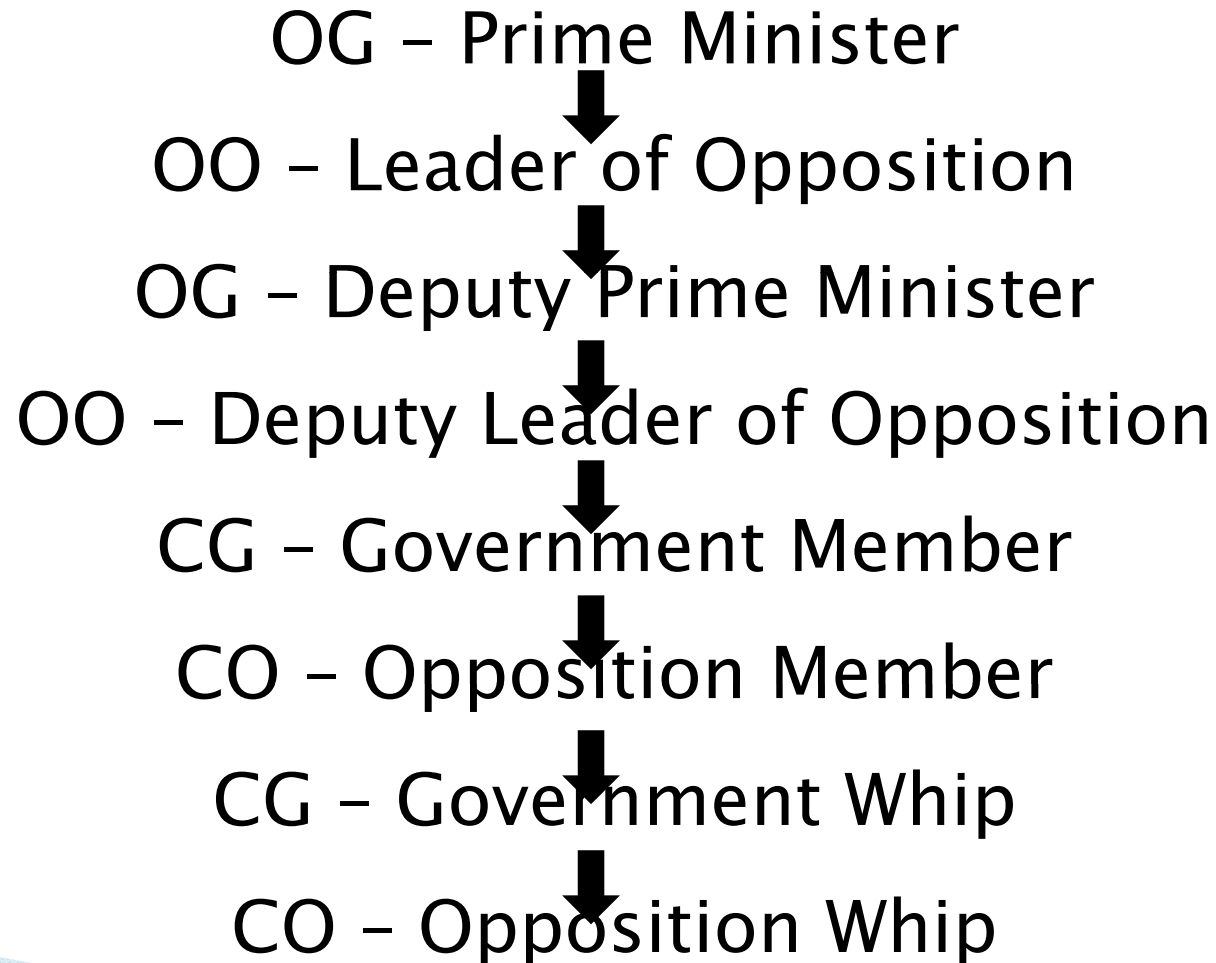
- Introduction to BP
- Role Fulfillment
- Adjudication

Intro to BP

- Only 1 motion is announced for each round.
- All teams have 15 minutes to casebuild started right after the Motion Launch
- The government must propose the motion.
- The opposition must negate the motion and present an alternative (ie. the status quo or counter model).
- Each speaker has 7 minutes to speak.
- Points of Information (POI) are allowed between the 2nd and 6th minute.

Order of Speaking

OG – Prime Minister

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OO – Leader of Opposition

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OG – Deputy Prime Minister

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OO – Deputy Leader of Opposition

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CG – Government Member

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CO – Opposition Member

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CG – Government Whip

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CO – Opposition Whip

OG – Prime Minister

- PM has to set up the debate. This includes:
  - ☐ Presenting a context/<u>problem</u>.
  - ☐ Providing a clear and reasonable <u>definition</u> (ie. debatable and within the context/spirit of the motion).
  - ☐ Setting <u>parameters</u> of the debate – what exactly will we be talking about?
  - ☐ Propose a <u>solution</u> (model if needed), and explain how it solves the problem.
  - ☐ Essentially, when the PM sits down, everyone should have a solid idea of what the debate will be about.

OG – Prime Minister (cont'd)

- It is VERY important that set up is done properly, because:
  - ☐ A poor set up tends to result in a messy/bad debate. OG gets blamed for this!
  - ☐ A poor set up makes it easier for the closing teams to re-characterize the debate to their advantage. OG risks getting 'left out' of the debate.
  - ☐ A clear set up makes the OG memorable!
- PM has to indicate the team split – ie. what PM and DPM will talk about (has to be <u>different</u> and <u>consistent</u>).
- PM has to provide arguments in support of the motion.

OO – Leader of Opposition

- The LO main role is to set up a <u>clear response</u> from the Opposition bench that <u>creates clash</u> in the debate.
  - ☐ Problem doesn't exist (status quo).
  - ☐ Different cause.
  - ☐ Solution won't work.
  - ☐ Solution has other harms.
  - ☐ Provide better solution (counter model).
- LO may challenge the PM's definition, but <u>only</u> if the definition is unreasonable.

OO – Leader of Opposition (cont'd)

‣ LO is also required to:
- ☐ Rebut the PM arguments.
- ☐ Provide substantive arguments against the motion.
- ☐ Indicate the team split – ie. what the LO and DLO will talk about (has to be <u>different</u> and <u>consistent</u>).
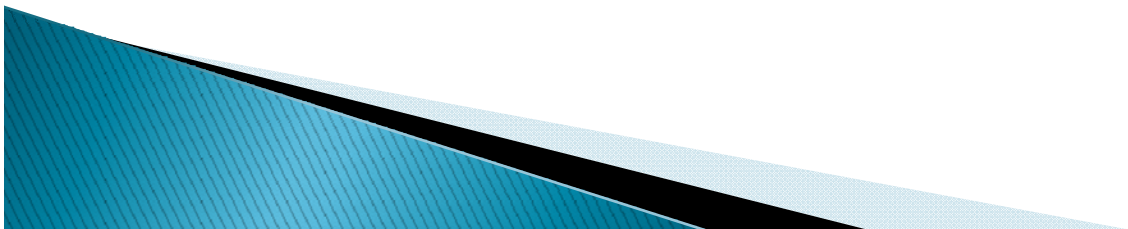
OG – Deputy Prime Minister

- The DPM roles are:
  - Deliver rebuttals to LO's arguments.
  - Support the arguments made by PM, and respond to the rebuttals from LO (refutation).
  - Bring more arguments to support the motion.
- At the end of the speech, briefly sums up the OG case:
  - What are the key ideas in the debate?
  - How does OG approach the debate?
  - What are the arguments OG wants to be remembered by?
  - Wraps up the opening half.

OO – Deputy Leader of Opposition

- The DLO roles are:
  - Deliver rebuttals to OG's arguments.
  - Support the arguments made by OL, and respond to the rebuttals from OG (refutation).
  - Bring more arguments against the motion.
- At the end of the speech, briefly sums up the OO case:
  - What are the key ideas in the debate?
  - How does OO approach the debate?
  - What are the arguments OO wants to be remembered by?
 - Wraps up the opening half.
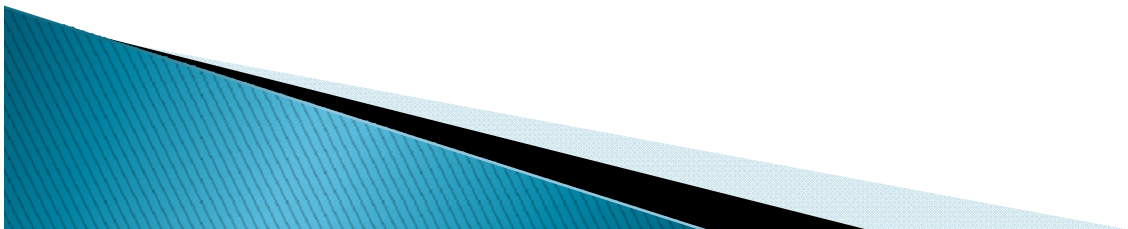
Government/Opposition Members

- GM and OM have generally similar roles:
  - Rebut all arguments from the opposing bench that came in the opening half.
  - OM rebuts GM <u>and</u> opening half (OG).
  - Deliver '<u>extensions</u>'.
    - Move the debate to a different area – ie. new arguments, deeper analysis.
    - Remain consistent with the opening half (OG/OO).
   - Goal: makes their team distinct, without contradicting!

Government/Opposition Whip

- GW and OW have generally similar roles:
  - ☐ Rebut the arguments from <u>all</u> opposing speakers that came before them.
    - ☐ GW rebuts OM, DLO, LO.
    - ☐ OW rebuts GW, GM, DPM, PM.
  - ☐ Support their team's extensions.
    - ☐ Using extensions to rebut arguments.
    - ☐ Incorporate extensions into each major point of contention/clash.
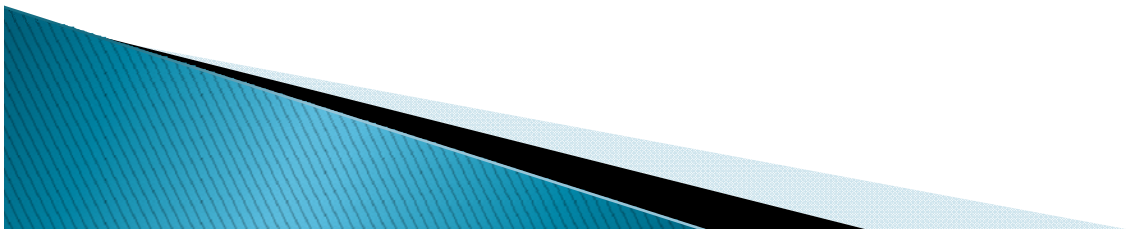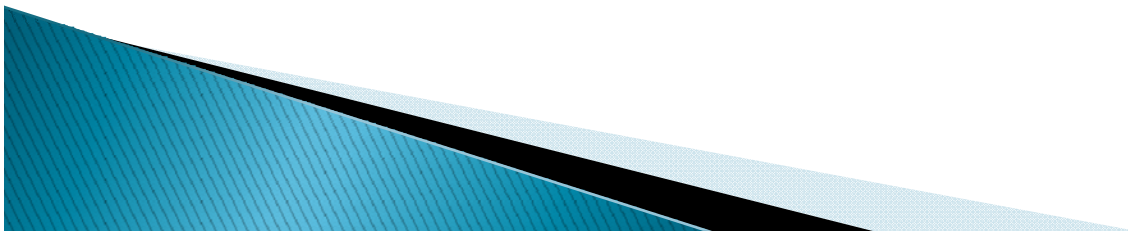
Government/Opposition Whip (cont'd)

- ☐ Reply speech.
  - ☐ Summarize the entire debate.
  - ☐ Highlight the important roles of the closing team in the debate.
- ☐ No new materials/arguments!
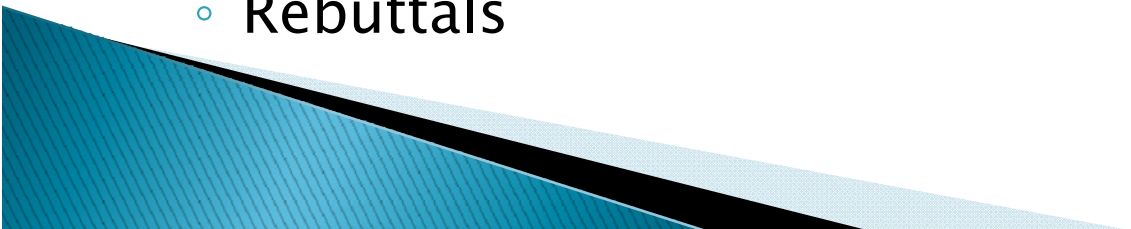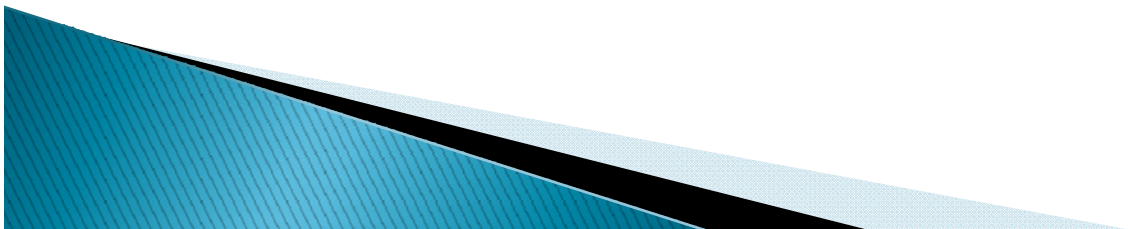
Adjudication

Golden Rule:

"Which team contributes the most to the debate?"

What to look for from each team?

- OG (Opening Government: Prime Minister + Deputy PM)
  - Problem – clear? is the scope realistic?
  - Definition – debatable? reasonable?
  - Solution/Model – sufficient to solve the problem?
  - Arguments
  - Rebuttals

- OO (Opening Opposition:)
  - Response – clear?
  - Solution/Counter model (if any) – sufficient to solve the problem?
  - Arguments
  - Rebuttals

What to look for from … ? (cont'd)

- CG/CO
  - Extension – distinct? new? relevant?
  - How they present the extension
    - Flag with POI?
    - Mention as 'important'/ 'key issue' at the start of the speech?
    - Incorporate in rebuttals?
  - Rebuttals
    - Strong?
    - Supporting extension?
  - Are they successful in making their materials the most important and relevant in the debate?
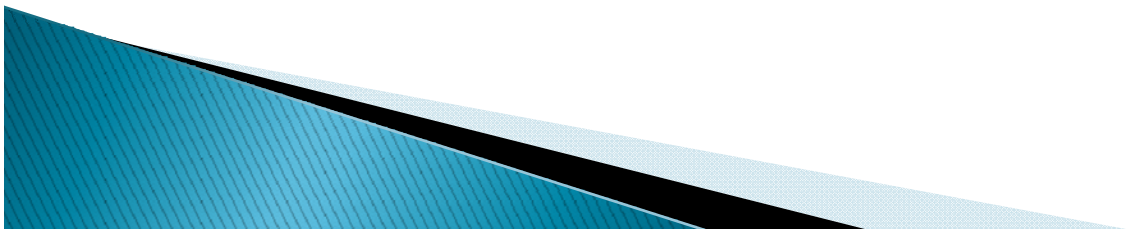
Assessing Arguments (cont'd)

- Relevant v. Irrelevant
  - Focus on <u>contribution</u> and <u>consistency</u>!
    - Does the argument <u>contribute</u> to achieve the goal in the debate?
    - Is the argument <u>consistent</u> with how the debate is characterized (problem/actors/etc.)?

- Strong v. Weak
  - AREL
  - Focus on the <u>reasoning</u>!
    - Deductive → all premises must be proven conclusively.
    - Inductive → credibility/persuasiveness of examples must be proven.
  - Use of compelling supporting data/facts.

Assessing Arguments (cont'd)

- Significant v. Insignificant
  - Focus on <u>importance</u>!
  - Is the argument substantially discussed by teams in the debate?
  - Did the argument manage to stay in the debate → 'airtime' is usually a good indicator.

Assessing Rebuttals

- Does it attack the reasoning?
  - Deductive
    - Should not target the conclusion.
   - Target the premises, prove them false – ie. through argumentations, not mere statements.
  - Inductive
    - Attack the credibility of the examples – ie. by arguing that the examples given are false/don't apply, not merely giving counter examples.
    - Attack the relationship between examples and conclusion – ie. by showing there are other factors at play.
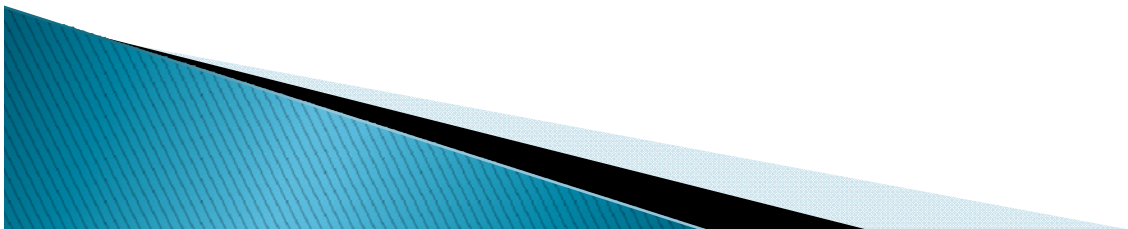
Handy to keep in mind…

▶ LISTEN!!!

▶ Don't think for the debaters!
  ◦ Awareness → what happens in the debate v. what happens in your head.
  ◦ Don't finish their arguments for them.
  ◦ Don't rebut their arguments.
  ◦ Handy tips: in your note, make a box for <u>your</u> thoughts.
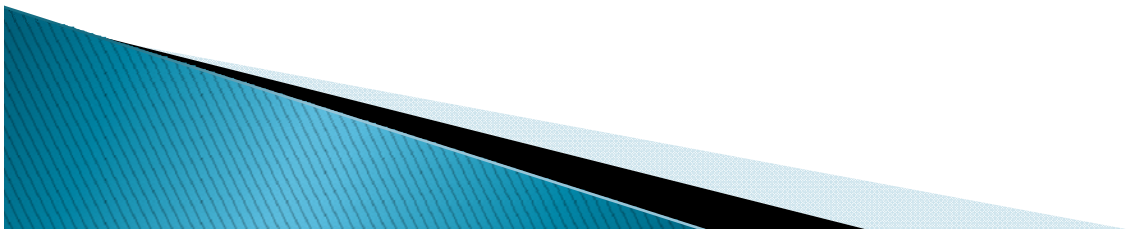
Handy to keep in mind… (cont'd)

- ▶ Judging is not coaching!
  - ◦ Don't expect arguments.
  - ◦ Don't try to think of better arguments the debaters could have presented.

- ▶ Manner – Matter
  - ◦ Don't automatically buy arguments just because of good manner.
  - ◦ If the manner is bad, don't strain yourself to understand the matter.

Duties of an adjudicator…

○ Confer and discuss the debate with the other adjudicators.

• The adjudication panel should attempt to agree on the adjudication of the debate. Therefore, confer in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect.

○ Determine the ranking of the teams.

○ Determine the teams' grades.

○ Determine the speakers' scores.

○ Provide a verbal adjudication.

○ Complete documentation required by the tournament.

Ranking

- Teams should be ranked from first place to fourth place.
  - 1st – 3 points
  - 2nd – 2 points
  - 3rd – 1 points
  - 4th – 0 point.
- Adjudicators should confer upon team rankings.
  - When a unanimous decision cannot be reached after conferral, the decision of the majority will determine the rankings.
  - When a majority decision cannot be reached, the chair of the panel of adjudicators will determine the rankings.
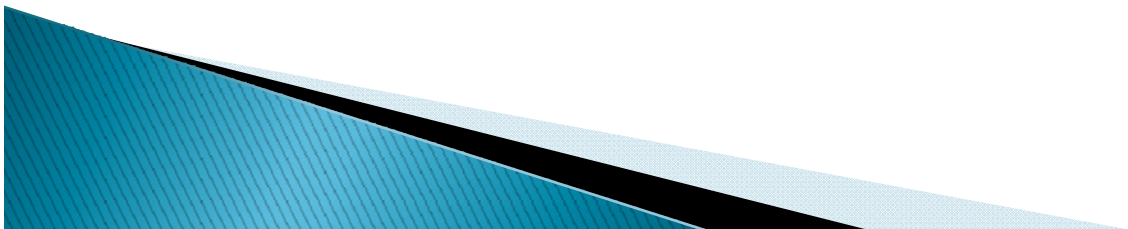
Grading and Marking (cont'd)

‣ The panel of adjudicators should agree upon the grade awarded to each team.

☐ Each adjudicator marks each team at their own discretion, but the marks should fall within the agreed grade for the team.

REMEMBER : The Higher the Rank, the higher the score, but the grade is not necessarily the Best.
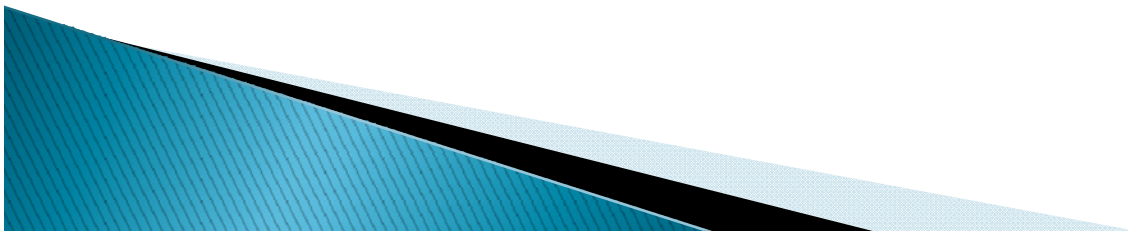
Grading and Marking (cont'd)

▸ Grades are interpreted as:

◦ A = 180 – 200.

Excellent to flawless. The standard you would expect to see from a team at the Semi Final/Grand Final of the tournament. The team has many strengths and few, if any, weaknesses.

◦ B = 160 – 179

Above average to very good. The standard you would expect to see from a team at the finals level or in contention to make to the finals. The team has clear strengths and some minor weaknesses.

◦ C = 140 – 159

Average. The team has strengths and weaknesses in roughly equal proportions.

◦ D = 120 – 139

Poor to below average. The team has clear problems and some minor strengths.

◦ E = 100 – 119

Very poor. The team has fundamental weaknesses and few, if any, strengths.

Grading and Marking (cont'd)

▸ Each adjudicator marks individual speakers at their discretion, but must ensure that the aggregate points of the team members is within the agreed grade for that team.

▸ Individual marks are interpreted as:

◦ A = 90 –100. Excellent to flawless, standard of a speaker in the final of the tournament.

◦ B = 80 – 89. Above average to very good, standard of a speaker in contention to make to the finals.

◦ C = 70 – 79. Average, weaknesses and strengths in equal proportion.

◦ D = 60 – 69. Poor to below average, clear problem.

◦ E = 50 – 59. Poor, fundamental flaws.

Verbal

▸ Announce ranking.
▸ Provide general assessment of the debate.
▸ Explain the determinant considerations for the ranking.
▸ Go team per team:
  ◦ Explain the reasons behind their ranking (in comparison to how other teams rank).
  ◦ Explain what they did well and what they lacked.
  ◦ Provide suggestions of what they can improve in next debates.
▸ Keep it concise!
▸ Offer personal assessment outside the room.