

Briefing 3:

The British Parliamentary Format (for Novices)

With very many thanks to the Adjudication Team from the De La Salle University WUDC 2012 for this document. Our amendments have been few and minor.

This briefing is designed for those who have never debated before in the British Parliamentary format or require clarification as to the basic rules. It should be read in conjunction with Briefings 1 and 2 on Debating and Adjudication at the WUDC Berlin 2013.

1. The Roles of the Eight Speakers
2. The Order of Speeches
3. Points of Information
4. Before the Debate
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1. The Roles of the Eight Speakers

Each debate will contain 4 teams, each team consisting of 2 speakers. There are 2 teams on each side of the debate. On one side are Opening Government (OG) and Closing Government (CG), on the other side are Opening Opposition (OO) and Closing Opposition (CO)

OG define the motions and advance arguments in favour of their side, and rebut arguments made by teams on the other side of the table.

OO must rebut OG's case and advance substantive arguments as to why their side of the table should win the debate.

CG must provide further arguments and analysis in favour of the motion, which are consistent with, but distinct from, the substantive material advanced by OG, as well as refuting the analysis of the Opposition teams.

CO must provide further arguments against the motion, which are consistent with, but different from, the arguments advanced by OO, as well as rebutting arguments made by the Government teams.

The second speaker of CG must summarise the debate as a whole on behalf of the Government bench.

The second speaker of this team must summarise the debate as a whole on behalf of the Opposition bench.

2. The Order of Speeches

Each speaker speaks once, so there will be 8 speeches in each debate. The order of speeches is as follows:

1. First speaker (the "Prime Minister") from the OG team,
2. First speaker ("the Leader of the Opposition") from the OO team,
3. Second speaker ("the Deputy Prime Minister") from the OG team,
4. Second speaker ("the Deputy Leader of the Opposition") from the OO team,
5. First speaker ("the Member of Government") from the CG team,



6. First speaker ("the Member of Opposition") from the CO team,
7. Second speaker ("the Government Whip") from the CG,
8. Second speaker ("the Opposition Whip") of the CO Team.

Speeches last for 7 minutes. Time signals will be given to indicate when 1 minute, 6 minutes and 7 minutes have elapsed.

3. Points of Information

The first and last minute of each speech is known as protected time, during which no points of information (POI) may be offered to the speaker who is making their speech.

During the intervening 5 minutes (between 01:00 and 06:00) points of information may be offered.

A point of information is a formalized interjection from any speaker on the opposite side of the table to the speaker who has the floor. It may last up to 15 seconds. It can take the form of a comment or a question to the speaker who has the floor.

It is up to the speaker who has the floor to decide which points of information to accept or reject. Each speaker should accept 1 point of information (they may accept more if they wish). To offer a point of information a speaker should stand and say "point of information", "sir" or "madam". If the point of information offered is refused, the speaker who offered it should sit down immediately.

4. Before the Debate

Each round has a specific topic. This topic will be announced to all participants 15 minutes before debates begin. Teams may only prepare in their teams - i.e. the two speakers in a team may confer with each other ONLY while preparing. Teams may not use any electronic devices to aid them in their preparation, with the exception of stopwatches (the use of mobile phones is allowed only insofar as the phone is used as a stopwatch) and electronic dictionaries. Teams must be in the correct room, ready to begin the debate, once the 15 minutes have elapsed.

5. After the Debate

Each debate will be judged by a panel of judges. They will rank the teams from 1st to 4th. Teams will be told the results of the debates from rounds 1-6 (at Worlds). While teams also receive speaker marks, these are not released until the conclusion of the tournament. Rounds 7, 8 and 9 are "silent" rounds (teams will not be told the results).

Speakers should be respectful to one another and their judges at all times.