

Ian Murphy Memorial Debating Competition

**Notes on Adjudication**

Thank you for offering to perform the very important task of adjudicating this debate.

Attached are the sheets to be used.

They are arranged so that the adjudicator can assess speakers in pairs and then decide which team is in front after each pair of speakers. The extra spaces at the bottom of each sheet can be used to emphasise points that might be raised in the adjudication summary.

Whilst there are certain protocols that apply in debating, the most important thing to consider is what a reasonable listener might conclude after listening to the debate. This principle is succinctly stated on page 51 of ‘*Taking the Initiative’*,\* a handbook on debating published by the Department of Education and Training in New South Wales. The authors say:

“While the various rules of debating are important to know, minor infractions should not form the basis of a decision. Such rules exist to ensure that the Matter a team presents is as effective as possible, and any mistake a team makes in following those rules is only as important as the impact that mistake has on the case they present.”

Some points that can be a source of confusion:

* Three great speeches by one team do not constitute a debate. Teams must demonstrate that they have listened to their opponents and have been able to effectively rebut the arguments put forward. A team with ineffective rebuttal should not win the debate.
* Any statement made is considered to be true unless it is effectively rebutted. It is not the adjudicator’s role to point out errors of fact; - it is the opposing team’s job.
* The final speaker should not introduce new lines of argument. However, new material put forward as part of rebuttal is allowed.
* It is important that speakers make good use of the time allocated. Being seriously under or over time is a method error.

**The person who delivers the adjudication should be as positive as possible, pointing out the good points and suggesting aspects that could be improved in future debates.**

\*(‘*Taking the Initiative’* is an excellent publication that can be downloaded as a .pdf file from:

<https://www.artsunit.nsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/Lloyd%20Cameron/2014%20Taking%20the%20Initiative.pdf> )

Date: Sheet 1

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**Adjudication Sheet**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Topic: | |
| 1st Speaker School: | 2nd Speaker School: |
| Definition: | Definition: |
| Allocation: 1st spkr. 2nd spkr. | Allocation: 1st spkr. 2nd spkr. |
| Team Line?  Case clear?    Method score /20 | Team Line?  Case clear?    Method score /20 |
| Arguments:  Matter score /40 | Rebuttal/Arguments:  Matter score /40 |
| Effectiveness of delivery:  Manner score /40 | Effectiveness of delivery:  Manner score /40 |
| Total: /100 | Total: /100 |
| Commendable aspects: | Commendable aspects: |
| Weaknesses: | Weaknesses: |
| Which of these two speakers was more convincing?  Why? | |

Sheet 2

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**Adjudication Sheet**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 3rd Speaker | 4th Speaker |
| Rebuttal/Arguments:  Matter score /40 | Rebuttal/Arguments:  Matter score /40 |
| Effectiveness of delivery:  Manner score /40 | Effectiveness of delivery:  Manner score /40 |
| Teamwork, continuity, consistency, use of time  Method score /20 | Teamwork, continuity, consistency, use of time  Method score /20 |
| Total: /100 | Total: /100 |
| Commendable aspects: | Commendable aspects: |
| Weaknesses: | Weaknesses: |
| Which of these two speakers was more convincing? Why?  Who is winning the debate at this stage and by how much? | |

Sheet 3

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**Adjudication Sheet**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 5th Speaker | 6th Speaker |
| Rebuttal/Summary  Matter score /40 | Rebuttal/Summary    Matter score /40 |
| Effectiveness of delivery:  Manner score /40 | Effectiveness of delivery:  Manner score /40 |
| Teamwork, continuity, consistency, use of time  Method score /20 | Teamwork, continuity, consistency, use of time, no new material  Method score /20 |
| Total: /100 | Total: /100 |
| Commendable aspects: | Commendable aspects: |
| Weaknesses: | Weaknesses: |
| Which of these two speakers was more convincing?    Who won the overall debate and why? | |