

Debate Criteria	Mastery	Above Standard	Standard	Approaches Standard	Below Standard
Opening & Closing Statements	35 points Extremely thorough, well-organized presentation of arguments and evidence Opening statement engages the interest of audience; closing statement leaves no unanswered issues and resonates with the audience	31.5 points Well-organized and complete presentation of arguments and evidence Opening statement successfully frames the issues; closing statement summarizes many arguments made in the debate	28 points Organized and generally complete presentation of arguments and evidence Opening statement outlines or lists arguments and evidence but does not generate interest; closing statement does not reflect remarks made during debate.	24.5 points Somewhat organized presentation of arguments and evidence Opening statement minimally outlines arguments; closing argument briefly restates the ideas offered in the opening statement	17.5 points Arguments are unorganized, incomplete, or completely lacking in evidence Opening statement and closing statements do little more than state the position of the team
Questioning and Response to Questions	25 points Effectively challenges the arguments made by opponents with argument and evidence Responds to issues raised by opponents with concise, accurate, logical answers	22.5 points Challenges the arguments made by opponents; challenges are generally effective Responds to issues raised by opponents with accurate and generally concise answers	20 points Responds to most of the issues raised by opponents with generally accurate answers Offers arguments, but no evidence, to counter the arguments made by opponents	17.5 points Seems to be caught off-guard by opponents; offers tentative, somewhat accurate, but possibly vague or illogical responses Attempts to challenge arguments of opponents	12.5 points Is unable to respond to issues raised by opponents in a meaningful or accurate way
Effective use of evidence / content knowledge	30 points Demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the issues, events and facts relevant to the topic Demonstrates thorough and accurate understanding of details as well as the ability to make original connections and interpretations	27 points Demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the issues, events and facts relevant to the topic Demonstrates thorough and accurate understanding of details as well as the ability to make original connections and interpretations	24 points Demonstrates a basic and accurate understanding of the issues, events and facts relevant to the topic. Demonstrates the ability to make basic connections between facts and concepts	21 points Demonstrates a generally accurate understanding of relevant issues, events and facts, but may exhibit minor confusion or misunderstandings, seem to understand general ideas, but do not support their ideas with relevant facts; OR, seem to understand facts but are unable to connect them into coherent arguments	15 points Demonstrates an inadequate understanding of the history content relevant to the topic Supports statements with vague or irrelevant information, or no information at all

Use of persuasive appeals	5 points Makes deliberate and effective use of logical, emotional and ethical appeals in order to persuade judges	4.5 points Uses logical, emotional and ethical appeals to enhance effectiveness of argument	4 points Uses some appeals to make argument more persuasive, but may not include a mix of logical, emotional and ethical appeals	3.5 points Makes minimal use of persuasive appeals	2.5 points Does not use persuasive rhetoric
Performance	5 points Exhibits confidence, energy, and passion in the course of the hearing Maintains respectful tone Accesses preparation materials with ease	4.5 points Exhibits confidence and energy in the course of the hearing Maintains respectful tone Uses preparation materials effectively	4 points Appears nervous, yet somewhat confident, before the court Maintains respectful tone Use of preparation materials does not distract	3.5 points Lacks confidence Maintains respectful tone Use of preparation materials distracts from quality of performance	2.5 points Demonstrates little or no preparation Fails to maintain respectful tone
Overall Score	Mastery 95 or more	Above Standard 85 or more	Standard 75 or more	Approaches Standard 65 or more	Below Standard 0 or more