

The ASC Debating Handbook

Winter 2015-16

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ASSOCIATION OF SPEAKERS CLUBS

GUIDE TO DEBATING

Introduction

A debate is an enjoyable exercise in careful listening, logical argument, effective persuasion and creative thinking upon one's feet. It is a form of communication in which two opposing arguments are tested through open and well-informed discussion and it is a critical tool for citizens in a participatory democracy. In many respects it more closely resembles what actually happens in the workplace, within personal relationships, and in the real world generally, than does the formal, uninterrupted public speech.

For debating requires all of the skills developed at Speakers Club meetings from, for example, 'Mean what you Say' through to 'Audience Rapport' and even to 'Speaking Without Notes', and it also very much involves being an effective team member. In fact, a debate provides a forum within which the whole range of speaking and evaluating techniques can be practised, within a unified programme.

Such an event introduces some valuable extra variety into a Club's season of meetings and offers a good basis for inter-Club activities. In addition, Club members are often called upon to adjudicate debates within or between schools and, to do this properly, they should certainly have been involved in debates themselves. Moreover, holding an annual Public Debate on a contemporary issue or challenging, say, the local university to a debate on a controversial and topical subject – with many students in attendance – offer first-rate possibilities for publicity as well as for pleasure. Accordingly, this Guide is for debating within, between and beyond our clubs

The Basic Debating Format

There is a **chairman** who introduces the speakers, controls the debate generally, and declares the result. The chairman of a debate performs the same broad functions as the chairman of an ordinary Speakers Club meeting, and the same skills of management and diplomacy are called for. The form of address is usually 'Mr Chairman' or 'Madam Chairman' with the '...Ladies and Gentlemen' omitted, and the person in the Chair should clarify this at the outset. [There has been a recent movement towards the use of '**Chair**' and that has merit.]

However, unlike an ordinary meeting, a debate is focused upon a **subject** (or motion, or even topic – all common terms for the issue to be debated) and a typical subject might be:

'THAT THE RETIREMENT AGE SHOULD BE INCREASED TO 75'

The **proposition** is the team of speakers whose role is to persuade the audience that the idea contained in the motion is correct. ("Yes – it should be increased to 75"). The **opposition** is the team of speakers whose task it is to provide arguments against the motion ("No – it should not be increased to 75") and to counter the proposition's case.

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To give one simple arrangement of the general format (which may be suitable for a Club's first ever debate), let there be four speakers, arranged in two groups:

For the Motion

The Proposer
The Seconder for the Proposition

Against the Motion

The Opposer.
The Seconder for the Opposition

The first speaker for the proposition defines the terms of the motion (e.g. What we mean by the 'Retirement Age'), outlines the team line and its main arguments, announces the division of those arguments between the two proposing speakers, and presents his/her arguments. This should be a constructive speech, getting the debate going effectively. No time should be wasted at this stage in attacking the probable or possible arguments of the opponents.

The first speaker for the opposition deals with the definition ("We agree/do not agree with their definition of the 'Retirement Age'..."), outlines the team case, announces the division of arguments amongst the two opposition speakers, tackles the main arguments of the proposition (rebuttal), and presents his/her part of their case. Here again, this should mainly comprise positive arguments for the opposition and, apart from the very first speaker in any debate, some part of every subsequent speech will be impromptu.

The second speaker for the proposition must defend the definition if it has been challenged, rebut the opposition case, proceed with arguments for the motion, and summarise his/her side's case. The second opposition speaker – in this most basic of examples the final main speaker – rebuts the proposition's case, presents some additional arguments and summarises the debate. Both second speakers should support and expand the views of their leaders, and attack the arguments put forward by the opponents.

Usually, the main speakers sit at the front, the proposition to the right of the chair, the opposition to the left. Each speaker should have a desk or a table to write upon. Speeches should be made from a lectern, placed slightly to one side so that speakers may include the other main speakers and the chair their audience. Lights may be positioned as for a normal club evening; alternatively, times may be indicated by a bell, rung by a timekeeper sitting next to the chairman. Where there are judges, they may be located as for other ASC competitions – preferably spread about the room.

After the Main Speakers

Let us now add some other possibilities on to the basic arrangement outlined above (noting as we do so that there is no one standard format for a debate). While our basic example described a debate involving a total of four speakers, a similar structure would apply with a third speaker added to each side. With each of those third and final speakers, there would be fewer new arguments and more rebuttals. [In formal schools debate in the UK it is common to have two speakers on each side: internationally, the arrangement is often three-a-side but with no summations.]

After those four speakers have finished, the chairman may declare the debate open to **speeches from the floor** of the house. Ideally, everyone present should have an opportunity to speak – as opposed to merely asking a question.

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At this stage, other than the main speakers who will just listen carefully, any person present may express an opinion. Such speeches should be more than formal interjections, as the person who just stands up and announces “Mr Chairman, I agree/disagree with the Motion” or “Madam Chairman, Mr McDuff’s speech was a load of rubbish”, really adds nothing of value to the debate.

In some debates, speakers from the floor are expected to state which side they intend to support. The chairman may decide to call for speeches in order: one in support, followed by one against. In such cases, opportunities should also be allowed for those in favour of abstaining – speaking from the ‘crossbenches’. In cases where most of the audience favours one particular side of the issue, the chairman could allocate speakers to the proposition or the opposition and require them to speak in support of that side, much as in a Club evening Topics Session.

In some debates, as well as the speeches from the floor, there is also a **question time**. The usual practice here is for members of the audience to put short questions to particular main speakers. For instance, a questioner might say:

“Madam Chairman, I should like to ask Miss MacGonagall if she realises that drunkenness in Canada has actually fallen since they extended the opening times of public houses?”

Questions are sometimes answered there and then, and sometimes dealt with in the summing up. This – as with every other aspect of procedure – should be made clear in advance by the chairman.

The summing up, by one main speaker from the opposition and then by one main speaker from the proposition, then follows. Finally, there may be a vote and, possibly, a general evaluation: these matters are dealt with below.

Summations

The summing up should not be prepared in advance, except perhaps for the opening sentence and the grand climax. It should deal with the arguments given by the other side and with a selection of points raised and questions asked during the open period. With experience, speakers will learn to summate by theme, rather than point-by-point. The summation should also recapitulate the speaker’s team’s own case, comparing it (favourably) with that of the opponents, and no new arguments should be presented. These summations are the last word in the debate and so the speakers delivering them should endeavour to leave the audience strongly persuaded to support their side of the argument.

Voting

After the summing up, the chairman may appoint two **tellers** to count the votes from the audience and then will put the motion to the vote – normally by a show of hands. It is customary to count the votes in favour (the Ayes), the votes against (the Noes), and the abstentions. The results may be written down clearly and passed to the chairman who, after checking them, makes the announcement.

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One further possibility is to take a ‘straw poll’ vote before the debate starts and to compare this with the actual result in order to assess whether the speakers have persuaded the audience to change their minds in favour of their side’s case. [But beware of those subtle characters who vote against their beliefs initially so that their subsequent changeover might indicate a victory for the side that they supported anyway.]

Order! Order!

The Order Paper below (taken from an actual inter-Club debate) incorporates speeches and questions from the floor, summations and an audience vote.

Cardiff Speakers Club & Cardiff (Mixed) Speakers Club Inter-Club Debate: Monday 9th May

ORDER PAPER

Motion before the House: ***THAT WE SHOULD BREAK THE LAW IN ORDER TO CHANGE IT***
[CSC Proposing, CMSC Opposing]

Madam Chairman: Val Harding

Timekeepers: Lloyd Evans and John Callaghan

7.15 pm – Opening and Welcome – Madam Speaker

Main Speaker for Proposition [CSC] Griff Sage (6-8 minutes)

Main Speaker for Opposition [CMSC] Mike Douse (6-8 minutes)

Second Speaker for Proposition [CSC] Doug Beddingham (6-8 minutes)

Second Speaker for Opposition [CMSC] Margaret Benedict (6-8 minutes)

Speeches from the floor – alternating Proposition and Opposition (up to 4 minutes): Terry Brooks, Brian Leadley and Brian Hawker of CSC; Judith Adams, Claude Rapport, and Patricia Douse of CMSC... and others if called upon by the Chairman

8.15 pm to 8.30 pm – Interval – Tea and Coffee [CSC]

Question Time – each question to be addressed through the Chair to a particular Speaker and directly related to what s/he has said

Topics (related to the Motion): Phil McCaffrey

Summing Up by Opposition: Mike Douse (up to 5 minutes)

Summing Up by Proposition: Griff Sage (up to 5 minutes)

Vote – based upon the merits of the Debate

General Evaluation: Olwen Heenan

Vote of Thanks: Mike Thomas (President of CSC)

9.35 pm - Closure – Madam Chairman

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The basic format presented above might adhere to the following pattern:

Proposer and Opposer	:	6-8 minutes each
Seconders for Proposition and Opposition	:	6-8 minutes each

Speakers should endeavour to deliver good arguments and rebuttal, with style, using all of the time available. The **timekeeper** is responsible for the accurate timing of each speech, and gives signals (lights or bells) at the appropriate points, which the Chairman will – with the Timekeeper demonstrating – have explained at the outset. In competitive debates, after every speaker has concluded, the Timekeeper should give the Judges a readable record of the time taken for each speech.

Politics and Religion

A word of warning. For good reasons, the ASC prohibits speeches that are no more than political polemics or religious rants. However, the precise interpretation of this decree requires the application of a liberal sprinkling of common sense. Just about every debating subject worth tackling (go through the list of 300 subjects below, for example) has some political and, depending upon interpretation, some religious subtext. Speakers Clubs are adult, tolerant assemblies. While members may not respond well to, say, a call to join a particular political Party or to embrace a specific Sect (especially if that involves going somewhere else or staying at home on Club evenings), there is every likelihood that a thoughtful, passionate speech on just about any issue (age-old or contemporary) will be well-received.

General Evaluation

[In a competitive debate, where there is a judge or – more likely – a panel of judges, it would be unusual and probably unnecessary to have also a general evaluator. The tasks and suggested approaches of the judges (or adjudicators) are addressed separately below.]

The role resembles that of the General Evaluator at a normal Club meeting except that it is likely that no intermediary evaluations (e.g. of the main speakers, of the topics...) will have been given. Another consideration is that a vote may have been taken (but possibly not yet announced). This means that more needs to be covered than usual, but maybe with not that much additional time.

As set out in the Speakers Guide, the General Evaluator should, insightfully and constructively, comment upon the evening as a whole – was the debate a success? did those involved fulfil their roles? what improvements may be made? In addition, the debate itself should be assessed including (unless this role has already been performed) the relative merits of the two cases, the persuasiveness of the various speakers, the teamwork, the audience rapport, the floor speeches, question time, and any other aspects deserving attention.

However, if there has been a vote, the General Evaluator should not (if it has already been announced) dismiss or contradict it, or (if it has yet to be announced) anticipate or pre-judge it. [Any vote should always occur – but not necessarily be announced – prior to the general evaluation.] As is always the case, the tasks of the General Evaluator call for an experienced and sensitive Club member; with debates, the requirement is even more critical.

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Different Kinds of Debate

A typical inter-schools debate in the UK might have the following pattern:

First Proposition	:	6 minutes
First Opposition	:	6 minutes
Second Proposition	:	6 minutes
Second Opposition	:	6 minutes
Opposition summation	:	3 minutes
Proposition summation	:	3 minutes

Each summation is given by one of the two speakers on that side: as already noted, it should contain no new arguments or evidence (“no new matter”) except as part of the rebuttal.

In contrast, the standard format in, for instance, Australia and New Zealand for competitive debates at school, club, university, national and international level is for teams of three and they participate as follows:

First Affirmative	:	X minutes
First Negative	:	X minutes
Second Affirmative	:	X minutes
Second Negative	:	X minutes
Third Affirmative	:	X minutes
Third Negative (no new matter)	:	X minutes

At the Junior Secondary level each speaker may be given 5 minutes; this rises to 10 minutes at Senior Secondary level and for less experienced club speakers; in all the major competitive debates, each speaker has 15 minutes.

The Two-Person Debate

An interesting alternative is the debate between two individuals which may be suitable, for instance, for ASC members who have completed the Advanced Certificate. A typical allocation of time is as follows:

Proposer	:	4 minutes
Opposer	:	8 minutes
Proposer (no new matter)	:	4 minutes

During the proposer’s opening, the case should be stated clearly and the arguments and supporting evidence introduced. The opposer has just one speech in which to make the case, present the evidence, rebut the arguments of the proposer, and sum up. In the final part of the proposer’s presentation, in which no new matter may be introduced save as rebuttal, the opposer’s arguments should be countered, the case for the proposition reiterated and the debate summed up.

If they are really competent speakers, the motion might be revealed to them, say, an hour before they are scheduled to begin. In any case where the subject for debate is not available well in advance, it should be of a general nature (such as THAT IT IS BETTER TO PLANT A CABBAGE THAN A ROSE) rather than a technical topic requiring specialist knowledge or

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substantial research (for instance, THAT THE UK'S INTERNATIONAL AID BUDGET SHOULD, BY 2020, BE EQUIVALENT TO AT LEAST 0.7% OF GNP).

The Parliamentary Debate

The Parliamentary debate, following a similar format to that of the House of Commons, is another alternative in which motions usually begin with the phrase 'This House' and the room in which the debate takes place is referred to as the **floor**, and a participant 'has the floor' when speaking. The **house** is the term used to describe the people in the room at the time of the debate. A **point of order** is an interruption of the debate to point out an alleged infringement of the rules, to be dealt with by the **speaker**, who is the person in the Chair.

In a standard UK inter-university debate there are four teams – each of two speakers – two on the proposition side, two in opposition. Each has around 6 minutes in which to speak, points of information from those on the other side are allowed (other than during the opening and closing minute of each speech) and the role of speakers 7 and 8 is to summarise the debate (introducing no new matter save as rebuttal). One interesting feature is that, on each side, there are two teams arguing the same case but also competing against one another. It is, therefore, not unusual to hear the following kinds of claim (for example, by the third and fourth speakers opposing the motion THIS HOUSE BELIEVES THAT GLOBAL WARMING IS A GREATER THREAT THAN TERRORISM):

A Mid-Debate Change of Track

Mr Nutty (third opposition): *“Earlier speakers on this side of the house have told you that global warming is not as serious a threat as the proposition would have us believe. While this remains the basis of our case, we shall now show that, whatever the consequences of global warming – even if they are as profound as the proposition would have you believe – at least equal damage to the environment may be caused by the actions of terrorists. The proposition mentions nuclear power – well terrorists can blow up power stations. They talk of emissions from increasing numbers of cars. But terrorists can...”*

In some competitions based upon the parliamentary format, the definition and case presented by the first Proposition and Opposition speakers have to be accepted by all subsequent speakers on their respective sides. For example, in the John Smith Memorial Mace (formerly the Observer Mace) debates – the premier UK inter-universities competition – it is the convention that the proposition (or opposition) argument should flow smoothly throughout all four speakers on that side, without any contradictions or sudden changes of direction. Should a speaker be at odds with the approach of an earlier speaker on the same side – but in another team – that is referred to as 'knifing' and is frowned upon by judges.

A Club seeking to do something different may, for instance, stage a parliamentary debate where the seating is arranged in the House of Commons style and where the main speakers take the parts of cabinet and shadow cabinet members, small party spokespersons and ordinary MPs. Thus, in a debate on the motion THIS HOUSE BELIEVES THAT ALL SECONDARY SCHOOL AGE YOUNGSTERS SHOULD ATTEND THEIR LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE, the main speakers would be the Secretary of State for Education and the Shadow Minister, and others might include spokespersons for the Liberal Democrats and the various nationalist parties, independents and rebel backbenchers. Formats based upon, say, local councils or

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devolved Scottish, Welsh, Northern Ireland or Regional bodies are also feasible – experimentation is to be encouraged once the basic principles are mastered.

The Balloon Debate

This is a special kind of event in which the participants take on the roles of particular people ostensibly adrift in a hot air balloon, only one of whom may survive. Each makes the case for their staying in and, thus, argues that all of the others should be ejected. Sometimes those taking part choose the characters that they shall assume, in other cases these may be allocated to them.

Typical casts include famous historical figures (Alexander the Great, Ghandi, George Washington, Isaac Newton...), sporting heroes, or inventors. Within schools, a modern history curriculum might be enlivened by putting, say, 20th century British prime ministers (Lloyd George, Attlee, Macmillan, Thatcher...) into the balloon, just as an English Literature programme may be animated by debating the relative merits and contributions to humanity of, for instance, 19th century novelists (Trollope, Dickens, Thackeray, Charlotte Brontë...).

The straightforward format is for each of the speakers to have, say, 5 minutes to defend their characters' right to be the one to remain adrift and then for the audience to vote. More elaborate arrangements are possible, for example:

- Each participant has 3 minutes to justify why the person that they are portraying should remain; the audience then votes to eject one or two of them;
- Each remaining speaker has a further 3 minutes to explain why each of the others should be ejected; the audience then votes again, once more reducing the numbers in the balloon;
- The audience (or an appointed individual or panel) then asks questions of each of those remaining; followed by a further audience vote, leaving just two persons; and
- These two speakers each have a final 3 minutes to justify their remaining and the other person being cast overboard; and the audience then decides between them.

Rebuttal, Definitions and New Matter

Rebuttal is answering of the other side's arguments in order to undermine their case: it is essential to and at the heart of a good debate. How well a speaker responds to the other side's arguments is crucial in determining who has won.

Speakers should be careful not to be side-tracked or to engage in irrelevant rebuttal. If, for instance, during a debate on the subject THAT THERE ARE NO SUCH THINGS AS GHOSTS, one speaker claims that "Blickling Hall in Suffolk is haunted by the ghost of Anne Boleyn" the other side may legitimately point out (a) that Blickling Hall is in Norfolk rather than Suffolk, and (b) that it was not built until some 60 years after Anne Boleyn's execution. However, no more than a few seconds should be devoted to these corrections as they add nothing directly to the issue under discussion and, at best, serve merely to discredit the veracity of the other side.

In preparing their case, speakers should give careful and creative attention not just to 'what does this motion mean?' but 'what shall we make this motion mean?' If any words in the motion are uncertain, opening speakers should carefully define how they fit into the debate. Some subjects, such as THAT THE PLAY'S THE THING, may be interpreted in various ways; others,

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such as THAT THE DEATH PENALTY SHOULD BE RE-INTRODUCED FOR THE MURDER OF POLICE OFFICERS are probably less open to diverse interpretations. In any case, each side should be definite about its **definitions**, not spending undue time in dictionary citations, but making clear and justifying exactly what the subject means in relation to their side's case.

The straightforward definition is that which an ordinary intelligent person would expect to hear after reading the motion. Versions which depart from that 'man/woman/person in the street' meaning require clear justification – and the other side should be ready to come to grips with obscure interpretations that do not fit their own case. Dealing with unacceptable definitions is an important aspect of rebuttal. Suppose, in a debate on the subject THAT STUDENTS SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN ALL ASPECTS OF UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE, the proposition states that this refers only to those matters that directly involve students and not, for example, to the appointment of professors or the salaries of lecturers. If the opposition have no problems with that interpretation they may say, for example, that "we are happy to accept their definition" or simply go ahead on that basis. However, if they do not accept it, then the opening opposition speaker should make this clear at the outset, and provide and substantiate the alternative definition that they advocate.

Judges will probably penalise definitions – especially weird ones – that are simply announced rather than justified. However, if the other side simply lets them go, or contradicts them too late on in the debate, an opportunity will have been lost to score extra points. Moreover, if a definition is not accepted, the opposition needs to explain why this is so and to convince the audience that their interpretation is the valid one. It would not be enough to claim, for instance, that "We do not accept that 'all aspects of university governance' excludes appointing professors and lecturers' pay as that is silly!"

During summations (and sometimes with, say, final speeches in a competitive debate with no summations) it is stipulated that the speaker should not "introduce **new matter** save as rebuttal" and the judges will penalise speakers who, for instance, give a new example or add to their overall case at this late stage, unless it is made believably clear that this is done in order to rebut something claimed by the other side.

Points of Information

In some debates – for example, in many competitions between universities or schools, and in parliamentary debates – there is a provision for points of information. These are interruptions by members of the non-speaking team to the speaker who has the floor at that time: members of the audience may not make points of information. They are formal parts of a debate and, in competitions, extra credit is given (a) for making good points of information and, even more so, (b) for answering them effectively. It is important that those making points of information constant do not to descend into intimidation ('badgering').

The participant in the debate who wishes to make a point of information rises and states "Point of Information!" The person speaking may either accept or reject it or say "In a moment!" If it is rejected, the person interrupting should immediately sit down. If accepted, the point should be brief (let us say 15 seconds maximum) and should be in the form of a question: if it cannot be put into two short sentences, it is not a point of information. Speakers are advised to accept

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a small number of such points and, when one is accepted, to deal with it succinctly and immediately and then, as seamlessly as possible, to go on with their speech.

Accepting and Refusing Points of Information

Mrs Hotchkiss: "...Obesity in this country is in part associated with the spread of American habits and American culture. Young people grow up on a diet of frankfurters and hamburgers..."

Mr Sproat (standing): "Point of Information!"

Mrs Hotchkiss: "I give way." (resuming her seat)

Mr Sproat "Is the speaker aware that Frankfurt and Hamburg are cities in Germany and not cities in America!" (resuming his seat)

Mrs Hotchkiss: (standing) "I understand that the food in question was first produced by German migrants in New York. In any case, it is from the United States that our young people now get their role models and their roll dependence: their addiction to bread rolls and fatty foods. These eating habits are turning them into..."

Miss Trinder (standing): "Point of Information!"

Mrs Hotchkiss: "No, thank you. They have become couch potatoes existing on a diet of chips with everything. They ..."

The first and last minutes of a speech are normally 'protected time' in which Points of Information are not allowed, just as they are not normally permissible during summations.

Ingenious Definitions and the Unanticipated Case

Cunning debaters sometimes interpret a subject in an unusual way in order to take their opponents by surprise. For instance, they may choose to assert that a 'flat tax' is a tax payable by residents of flats or that a ban on smoking extends to chimneys. This can often work, provided the team is able to sustain their version beyond the initial joke and to base a tenable case upon it. The other team, when faced with unexpected interpretations of this nature, may care to apply what is termed an '**even...if**', as illustrated in the Box below:

Dealing with the Unaccepted Definition

Mr Frobisher (second proposition: "...As my colleague has already pointed out, this debate is about the theatre. This is how the average sensible person would interpret the subject 'THAT WE SHOULD GO ON THE STAGE' and the opposition's claim that it is about stagecoaches in the Wild West is so bizarre that it could only have been dreamed up by highly intelligent people. However, even if today's debate were to be about stagecoaches – which it isn't – then certainly we would travel on that kind of stage. We would go in style with Wyatt Earp to Wyoming by way of the Windy City. We would journey in comfort and probably pack a pistol, maybe a Colt 45. So, yes, we would go on the stagecoach but, let us be very clear, that interpretation is just a figment of the opposition's imagination. In terms of this debate, they have taken the Deadwood Stage – they have been seeing too many old cowboy films. And, instead of watching Roy Rogers and Ronald Reagan, where should they have been? I'll tell you where. They should have been at the theatre..."

Harder to counter are the more thoughtful and entirely legitimate interpretations based upon a searching analysis of the key words in the motion. For instance, in opposing 'THAT THIS HOUSE BELIEVES THAT THE WAR ON TERROR CAN NEVER SUCCEED', the opposition may choose to say that they are entirely in agreement with the proposition that the War on Terror is a very bad thing, and they may even go as far as to say that it is extremely unlikely to succeed, but then they would add that there is, say, a 1 in 100 possibility that it might, and so the 'never' just cannot be justified. In such an instance, if the next proposition speaker

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had prepared further arguments condemning the War on Terror, those would need to be discarded, as its badness is now common ground between the two sides. The issue for the remainder of that debate has shifted to that word ‘never’, with the proposition required to show that it can definitely not ever succeed in any conceivable circumstances and the opposition called upon to persuade the audience that it just might.

The Impermissible Negative

The task of the Proposition is clear: they are to convince those present that the Motion is true – that, for example, the retirement age should be increased to 75. The task of the Opposition is to say that the Motion is not true – that, in this example, the retirement age should not be increased to 75. This gives them several options: they may say, for instance, that it should stay as it is, or that it should be raised to 74 (or to 73 or 72), or that it should be raised to, say, 74 for men and 72 (or 67) for women, or indeed that it should be reduced to 59.

However, what they should not set out to show is that, for example, there should not be such a thing as a ‘Retirement Age’ – for it is implicit in the Motion that there is such a thing. It may possibly be true that people should just go on working until they can afford to stop (or until they drop), but that is, in debating conventions, an impermissible negative.

Similarly, with a debate on the subject THAT STANLEY MATTHEWS WAS THE GREATEST FOOTBALLER EVER the Opposition may not say, for instance, that it is impossible to tell whether or not Stanley Matthews was the greatest footballer ever, or that the concept ‘greatest footballer ever’ has no meaning. While these contentions may well be correct, they are not valid Opposition cases. The Opposition is required to try to convince those present that, given that there is a ‘greatest footballer ever’, then, whoever it is, it is not Stanley Matthews. They may, for example, say that it is Pele or George Best. They may also say that, as Maradona and/or Tom Finney are greater footballers than Stanley Matthews, then – whether or not the ‘greatest’ was Maradona and/or Tom Finney and/or some other footballer (who need not be named) – it certainly could not be Stanley Matthews [see suggested subject 300, below, for a similar example].

As with the Proposition, the Opposition has to present a case, and that case needs to accept the bases of the motion, just as tennis players must accept the positions of the court and of the net, for otherwise it would be impossible for them to play a game together.

Matter, Manner and Method

Many competitions are judged on Style (or Manner), Content (or Matter), and Strategy (or Method).

Style is the way the arguments are presented to the audience. These are covered in detail in the ASC Speakers Guide and include:

- Good eye contact;
- Good use of notes (or speaking without notes) and definitely not reading directly from a pre-prepared speech;
- Variation in pace, volume and pitch: speaking slowly and pausing frequently;
- Effective use of gestures and body language; and

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- Speaking clearly so that everyone can hear all that is said (accents should certainly not be penalised, but mumbling and hesitation should be).

As every Club member knows, the key to effective delivery is control. Debaters – and speakers generally – should always listen carefully to themselves as they speak (even if they have heard it all before!).

Content is what is said: the arguments and the examples that support your side of the motion. (Although it may be judged on how the speech would read were it presented as an essay, care should be taken in using that explanation: the very last thing to encourage is a collection of essays that the speakers simply read out to the audience!) A good debater will:

- Provide a clear analysis of the motion;
- Use relevant arguments, logically explained;
- Employ good examples to back up the team's arguments;
- Provide arguments and evidence to show how the other side is wrong; and
- Use points of information effectively.

Content or Matter is about logic and relevance. Participants should test each argument to make sure that the conclusion flows directly from the premises (logic) and that it relates to the case which the team is trying to prove (relevance). Judges should reward clear definitions and relevant, logical arguments that are backed up with appropriate examples. As the debate develops, judges should be looking for more and more rebuttal and response from the speakers.

Matter and Mumbling

In recent years there has been a tendency in some competitions – including the World School Students Debating Contest and some national selection events – to judge on the basis of argument and rebuttal alone, taking virtually no account of presentation prowess. Even when equal marks are available for Matter and Manner, some judges now concentrate upon the latter so that the winning team evolves on the basis of 'What was said' giving no attention to 'How well it was said'. ASC members are well-positioned to restore the balance: the ideal is a good and well-presented debating speech.

Strategy is how the arguments are put together and how the available time is used to developing the most effective points and not wasted upon trivia and irrelevance. It involves:

- Using a clear structure for the speech;
- Effective teamwork – backing up (and not contradicting) one's partner;
- Identifying the key issues in the debate;
- Responding dynamically to the other side's arguments; and
- Allocating the most time to the most important issues, as they arise.

Strategy or Method allows judges to reward speakers who are able to structure their arguments well, use the time available to its maximum effect, focus on the main issues in the debate and work effectively as a team.

Teamwork, at its most basic, consists of (a) making clear who will do what [for instance: "I will deal with the underlying principles and my partner, Mrs Carrot, will handle some specific examples"], (b) doing it, and (c) making clear that this has been done. Ideally, there should be a clear division of work within the team with arguments flowing seamlessly from one to the other, and second speakers referring to what their opening speakers have covered. Clear teamwork can sometimes be a decisive criterion for judges faced with a very close contest.

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Not utilising the available time, or going on too long, will also lose strategy marks; in addition, a speaker who stops well before the allotted time is unlikely to have as good content as has one who uses every available second.

Appropriate humour should be rewarded: even the most serious subject can be treated humorously at certain points and the argument thus presented gains strength from the contrast. [Old debating witticism: “how a joke is told is manner, the content of the joke is matter, and its relevance to the debate relates to method!”]

A **brilliant debating speech** engages very effectively with the audience, is easy to follow, and contains intelligent argument backed-up by interesting and relevant examples. Such a speech is well-structured, demonstrating a strategic approach to analysis, and is very clearly embedded in the overall team case. Offering an innovative approach to the issues that is both interesting and well thought out, it responds well to the other team’s arguments and also displays an excellent command of points of information. Such a speech is delivered with appropriate passion and effective variation in tone, pace and volume: any notes that are used do not distract from the effectiveness of style.

Some Tips for Debaters

- Decide upon your overall team case first and, having done that, agree on what each speaker on your team is to cover;
- Give some attention to what your opponents may say and have your counter-arguments ready but do not use these ideas unless and until the other side actually makes the points that you are ready to rebut;
- Organise your material so the audience understands and remembers it – tell them what you are going to say, then say it, and then tell them what you have said;
- Write headings on cards in order to jog your memory, using as few words as possible;
- Practice in front of a mirror (or a video camera!) so that you can see (and hear) what the audience will see (and hear);
- **Do not read your speech.** Do not recite it from memory. Communicate effectively with the audience – your task is to persuade them and this is an interactive process;
- When speaking, relax as much as possible and avoid distracting mannerisms such as swaying or fiddling with the lectern;
- (Other than the opening Proposition speaker) Rebut the main points made by the other side – not necessarily only at the beginning of your speech;
- Try to move seamlessly from rebuttal into your own case and, if possible, compare your arguments (favourably) with those of your opponents throughout your speech
- Always relate what you are saying back to the topic – explain the relevance of each point that you make so that it is clear to the audience that everything you say supports your side of the subject;
- Never let a speech become a succession of points – have a clear plan and stick to it;
- Use interesting examples to support your arguments to which the audience may readily relate and which provide good evidence to support your arguments;
- Always end in a controlled and memorable manner, never giving the impression you have been thrown by the light or the bell; and
- When the other side is speaking, pass (short, clear) notes to the next speaker on your side – do not whisper to one another.

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Some Tips for Judges/Adjudicators (in competitive debates)

[Some of this section may be particularly relevant to Club members called upon to judge school debates.]

- Be armed with a pencil as well as at least two pens;
- Listen carefully, watch attentively, and be aware of audience reaction (but not unduly influenced by, say, home team enthusiasm);
- Make brief notes of the key arguments and of strengths and weaknesses in matter, manner and method;
- As each speech ends, comparing that speaker (in each category) with what has gone before, pencilling in your provisional marks;
- Be fully aware of parts of the debate that are more difficult to assess (such as Summaries and Points of Information) which must be rewarded or penalised appropriately;
- Once the debate has concluded, decide on who has won (your most important role) on the basis of which team was the more persuasive, taking account of what was said, how it was presented, and how well-organised the presentation was;
- If you are required to also select, for example, ‘the best individual speaker’, apply similar criteria, making your decision on the basis of overall contribution to the debate;
- Use your marks to help you come to your decision but, above all, make sure that your marks support your judgement (and not the reverse);
- Always remember that a debate is not a speech contest;
- Check your arithmetic; remember that there cannot be a tie; make the marks permanent once you are certain that they reflect your decision on who has won;
- If you are part of a judging panel, ensure through discussion that your views have equal weight (no more and no less) than those of your fellow judges;
- The presentation by an adjudicator of the panel’s verdict should be reasonably short, offer constructive feedback linked to particular examples from the debate, and be presented in a positive and encouraging manner;
- This presentation should contain the consensus impressions and advice of all of the judges (and should not include comments such as: “Dr Pebble considers that Enid McGregor waved her hands about too much but I disagree with him”);
- Adjudicators should always be approachable, confident, courteous and well-organised; time should be allowed for them to speak to the debaters individually if requested – although entering into another debate (especially if it is likely to become heated and emotional) over the result is definitely to be avoided.

Some Tips for Chairmen (and for the Speaker in a parliamentary debate)

You are the impresario *cum* referee and your tasks include:

- Seeing that everyone is seated in the correct place: proposition on your right, opposition on your left;
- Welcoming the audience
- Introducing the teams, the judges, the timekeepers (with a demonstration of the lights/bell) and anyone else with a specific role;
- Outlining the rules and announcing the motion;
- Ensuring that the debate runs according to the rules;
- Conducting the floor debate;

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- Conducting question time;
- Conducting the summations;
- Appointing tellers and conducting the vote;
- Announcing the result;
- Calling upon the general evaluator; and
- Closing the meeting.

You may also be the organiser...

Some Tips for Organisers

Deal effectively and imaginatively with all matters related to

- the venue
- the layout of the tables and chairs
- the subject for the debates
- the number of speakers
- whether to have summations and/or Points of Information
- whether to have a floor debate and, if so, for how long;
- the times for main speeches and summations;
- producing a programme
- the main speakers
- the Chairman;;
- the Timekeeper;
- the General Evaluator or
- the Judges; and, last but not least,
- the Audience.

Ensure that everything is set up correctly before the debate and remember that the above checklist is no more than a general guide and that many aspects may be altered to suit the time and facilities available and the preferences of Club members.

A Call to all Speakers Clubs

Contact your nearest university's Students Union and challenge them to a debate. Meet beforehand to agree on rules, conventions and arrangements for judging. Regard it – and trust that they too regard it – as a fun opportunity for friendly interaction [but go all out to beat them, of course]. When you've had one or two annual debates with the students, contact your local prison...¹

¹ Prison debating societies have been involved in friendly meetings and more formal contests for many years in Australia. Ancient sayings on such occasions include "He sees debating as a form of escape" and "She speaks with the courage of her convictions". The Long Bay Gaol team ('Joey Banks' after Captain Cook's botanist Sir Joseph Banks) has won the New South Wales competition more than once – never competing away from home.

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Selecting the Subject

Choosing an appropriate motion is crucial: it should be of interest to the audience and there needs to be clear scope for developing arguments both for and against. Some subjects are suited to some occasions and not to others. For instance, THAT CO-EDUCATION IS A MIXED BLESSING would probably be appropriate only for school students where this is an live issue, just as THAT BLACKPOOL IS THE LAST RESORT may have limited significance in, say, Cornwall or the Scottish Highlands.

Subjects such as THAT KARL MARX WAS A RED SQUARE or THAT CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS ARE DIVORCED FROM REALITY may (possibly) work well within University debating societies although humorous topics, along the lines of THAT WE WOULD RATHER BE WITTY THAN PRETTY, do not necessarily result in hilarious debates.

Debates directly related to the curriculum, such as THAT MACBETH WAS NOT TO BLAME or THAT APPEASING HITLER WAS UNFORGIVABLE may, if properly prepared for, be valuable for those studying such themes, as well as offering general practice in presentation and rebuttal.

Avoid truisms (for example: 'THAT IT MAY RAIN TOMORROW'), tautologies (e.g. 'THAT ALL BACHELORS ARE UNMARRIED MEN'), tight cases, with all the arguments on one side only (e.g. 'THAT CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE ILL-TREATED') and those necessitating specialist knowledge (e.g. 'THAT DIETHYLDITHIOCARBAMIC ACID 2-CHLORALLYL-ESTER SHOULD BE A NON-HAZARDOUS CHEMICAL').

As noted above, in parliamentary debates the motion is usually expressed in the form: THIS HOUSE BELIEVES THAT THERE SHOULD BE A TAX ON BACHELORS. Where there is any possibility of ambiguity (THAT READING IS OVER-RATED), attention should be given to whether the motion should be given in UPPER- or lower-case (thus clarifying that it is 'That reading is over-rated' as opposed to 'That Reading is over-rated').

THREE HUNDRED SUBJECTS FOR DEBATE

While good debates have been held on each of the motions listed below, Clubs are encouraged also to consider topical issues or to identify new themes – or to express old themes in original ways. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this list provide a basis for many great debates as well as a stimulus for concocting numerous other motions.

This list includes several additional subjects that have been added to the list – after being tried out in actual debates – since the original 2007 version of this Guide, and a number of subjects on the original list (e.g. related to the 'forthcoming' London Olympics) have been removed.

[Further suggestions may be found on websites such as www.debatatabase.com or www.britishdebate.com or in books such as *Competitive Debating* by Dan Neidle; *Pros & Cons: A Debater's Handbook* edited by Trevor Sather; and the Oxford Union's *Rough Guide To Debating* by Andy Kidd.]

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1. THAT THE AGE OF ORATORY IS DEAD
2. THAT WE SHOULD EXERCISE OUR RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT
3. THAT SOME TOPICS ARE INAPPROPRIATE FOR DEBATE
4. THAT ARRANGED MARRIAGES SHOULD BE OUTLAWED
5. THAT WE SHOULD PUBLISH AND BE DAMNED
6. THAT THE ASSASSINATION OF TYRANNICAL DICTATORS IS JUSTIFIED
7. THAT ASSISTED SUICIDE SHOULD BE LEGALISED
8. THAT PRISONERS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO VOTE
9. THAT BRITAIN IS A POLICE STATE.
10. THAT MAN-MADE GLOBAL WARMING IS A MYTH
11. THAT NO GOD EXISTS
12. THAT THE PRIORITY SHOULD BE BRITISH JOBS FOR BRITISH WORKERS
13. THAT ISRAEL AND PALESTINE SHOULD BE A SINGLE STATE
14. THAT THE DEFICIT MATTERS FAR LESS THAN WE ARE BEING TOLD
15. THAT THE BURKA SHOULD BE BANNED
16. THAT HUNG PARLIAMENTS ARE GOOD FOR DEMOCRACY
17. THAT TONY BLAIR SHOULD BE PUT ON TRIAL OVER IRAQ
18. THAT BRITAIN IS NO LONGER GREAT
19. THAT AFRICA IS TOO AID-RELIANT
20. THAT WE SUPPORT THE RIGHT TO STRIKE
21. THAT NOSTALGIA IS NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE
22. THAT MULTICULTURALISM IS THE BEST OF ALL WORLDS
23. THAT THE OLD JOKES ARE THE BEST
24. THAT THE EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT SHOULD BE REPLACED BY A UK BILL OF RIGHTS
25. THAT HEATHROW SHOULD GET ANOTHER RUNWAY
26. THAT CIVIL LIBERTIES SHOULD BE RESTRICTED IN THE INTEREST OF SECURITY
27. THAT ALL POLITICIANS ARE MUCH THE SAME
28. THAT CONTEMPORARY TECHNOLOGY BELONGS TO THE YOUNG
29. THAT ZERO-HOURS CONTRACTS SHOULD BE BANNED
30. THAT WE CANNOT AFFORD A WELFARE STATE
31. THAT SUPERMARKET SUNDAY TRADING SHOULD BE UNRESTRICTED
32. THAT ETHNIC ENCLAVES IN BRITISH CITIES SHOULD BE BROKEN UP
33. THAT WE NEED TRIDENT
34. THAT NUCLEAR POWER IS THE FUTURE OF ENERGY
35. THAT OUR ORGAN DONATION POLICY IS BRAINLESS

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36. THAT THE WORLD NEEDS ANOTHER EINSTEIN RATHER THAN ANOTHER SHAKESPEARE
37. THAT THERE SHOULD BE A RED LINE REGARDING CHEMICAL WARFARE
38. THAT THE UK SHOULD DABBLE LESS IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
39. THAT THE MEDIA DESERVES A BAD PRESS
40. THAT WE ARE STILL CONFINED BY OUR GENDER ROLES
41. THAT WE ARE ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE
42. THAT SOCIAL MEDIA IS ANTI-SOCIAL
43. THAT WE AFFIRM THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE
44. THAT THERE IS NOWT WRONG WITH SLANG, INNIT
45. THAT WIND TURBINES ARE A LOT OF HOT AIR
46. THAT THE WELSH LANGUAGE IS DEAD AND SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO REST IN PEACE
47. THAT LIFE SHOULD MEAN LIFE
48. THAT WE WOULD BOLDLY GO
49. THAT BRITAIN WOULD BE BETTER WERE LONDON NOT A FINANCIAL HUB
50. THAT ENGLAND AND WALES SHOULD BE GRANTED INDEPENDENCE FROM SCOTLAND
51. THAT AUSTERITY DOES NOT WORK
52. THAT WE HAVE COME TO THE END OF THE ROAD
53. THAT OXBRIDGE SHOULD TAKE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION TO INCREASE THE NUMBERS OF STUDENTS FROM POOR FAMILIES
54. THAT THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES IS MORE DEADLY THAN THE MALE
55. THAT THE BBC SHOULD BE FUNDED BY A RING-FENCED HOUSEHOLD TAX RATHER THAN THROUGH THE LICENCE FEE
56. THAT WE SHOULD ALL CARRY IDENTITY CARDS
57. THAT OLYMPIC GOLDS ARE OVER-VALUED
58. THAT JUNK FOOD SHOULD BE BANNED FROM SCHOOLS
59. THAT THE VOTING AGE SHOULD BE LOWERED TO 16
60. THAT COSMETIC SURGERY IS A RIP-OFF
61. THAT THE RAILWAYS SHOULD BE RE-NATIONALISED
62. THAT THERE SHOULD BE HARSHER SENTENCES FOR CELEBRITY CRIMINALS
63. THAT STATE SCHOOLS SHOULD BAN RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS
64. THAT MARRIAGE IS AN OUTDATED CONCEPT
65. THAT DEVELOPMENT AID SHOULD BE GIVEN ONLY TO DEMOCRACIES
66. THAT THE USE OF PERFORMANCE ENHANCING DRUGS IN SPORT SHOULD BE LEGALISED

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67. THAT THERE IS NO LONGER A NEED FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES
68. THAT NO-ONE HAS THE RIGHT TO NOT BE OFFENDED
69. THAT THERE SHOULD BE A QUOTA OF AT LEAST 40% FEMALE BOARD DIRECTORS FOR EVERY MAJOR COMPANY
70. THAT MUSIC IS OVER-RATED
71. THAT 21 YEARS SHOULD BE THE MINIMUM DRINKING AGE
72. THAT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO WORK IN THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN FOR FIVE YEARS AFTER GRADUATION
73. THAT THE TERMINALLY ILL SHOULD BE ALLOWED ACCESS TO UNAPPROVED EXPERIMENTAL MEDICATION
74. THAT SCHOOLS DO NOT PREPARE YOUNG PEOPLE FOR ADULT LIFE
75. THAT THE UK SHOULD APOLOGISE FOR COLONIALISM
76. THAT HATE SPEECH SHOULD BE A CRIME
77. THAT FREE TRADE HARMS DEVELOPING COUNTRIES MORE THAN IT HELPS THEM
78. THAT 80 IS THE NEW 50
79. THAT AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES SHOULD BE SUBSTANTIALLY DECREASED
80. THAT JERUSALEM SHOULD BECOME AN INDEPENDENT CITY
81. THAT BRITAIN IS NO LONGER A CARING SOCIETY
82. THAT INTERNET DATING IS THE WAY TO GO
83. THAT FRACKING SHOULD BE BANNED
84. THAT AGGRESSIVE TAX AVOIDANCE IS IMMORAL
85. THAT WE ARE NO LONGER A CHRISTIAN COUNTRY
86. THAT THE UK SHOULD BE AT THE HEART OF EUROPE
87. THAT ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA ARE RIDICULOUS
88. THAT BIG GAME HUNTING IS JUSTIFIABLE
89. THAT UK TEAMS SHOULD WITHDRAW FROM THE QATAR WORLD CUP
90. THAT CHILD BENEFITS SHOULD BE LIMITED TO TWO PER MOTHER
91. THAT THE UK NEEDS A WRITTEN CONSTITUTION
92. THAT THE BANKS ARE TO BLAME
93. THAT WE SHOULD SUPPORT A KURDISH STATE
94. THAT WE STAND BY JULIAN ASSANGE
95. THAT ELECTIONS TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS SHOULD BE BASED ON PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION
96. THAT THE MILITARY STRUGGLE AGAINST ISIS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED SOLELY BY MIDDLE EAST NATIONS
97. THAT WE SHOULD BE WILLING TO COMPROMISE OUR PRIVACY IN THE INTERESTS OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

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98. THAT COMMERCIAL SURROGACY IN POORER COUNTRIES IS EXPLOITATIVE
99. THAT WE SHOULD HAVE AN OPEN BORDERS POLICY FOR MIGRANTS
100. THAT LADS' MAGS DEGRADE WOMEN
101. THAT THE BRITISH PRESS REQUIRES TOUGHER REGULATION
102. THAT WIKILEAKS IS GOOD FOR DEMOCRACY
103. THAT OUR ONLINE ACTIVITIES SHOULD REMAIN PRIVATE
104. THAT CELEBRITIES SHOULD KEEP OUT OF POLITICS
105. THAT PEOPLE NEED PROTECTING FROM VIOLENT LYRICS, FILMS AND VIDEO GAMES
106. That the media are responsible for lowering the level of public debate
107. THAT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES TRANSCEND PARTY POLITICS
108. THAT ARTISTIC EXPRESSION SHOULD NEVER BE CENSORED
109. THAT THE STATE FUNDING OF THE ARTS IS ESSENTIAL TO A CIVILISED SOCIETY
110. THAT GREAT APES HAVE RIGHTS
111. THAT HAPPINESS IS THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT
112. That HUMOUR IS NO LAUGHING MATTER
113. THAT POP ARTISTS SHOULD BE JUDGED ON THEIR WORK AND NOT ON THEIR LIFESTYLE
114. THAT TOURISM BENEFITS THE WORLD
115. THAT WE DESERVE THE POLITICIANS THAT WE GET
116. THAT WE ARE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT
117. THAT FAME IS THE SPUR
118. THAT THE PLAY'S THE THING
119. THAT PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION DOES NOT ADD UP
120. THAT THE PAST IS ANOTHER COUNTRY
121. THAT DEMOCRACY SHOULD NEVER BE COMPROMISED FOR PROGRESS
122. THAT THE PLAYSTATION HAS DESTROYED THE PLAYGROUND
123. THAT STAYING AT HOME BROADENS THE MIND
124. THAT THERE IS NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS
125. THAT ESPIONAGE IS IMMORAL
126. THAT THE AGE OF CHIVALRY IS DEAD
127. THAT COPYRIGHT BENEFITS THE ARTS
128. THAT IT IS BEYOND A JOKE
129. THAT PROPERTY IS THEFT
130. THAT WE PREFER THE DOLLAR TO THE EURO
131. THAT THE SUN IS RISING IN THE EAST

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132. THAT VOTING IN GENERAL ELECTIONS SHOULD BE COMPULSORY
133. THAT THE MONARCHY HAS HAD ITS DAY
134. THAT WE SHOULD BE THANKFUL FOR TRADE UNIONS
135. THAT WE SHOULD SEND IN THE CLONES
136. THAT THE CARNIVAL IS OVER
137. THAT WE ARE READY TO GO INTO SPACE
138. THAT JUSTICE IS LITTLE MORE THAN REVENGE
139. THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS NEITHER
140. THAT MORALITY IS FOR OTHER PEOPLE
141. THAT WHISTLEBLOWERS ARE 21ST CENTURY HEROES
142. THAT RUSSIA SHOULD GET OUT OF UKRAINE AND THE CRIMEA
143. THAT WE SHOULD LINK TRADE TO HUMAN RIGHTS
144. THAT WE SHOULD LEGISLATE AGAINST VILIFICATION
145. THAT IT ISN'T CRICKET
146. THAT WE SHOULD ALL BE VEGETARIAN
147. THAT IT IS BETTER TO BE WANTED FOR MURDER THAN NOT TO BE
WANTED AT ALL
148. THAT TAIWAN IS A RENEGADE PROVINCE OF CHINA
149. THAT THE MAN IN THE STREET HAS DISAPPEARED
150. THAT PARENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO SMACK THEIR CHILDREN
151. THAT PUBLIC TRANSPORT SHOULD BE FREE
152. THAT SECRETS SHOULD BE KEPT
153. THAT WE NEED A NEW NATIONAL ANTHEM
154. THAT MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS HAVE FAR TOO MUCH
POWER
155. THAT OUR SPORTSPERSONS ARE POOR ROLE MODELS
156. THAT FIGHTING IS BETTER THAN LONELINESS
157. THAT WE SHOULD LIFT THE BAN ON COMMERCIAL WHALING
158. THAT WE HAVE NO TIME FOR CHESS
159. THAT WE PREFER ORGANIC FOOD
160. THAT THERE IS ONE LAW FOR THE RICH
161. THAT THE LOTTERY IS A FORCE FOR GOOD
162. THAT THE DEATH PENALTY SHOULD BE RESTORED
163. THAT THERE ARE NO UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS
164. THAT WE SHOULD BEAT THE BULLIES
165. THAT MONEY CORRUPTS SPORT
166. THAT WE SHOULD CLOSE THE ZOOS
167. THAT POP IS SLOP

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168. THAT GLOBAL WARMING IS A GREATER THREAT THAN TERRORISM
169. THAT THERE SHOULD BE MORE THAN ONE MONOPOLIES COMMISSION
170. THAT THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANISATION HAS HAD ITS DAY
171. THAT ALL SCHOOL STUDENTS SHOULD LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
172. THAT VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA SHOULD BE LEGALISED
173. THAT SPACE EXPLORATION IS A WASTE OF MONEY
174. THAT WE THANK GOD FOR AMERICA
175. THAT WE CANNOT AFFORD INTERNATIONAL AID
176. THAT THERE IS TOO MUCH VIOLENCE ON TELEVISION
177. THAT SOFT DRUGS SHOULD BE LEGALISED
178. THAT THERE SHOULD BE A RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS
179. THAT SANTA CLAUS IS A JUSTIFIABLE DECEPTION
180. THAT THE BRIDE SHOULD WEAR BLACK
181. THAT WE HAVE LOST OUR SENSE OF HUMOUR
182. THAT ALL CHILDREN SHOULD ATTEND THEIR LOCAL MAINTAINED SCHOOL
183. THAT THE ODDS ARE STACKED AGAINST US
184. THAT SMOKING SHOULD BE TOTALLY BANNED
185. THAT DECENT PEOPLE DO NOT HUNT
186. THAT TERRORISM IS NEVER JUSTIFIABLE
187. THAT EVERYONE SHOULD BE ON A DNA REGISTER
188. THAT THERE SHOULD BE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE
189. THAT REALITY TV HAS GONE TOO FAR
190. THAT WE ARE HAPPY TO EAT GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS
191. THAT PREGNANT GIRLS SHOULD BE OFFERED ABORTIONS WITHOUT PARENTAL CONSENT
192. THAT POLICE OFFICERS SHOULD ROUTINELY CARRY GUNS
193. THAT CRIMINAL TRIALS SHOULD BE TELEVISED
194. THAT IT IS NEVER JUSTIFIABLE TO EXECUTE CRIMINALS
195. THAT STRICTER PUNISHMENT IS THE ANSWER TO JUVENILE CRIME
196. THAT ENGLISH SHOULD BE THE EU'S SOLE WORKING LANGUAGE
197. THAT WE SHOULD BREAK THE LAW IN ORDER TO CHANGE IT
198. THAT FORMER COLONIAL POWERS SHOULD PAY REPARATIONS TO THEIR FORMER COLONIES
199. THAT THE COMMONWEALTH SHOULD BE ABOLISHED
200. THAT WE HAVE NO FAITH IN FAITH SCHOOLS
201. THAT FACTORY FARMING SHOULD BE BANNED

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202. THAT CULTURAL TREASURES SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN
203. THAT THE WAR ON TERROR CANNOT BE WON
204. THAT PEOPLE WITH DANGEROUS PERSONALITY DISORDERS SHOULD BE DETAINED
205. THAT DEVELOPED COUNTRIES SHOULD CANCEL THE POOREST NATIONS' DEBTS
206. THAT DEVOLUTION (*TO SCOTLAND/WALES/NORTHERN IRELAND*) IS TO BE REGRETTED
207. THAT THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SHOULD BE DISESTABLISHED
208. THAT BOXING SHOULD BE BANNED
209. THAT OUR GOVERNMENT SHOULD ACTIVELY PURSUE AN ETHICAL FOREIGN POLICY
210. THAT THE EU SHOULD HAVE A DIRECTLY ELECTED LEADER
211. THAT EXTREMIST POLITICAL PARTIES SHOULD BE BANNED
212. THAT SOCIALISM HAS HAD ITS DAY
213. THAT WE WOULD GO TO MARS
214. THAT LIBERALISM WENT OUT WITH BUTTONED BOOTS
215. THAT WE ARE ALL FEMINISTS NOW
216. THAT FLAT TAXES ARE THE FAIREST
217. THAT HIGHER EDUCATION SHOULD BE FUNDED THROUGH A TAX ON GRADUATES
218. THAT THE HOUSE OF LORDS SHOULD BECOME AN ENTIRELY ELECTED CHAMBER
219. THAT THERE ARE NO SUCH THINGS AS UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS
220. THAT MIGRATION SHOULD BE STRICTLY FOR THE BIRDS
221. THAT NATIONAL SERVICE SHOULD BE REINTRODUCED
222. THAT NATO SHOULD BE DISBANDED
223. THAT NURSERY EDUCATION SHOULD BE FREE AND UNIVERSALLY AVAILABLE
224. THAT WE REJECT ALL VIOLENCE
225. THAT DEFENDANTS' PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS SHOULD BE MADE KNOWN TO JURIES
226. THAT THE NHS SHOULD BE FULLY PRIVATISED
227. THAT MPS SHOULD BE BANNED FROM PURSUING REMUNERATED OUTSIDE INTERESTS
228. THAT REFERENDUMS COUNT FOR NOTHING
229. THAT ORGANISED RELIGIONS HAVE DONE MORE HARM THAN GOOD
230. THAT WE WOULD ENCOURAGE OUR CHILDREN TO GET A UNIVERSITY DEGREE

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231. THAT MEDICAL RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN STEM CELLS SHOULD BE PERMITTED
232. THAT THE BENEFITS OF TOURISM OUTWEIGH THE COSTS
233. THAT ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS SHOULD BE ABOLISHED
234. THAT THE RIGHT TO TRIAL BY JURY SHOULD BE RESTRICTED
235. THAT VETOES IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL SHOULD BE ABOLISHED
236. THAT IT IS BETTER TO PLANT A CABBAGE THAN A ROSE
237. THAT MANSIONS SHOULD BE TAXED
238. THAT THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY OUTWEIGHS THE FREEDOM TO REPORT
239. THAT TURKEY SHOULD BE WELCOMED INTO THE EUROPEAN UNION
240. THAT THERE SHOULD EQUAL PRIZE MONEY FOR SPORTSMEN AND SPORTSWOMEN
241. THAT GOVERNMENTS SHOULD NEVER NEGOTIATE WITH TERRORISTS
242. THAT SCIENCE HAS GONE TOO FAR
243. THAT EDUCATION AND TRAINING ARE AS DIFFERENT AS CHALKBOARDS AND CHEESEBOARDS
244. THAT LIFE IS TOO SHORT
245. THAT WE SHOULD SACRIFICE SOME CIVIL LIBERTIES IN THE INTERESTS OF SECURITY
246. THAT ATTENDING SCHOOL INTERRUPTS EDUCATION
247. THAT THE CONSUMER GETS A RAW DEAL
248. THAT THERE ARE FAIRIES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE GARDEN
249. THAT WE ARE BLINDED BY OUR BELIEFS
250. THAT RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IS A COP-OUT
251. THAT WE SHALL OVERCOME
252. THAT THE USA IS A FAILED SUPERSTATE
253. THAT ANYONE WHO GOES TO SEE A PSYCHIATRIST MUST BE CRAZY
254. THAT WE PREFER ROMANCE TO REALITY
255. THAT DENTAL TREATMENT SHOULD BE FREE
256. THAT ASTROLOGY IS HUMBUG
257. THAT OPPORTUNISM IS THE ONLY RATIONAL PHILOSOPHY
258. THAT FORMAL PRAYERS IN SCHOOLS SHOULD BE PROHIBITED
259. THAT ECONOMIC WELL-BEING IS A GREATER GOOD THAN LIBERTY
260. THAT THERE ARE MORE SNAKES THAN LADDERS
261. THAT THE UK NO LONGER NEEDS AN ARMY
262. THAT WE NO LONGER KNOW RIGHT FROM WRONG
263. THAT WE SHOULD GO BACK TO BASICS
264. THAT PARENTS KNOW BEST

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265. THAT OUR MOTORWAYS LEAD ONLY TO CHAOS
266. THAT THE CELTIC FRINGE IS THE LUNATIC FRINGE
267. THAT CELIBACY IS OUTMODED
268. THAT THERE SHOULD BE ONE NATIONAL POLICE SERVICE FOR THE UK
269. THAT A CONGESTION CHARGE SHOULD BE INTRODUCED IN [*OUR CITY*]
270. THAT THERE SHOULD BE A LEVY ON EVERY E-MAIL MESSAGE
271. THAT WE ARE PROUD TO BE POLITICALLY CORRECT
272. THAT HONG KONG SHOULD BECOME AN ORDINARY PART OF CHINA
273. THAT CRIME DOES NOT PAY
274. THAT IMPRISONMENT WORKS
275. THAT INTELLIGENT DESIGN IS AN UNINTELLIGENT FABRICATION
276. THAT HIV/AIDS IS MORE A PRODUCT OF POVERTY THAN OF PROMISCUITY
277. THAT ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE REAL THING
278. THAT THE MILITARY MIND IS OFFENSIVE
279. THAT BRITANNIA WAIVES THE RULES
280. THAT AMERICAN CULTURE IS AN OXYMORON
281. THAT THE WORLD IS FLAT
282. THAT WE SHOULD SEND A GUNBOAT
283. THAT AGE DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE SHOULD BE OUTLAWED
284. THAT PROSTITUTION SHOULD BE LEGALISED
285. THAT WE SHOULD LOOK BEFORE WE LEAP
286. THAT WE SHOULD TURN THE MUSIC DOWN
287. THAT THE UK SHOULD CEASE EXPORTING ARMS
288. THAT OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM IS FAILING OUR STUDENTS
289. THAT HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS
290. THAT ALL GOOD THINGS COME TO AN END
291. THAT THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE IMMORAL, ILLEGAL OR FATTENING
292. THAT MYSTICISM IS MADNESS
293. THAT THINGS FALL APART
294. THAT KNOWLEDGE IS POWER
295. THAT IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS
296. THAT WE HAVE KEPT THE FAITH
297. THAT WE HAVE TOO MUCH CHOICE
298. THAT IT'S ALL GOING PEAR-SHAPED
299. THAT PRESIDENT OBAMA HAS BEEN A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT
300. THAT CHURCHILL IS THE GREATEST BRITON

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Date: _____ Competition and Round: _____

Motion: _____

Proposition Team: _____ Opposition Team: _____

PROPOSITION (Names of Speakers)	Style/Manner	Content/Manner	Strategy/Method	TOTAL
First speaker	(40)	(40)	(20)	(100)
Second speaker	(40)	(40)	(20)	(100)
Third speaker (if any)	(40)	(40)	(20)	(100)

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Summation (if any)	(20)	(20)	(10)	(50)
TEAM TOTAL				

OPPOSITION (Names of Speakers)	Style/Manner	Content/Manner	Strategy/Method	TOTAL
First speaker	(40)	(40)	(20)	(100)
Second speaker	(40)	(40)	(20)	(100)

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Third speaker (if any)	(40)	(40)	(20)	(100)
Summation (if any)	(20)	(20)	(10)	(50)
TEAM TOTAL				

I judge that this debate has been won by the _____ by _____ points.
[NOTE: There has to be a winner: there cannot be a tie.] [Proposition/Opposition]

Name of Adjudicator: _____

Signature:

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Date: _____ Competition and Round: _____

Motion: _____

Proposer: _____ Opposer: _____

PROPOSER (Name of Speaker)	Style/Manner	Content/Manner	Strategy/Method	TOTAL
First speech	(20)	(20)	(10)	(50)
Second speech	(20)	(20)	(10)	(50)
TOTAL	(40)	(40)	(20)	(100)

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OPPOSER (Name of Speaker)	Style/Manner	Content/Manner	Strategy/Method	TOTAL
	(40)	(40)	(20)	(100)

I judge that this debate has been won by the _____ by _____ points.
[NOTE: There has to be a winner: there cannot be a tie.] [Proposer/Opposer]

Name of Adjudicator: _____

Signature: _____

NOTES FOR ADJUDICATORS FOR BOTH TEAM AND INDIVIDUAL DEBATES:

Style or **Manner** is the way the arguments are presented to the audience, including eye contact, use of notes (or speaking without notes), variation in pace, volume and pitch, effective use of gestures and clarity of speech (see the ASC Speakers Guide).

Content or **Matter** is what is said, focusing on logic and relevance; it includes clear analysis, pertinent arguments that are sensibly explained, good examples to support those arguments, effective rebuttal and using points of information effectively.

Strategy or **Method** is how the arguments are put together using all of the available time; it involves a clear structure for the speech, effective teamwork, identifying the key issues as they arise, and responding dynamically to the other side's arguments.

As an **adjudicatorial convention**, it is suggested that an 'average' speech be awarded a total score (out of 100) in the range of 40 to 60 and a speech that is 'excellent in all respects' be awarded a total score of around 90. Scores close to 100 should be avoided as the next speech may be even better!

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