



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
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Middle School Delegate Debate Guide

In debate, delegates must be prepared to make the most of their time whenever they are recognized. This document contains tips and procedures for use during parliamentary sessions.

Prior to Debate:

Check the docket and read the bills that will be in your committee as soon as possible, preparing speeches for each topic.

Being Recognized:

A delegate will raise his/her placard to be recognized. Whenever a delegate is given the floor to speak, he/she must first address the chair by stating his/her name, the school she/he represents, and then addressing the chair.

“John Doe, representing Ohio School, Madam (or Sir) Chair”

Non-Debatable Technical Questions:

When recognized to ask a technical question, a delegate must stand, address the chair, ask their question in a clear and loud voice, and remain standing to receive their answer. Delegates may not respond in any manner to the answer. Questions deemed debatable will be declared out of order by the chair and will immediately recognize the next question.

What is a technical question?

A technical question is a question of fact. Technical questions can be answered “yes,” “no,” or with evidence such as statistics and scientific research. The best technical questions are tailored to the issue, but some apply to most bills. These include:

“Where will you get funding?”

“Who will enforce this policy?”

What makes a question debatable?

Questions that assume facts not already demonstrated, that call for an opinion or assumption, or that otherwise seek to discuss any topic that is not bound by fact are debatable. Questions that use the word “why” are almost always debatable.

Vague examples include:

“Why will this solution work?”

“Wouldn’t another solution offer the same benefits?”

“Since *this* is good, isn’t *that* bad?”



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Pro/Con Debate:

During debate, delegates are recognized for one minute, and have several options for what they can do with their time. The chair will alternate speakers who are in opposition and speakers who are in favor. Once a delegate is recognized and has addressed the Chair, she/he may do one or two of the following:

- **Speak in favor or against the Bill**
- **Ask the authors to yield to a question (or series of questions)**

Speaking:

It is assumed that a delegate will speak when recognized. If a delegate wishes only to speak, he/she may do so after she/he has addressed the Chair.

Asking Questions:

Delegates may use the time they are allotted to ask the author questions. During Pro/Con debate questions may be debatable.

How do I ask questions during debate?

In order to ask the author a question (or series of questions) during pro/con debate after being recognized by the chair, a delegate must address the chair and ask, **“Will the author yield to a question (or series of questions)?”** The chair then asks the author if he/she will yield. If the author’s answer is yes, the delegate is then entitled to ask one or more questions. The author may say no.

May I interrupt the Author if she/he has answered my question?

Decorum and respect are always required, but if an Author has answered the question, the delegate who asked the question may thank the Authors to signify their satisfaction with the answer and then move on to the next question.

May I speak after I ask questions?

If a delegate wishes to speak after she/he asks the Author questions, she/he must state his/her intent when requesting that the Authors yield. This is done by saying **“John Doe, representing Commonwealth School, Madam (or Sir) Chair. Will the author yield to a question (or series of questions)? I reserve my right to speak afterward.”**

Motions & Amendments

Though an important part of the legislative process, no Motions or Amendments will be considered in order at YIG due to time constraints.