

Student Congress Judge Instructions

How to judge a Student Congress session at a WASDL tournament.

Washington Area Speech and Debate League

Event overview

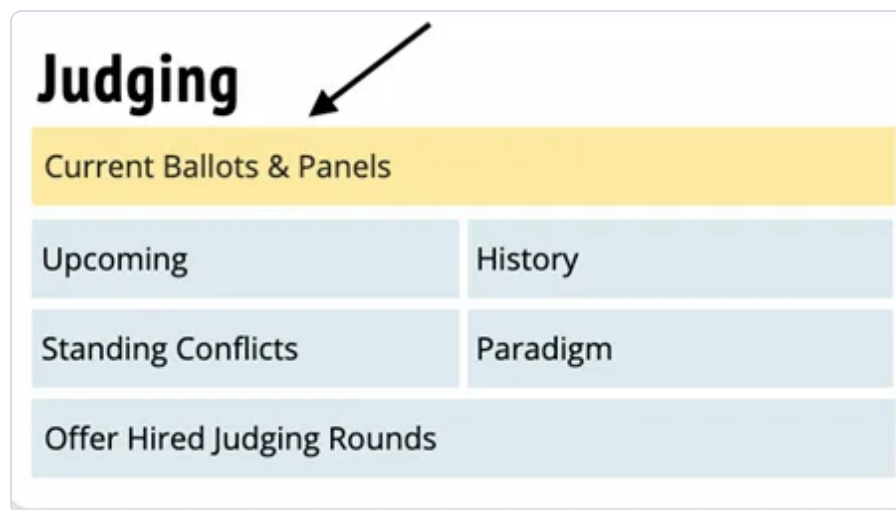
Student Congress simulates a legislative session where 12–25 students debate bills and resolutions. Students give speeches, ask questions, and vote on legislation. Students conduct business following Robert’s Rules of Order.

What you need

- A free [Tabroom](#) account (your coach can help).
- A Wi-Fi enabled device (laptop/tablet for comments).
- Be prepared to stay the entire day, but you won’t judge all sessions.

Assignments

- Check Tabroom before each session for your assignment.
- Please stay in the judges lounge in the event the tournament director needs to make a substitution.



Your assignments are under Judging → Current Ballots & Panels.

Judging

- Go to the room assigned in Tabroom.
- Log in to Tabroom and click “START” on your assignment.
- Silence your phone.

- You will be judging each student's speech only. The parliamentarian will judge questions, handling of questions, chamber business, and participation. You are only judging the speech itself.

Ballots

- Each speaker gets a separate window for each speech given with space for:
 - Legislation name (abbreviate if needed).
 - Speaker's position (AFF/NEG).
- Some students might not make a speech; they will not have a speech score.
- Unsure if the presiding officer is doing a great job? If the Parliamentarian (adult at the front) is not having to interfere to help them conduct the session, they are likely going to be in your top ranking and earning a score of 6.
- Write comments throughout the speech (see the scoring guide below).
- Set aside your personal bias (beliefs and opinions) and focus on judging criteria.
- Be kind in your comments. Do not comment on appearance or unrelated aspects.
- Score speeches 4–6 (4 = lowest, 6 = highest) based on the criteria below.
 - 2–3 reserved for wrong bill/side, very short, or offensive speeches.
- These scores are for NSDA points and feedback, not to determine the winner.

Room: WhiteH 208
CON SESSION 2
Adam Jacobi

Speeches
Rankings
Seating

Per-Speech Points
Select a speaker: 02 Yara Rahim- Yara Rahim

02 Yara Rahim: Yara Rahim
Presiding Officer this session
☒

New PO rating:
Presiding Officership

It's always helpful to give opening remarks regarding procedures, although I would recommend having a bulleted list of protocols you wish to cover, so you do not inadvertently miss something; you did seem a little disorganized. However, I really appreciate you sharing a Google Sheet with your speaking and questioning recency, so it is clear to your peers where they are in recognition.

Points for this period (1 - 6): 5
Save

A speech ballot. You fill out one for each speech, choosing the student from the drop-down. This example is for a presiding officer, so the Presiding Officer box is checked.

Ranking

- At the session's end, rank the top 8 speakers (1 = best, 8 = lowest).
- The Presiding Officer's performance (fairness, maintaining order) should be considered in ranking.
- Do not discuss scores or ranks with the other judge.
- Submit your ranks/scores. Once submitted, they are final. Please complete this as soon as possible.
- You will need to confirm scores twice in Tabroom.

Room: WhiteH 208

CON SESSION 2

Adam Jacobi

Speeches

Rankings

Seating

We are all influenced by implicit bias, or the stereotypes that unconsciously affect our decisions. When judging, our implicit biases negatively impact students who are traditionally marginalized and disenfranchised. Before writing comments or making a decision, please take a moment to reflect on any biases that may impact your decision-making process.

Please read carefully:

- **Scorers rank contestants 1st through 8th ONLY (do not rank beyond 8).**
- Students must be recognized and give a speech, or preside to be ranked.
- Include the presiding officer (PO) within your ranking **if they were worthy** by asking how the PO's overall performance compares to that of a speaker based on your expectations for either? If the PO was **not worthy of ranking**, you **must explain in your written comments for the PO**; if you do not offer a non-rank explanation, tournament staff will contact you to either provide an explanation or re-rank the round including the PO.
- **Congressional Debate Judging Guide.**
- **Legislation docket packet**
- **Tournament schedule**
- **Tournament Congress rules**

Blanks will be auto-filled with a 9

Recency	Entry Code	PO	Speech Points	Average	Rank
7	12 Paloma Delgado		6, 6	6	
14	10 Ye-Rin Cho		6, 6	6	
16	02 Yara Rahim		6, 6	6	
11	01 Aaliyah Habib	PO	6, 5, 6	5.67	
4	06 Abdullah Farooqi		5, 6	5.5	

Final rankings. Make sure to click the green button to finalize your scores!

After the session

- You can continue writing comments on ballots until the awards ceremony.
- Do not give students verbal feedback. They will receive ballots with your comments later.

Need help?

- The parliamentarian can assist with technical issues and stop the session for breaks.

Scoring and feedback guide

Use the following chart to consider scores for speeches and how to write feedback.

Speaker ballot

Suggested language

Overall consideration

Scorers will rank the top 8 students participating in the Chamber, which includes the Presiding Officer.

Scorers will score each speech with a rating of 1 to 6.

- Do not let your own opinion or point of view influence your evaluation of the speeches. You're evaluating their arguments.
- Understand that the rating of 1 to 6 is just on the speech; however the ranking is their holistic performance in the Chamber (1 to 8).
- When rating the speech, 6 is the highest; whereas when ranking the top 8 in the Chamber, 1 is the highest.

Delivery

Does the speaker manifest poise, style, coherency, and a seriousness of purpose in presenting the speech?

- To improve, your goal is to be able to do your speech extemporaneously and to not just read your speech.
- You can improve your presence in the Chamber by making your movement natural.
- You can improve your presence in the Chamber by directly addressing the questioner (as well as addressing the one answering questions).

Originality of thought

Does the speech advance debate or merely rehash old points? Is there a new twist or angle to the argument? Does the speaker take into account arguments made by previous speakers?

- To improve, try to bring new arguments into the debate in order to avoid "rehash".
- Try to avoid repetitive arguments. You can do this by extending the argument.
- You can improve your arguments by directly addressing a fellow Representative's arguments (called "clash").

Speaker ballot**Suggested language**

Organization and unity of speech

Does the speech ramble or does it develop? Does the speech move from point to point in an orderly way?

- You can improve your arguments by having a good attention grabbing device in the opening that links to your arguments.
- You can improve your arguments if you have structured claims, reasons supporting those claims, and evidence supporting them.

Evidence and logical basis for statements

Does the speaker state references to books, magazines, newspapers, or credible web sites? Number of citations of sources.

- You can improve your arguments by having strong, proper citations.
- Your speech can be improved by having more sources.

Overall impact and impression

- Never comment on a person's clothes or appearance.
 - Do not comment on students with speech or physical impairment.
 - If, in your opinion, they spoke too fast, explain that to be persuasive, natural speech is best.
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