

1AC-CESSIBILITY

Speech and Debate and Disability Judge Training Guidelines

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What is Disability?

- According to prominent disability rights advocate and lawyer, Lydia X. Z. Brown, "People are disabled when they have physical or mental differences or impairments while living in a society where their bodies and ways of thinking, communicating, sensing, or moving are not treated as 'normal' or 'natural.'"
- Many disabilities are not outwardly detectable.

The Purpose of Speech and Debate

- Speech and debate is an extracurricular, academic activity.
- The heart of speech and debate is education: learning about communication, practicing argumentation, receiving topic-specific education, and broadening collegiate opportunities.
- Learning is at the center of the activity and, consequently, certain technical aspects that may be impacted by disability are not a reason to score someone lower

General Guidance for Judging More Equitably

- Foster inclusiveness in the ways you can. If a participant has a question, request, or concern they want to share, take the time to listen, and see what you can do to facilitate it.
- There are dozens of components to consider while judging, if a disability directly impacts one factor, value other factors in its place.
- Do not let noticeable medical equipment distract you or negatively impact your judgment.
- Do not let disabilities/medical conditions relating to speech (Tourette's, stutters, etc.) negatively impact your judgment.
- Be mindful that participants may need a short break mid-round to manage ongoing medical conditions.
- If a participant arrives late to a round, please be understanding of the difficulties of navigating unfamiliar, potentially inaccessible environments.

Advice for Judging Speech

- Not all participants have the same capacity for mobility.
- Blocking is the planned movement of the body and a common part of many speeches but not imperative to include.
- In interpretation events, people can use a combination of blocking and character voices to differentiate "who" is speaking.
- Many people use transitional phrases and walk from one part of the room to another to mark when a new segment of the speech begins.
- Please do not allow simple or non-existent blocking to negatively impact your judgment.
- Blocking is one of several factors to consider: volume, thematic development, argumentation, character depth, intonation, and more.

Advice for Judging Debate

- Spreading is the practice of reading arguments and evidence in a debate extremely fast with the goal of fitting a greater number of arguments into a speech.
- Spreading is not possible for many people for a variety of reasons including being D/deaf or hard of hearing and having an auditory processing disorder or cognitive disability.
- Please support participants in the decision not to spread.
- Please do not perceive this decision as a request for the debate to be "easier."
- Non-spreading debates are just as intellectually valuable. In some ways, they may be more sincere due to the proportionally more constrained selection of arguments.

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As a judge, you influence a participant's evaluation, outcomes, and experience, making it important to combat internal biases like ableism.

1AC is a community organization dedicated to making speech and debate more accessible for disabled participants.