

Guide for Running A Tournament (Debate or Speech)

The following is a breakdown of most aspects that you will need to consider or include for hosting a speech or debate tournament. It is broken down into three main sections: Part I: Things to do before the tournament, Part II: Things to do day of the tournament and Part III: Things to do after the tournament. It is a pretty detailed list; don't be scared, running a tournament is certainly a manageable task!

Part I: Things To Do and Consider Before the Tournament

Invitations

- This should be a short document (anywhere from one to approximately four pages) that includes the information for your tournament
- Included should be:
 - The name of the tournament
 - Who is hosting the tournament
 - Ex. your school
 - The date
 - Who the target audience is
 - Ex. Speech tournament for Edmonton Senior High Students only
 - Where it is being hosted
 - Address of your school, and where to go once you arrive
 - A broken down schedule of events
 - When is registration, briefings, round 1, lunch, etc.
 - Cost
 - Ex. \$20/speaker or \$45/team
 - How to pay fees
 - Cheque only? Cash accepted? Payment required for no-shows? One cheque per school or individual payments from students?
 - Who should the cheques be made out to?
 - Style
 - Will it be prepared from one of the topics, or will it be impromptu?
 - Any relevant information about how the results will be determined
 - Ex. will it be win/loss then speaker points? Will it be magic wand style?
 - Ex. will there be final rounds held that day?
 - Volunteer/Judging Requirements
 - Ex. One judge required per 2 students
 - Will students be allowed to participate if their judge does not show up?
 - Contact information for the host school
 - Email address, phone number

- A School Registration Form
 - Space on the form for:
 - School registering
 - Contact/Coaches information
 - Phone Number of Contact/Coach
 - Email address of Contact/Coach
 - Debate
 - Teams – name of each debater
 - Beginner or Open status
 - Their judges name and contact information
 - Speech
 - Name of each student
 - Which category they are competing in
 - Their judges name and contact information

Registration

- This can often be done via email from the School Registration Form that you include in the Invitation
- You need to keep track of every student that is registered for your tournament, and which school they attend. This is important for setting up your stats for the programs, and estimating how many people will be attending.

Budget

- Establishing a budget is very important for hosting a tournament. You will need to know if your school will be helping cover the cost of the tournament, or if funds generated from registration will fund the tournament.
- One portion often forgotten about is the space itself. You need to take into consideration rental of the space (ex. who will pay for custodial staff? Who will open the building?)
- Important parts of the budget:
 - Revenue:
 - Registration fees from competitors
 - Registration fees from no-shows
 - Donations
 - Expenditures:
 - Parking?
 - Rental space
 - Printing of packages, ballots, registration, stats, etc.
 - Food
 - Breakfast? – tea, coffee, muffins, etc.
 - Lunch? – sandwiches, chips, juice, etc.
 - Equipment

- Pens, overhead sheets, etc.
 - Thank you gifts
 - Awards
 - Medals, plaques, certificates, etc.
- Tips for working with a budget
 - Food is one area that you can really get good deals on
 - Frequently, if you have a letter on school letterhead saying you are hosting a school related event (give details like when, benefits, etc.) you can get quite good deals on food
 - Ex. grocery stores, 50% discount on fruit, 10% on juice, etc.
 - Ex. pizza places, free upgrade in size (pay for medium, get large)
 - The biggest thing is to ask. Some places may not be able to give discounts, but several can, and you can choose your respective food offerings from this.
 - Also if your school has a cafeteria, it is usually pretty reasonable to order your food through them.
 - Make sure you don't spend more than you are going to make! This is especially important if your school can't give you a buffer or donation of funds.

Food

- Determine how many meals you need to serve
 - Will it be breakfast, lunch, and dinner? – This is determined by the length of your tournament usually
 - Typically most Saturday, one day, tournaments serve breakfast and lunch
 - You will likely need to serve all the competitors, your judges, your volunteers (i.e. times people, runners, etc.), and your coaches
 - Make sure you have enough food for all of them!
- Determine the type of food you will serve
 - Please note, the ADSA has a policy against serving food with peanuts or nuts. Please keep this in consideration when planning your meals
- Breakfast:
 - Tea and Coffee – usually a must
 - Will you purchase this from Starbucks, or will you make the tea or coffee? Remember you will need tea bags, sugar, milk, cups, and stir sticks
 - Ideas for breakfast foods:
 - Cinnamon buns
 - Muffins
 - Pastries
 - Bagels

- You will probably need to also buy jam, margarine, and/or cream cheese, possibly have a toaster?
- You will also need knives
- Ideas for lunch:
 - Pizza
 - Subs/sandwiches
 - It is usually cheaper to order platters of sandwiches from a grocery store than to order from a chain sandwich shop
 - Pasta

Ballots

-

Briefings

- Make sure that you have a person or people assigned to provide the briefing day of
- More information about briefings is Part II

Volunteers

- Volunteers are especially helpful for running a tournament. The number of volunteers varies from tournament to tournament in terms of your resources.
- Sometimes you can have enough volunteers to have a timekeeper in each room that can then run that rooms ballot to the tabs room, eliminating the need for a runner
- Other times, you will need one or two people to go around to collect ballots (runners) if you do not have timekeepers.
- You will also need volunteers to run your stats. Usually two people are enough.

Packages for Judges, Competitors, and Volunteers

-

Part II: Things to do Day of the Tournament

Check in of Judges, Volunteers and Competitors (Day of Registration)

- You should have a few of tables set up with volunteers to check in your judges, volunteers, and competitors
 - Have a list pre-printed out with everyone that you are expecting
 - Highlight or check off people as they check in with you

- It is handy to have the three different types check in at three different tables to avoid congestion
 - If you are hosting a larger sized tournament, it may also be helpful to have the type of participant (Ex. Beginner or Senior debater) check in at separate tables too
- Your volunteers should make note of any “extra” people that are checking in, and inform the host of these changes
 - This is particularly important if you pre-slate judges, or have extra teams showing up
- Your volunteers should also make note of any “no-shows” and inform the host of these changes
 - Again, this is important if you pre-slate judges, or have teams that have not shown up
 - Ask the coach from that school if they know about their students absence – they may have invaluable information
- Here you should hand out a copy of the schedule for the day, and relevant packages. There will be a section on what to include in this package listed in Part I. There should be a package for each one of these types of participants
 - Judges
 - Debaters/Speakers
 - Volunteers

Briefings

-

Reminder of Things You Will Need for Day of

- Extra pens/pencils
 - Judges are always in need of pens/pencils to fill out their ballots and make notes
- Extra paper
 - Also handy for judges and volunteers, and making last minutes notes
- Computers for Stats
 - Will they use their own laptop? Or will you need a login for them to access your schools network?
- Computer, data projector and screen for briefings, rounds, etc.
 - Not necessarily required, but it is nice to be able to display round information especially, so people can easily check where they are going
 - You may also use an overhead projector and screen