

Canadian National Debate Style Guide



Canadian National Style Guide

Canadian National Style is a type of debate inspired by the style of debate used at the World Schools Debating Championships. National Style is Worlds Style with two person teams instead of the usual three. Each of the speakers is given one constructive speech, and each team is given a reply speech delivered as the last two speeches of the debate.

The team that is in favor of the motion is called the Proposition, and the team against the resolution is the Opposition. All of the constructive speeches are given equal amounts of time. The reply speech is given by the first speaker on each of the respective teams. All debates in Canadian National Style are values debates. All motions are prefaced with the words "This House" referring to a generic government institution (not necessarily Canada). All debaters can address the speaker (Mr./Mrs. Speaker), the chair (Mr/Madam Chair) or the audience Ladies and Gentlemen.

Senior High Canadian National Style

	Sr. High Beginner	Sr. High Open
1 st Proposition Constructive	8 min	8 min
1 st Opposition Constructive	8 min	8 min
2 nd Proposition Constructive	8 min	8 min
2 nd Opposition Constructive	8 min	8 min
Reply Speech by 1 st Opposition	4 min	4 min
Reply Speech by 1 st Proposition	4 min	4 min

(2 Person Teams)

Bilingual Canadian National Style

	Sr. High Beginner	Sr. High Open
1 st Proposition Constructive in French (Definitions in both languages)	8 min	8 min
1 st Opposition Constructive in French	8 min	8 min
2 nd Proposition Constructive in French	8 min	8 min
2 nd Opposition Constructive in French	8 min	8 min
Reply Speech by 1 st Opposition in English	4 min	4 min
Reply Speech by 1 st Proposition in	4 min	4 min

(2 Person Teams)

1 st Proposition (Sr. Beg – 6 min, Sr. Open – 8 min)	1 st Opposition (Sr. Beg – 6 min, Sr. Open – 8 min)	2 nd Proposition (Sr. Beg – 6 min, Sr. Open – 8 min)	2 nd Opposition (Sr. Beg – 6 min, Sr. Open – 8 min)	Opposition Reply Speech (1 st Opposition) (4 min)	Proposition Reply Speech (1 st Proposition) (4 min)
Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Both reply speeches summarize their position and point out the basic flaws of the opposition.	
Definitions	If necessary, challenge definitions	Show unity with Caseline	Show unity with Caseline		
Theme/Case line	Theme/Case line	Clash with Opposition arguments	Clash with Proposition arguments	No new arguments can be introduced although new evidence (examples, logic etc.) is allowed.	
Model (If Needed)	Clash with Proposition arguments	Additional arguments to support resolution	Further arguments against resolution	Explain why your team should win and the other team should lose. Remind the judges of your arguments. Tell the judges why they should believe your arguments even after the other team's attack.	
Arguments in support of resolution	If necessary- counter model, otherwise arguments against	Conclusion	Conclusion	Explain why the judges should not listen to the other team.	
Conclusion	Conclusion			Review critical evidence.	

1st PROPOSITION SPEECH

The first speech should contain the following specific elements:

1. Introduction
2. Definitions
3. Model (If used)
4. Theme/Case line
5. Proposition Arguments
6. Conclusion

In the first proposition speech over eighty five percent of the speech should be reserved for the constructive matter. The first proposition usually develops two constructive points in their speech giving each point equal time. For example in an eight minute speech:

- The first minute would contain the introduction and definitions
- The next three minutes would present the first constructive argument
- The following three minutes would present the second constructive argument
- Last thirty seconds would summarize and conclude the arguments.

Introductions

Introductions can be as simple as “Mr. Speaker” and as complex as greeting all the members of the room, or just as effective is to grab the judge’s attention by starting the debate with some witty and pertinent information.

Definition and Model

Canadian National Style does not allow squirreling of the motion (that is taking the debate out of the context in which it is supposed to be debate in). The test for definitions is “would an average person walking in off the street see the motion and agree with your definitions”. In addition to definitions it is important to, when necessary, propose a model. A model is an extension of the definitions that aims to add increased clarity to the motion. The model answers the four W’s of the debate. Who, What, When, Where. A good model creates more context and makes the debate cleaner by removing much of the debate from the implementing of a policy to the actual policy itself. The model must be fully explained in the first speech. An example of a model for the resolution This House would impose a carbon tax would be:

1. The government of Canada impose a \$40 dollar tax on each ton of carbon that companies produce
2. The money collected will be directed back in the form of subsidies and grants to companies that are investing in green energy and technology
3. The tax will increase at a rate of five dollars each year
4. The tax will come into affect in the year 2010

Case Split and Case Line

The case line and split are both elements taken directly from Worlds Style debate. The case split can encompass a few different ideas. A case split is simply how the arguments are divided between the two speakers. The first, and most basic case split is just to inform the judges when each of the individual three to four arguments are going to be presented. The second, and preferred manner of presenting a split is to develop two themes. The first speech deals with the first theme, in which two separate arguments would be presented. The second speech deals with the second speech where the last of the arguments would be put forward. For example, in the resolution “This House would legalize all drugs” the case split could be presented as follows:

“The two themes we are going to be talking about in this debate are: 1st Drugs in Society and 2nd the Developing World. The first theme will be exemplified explained in my speech, while the second theme in my partners. Under the theme of the developed world we have two arguments: Freedom of Choice and Harm Reduction.”

A Case line is the central point idea that your case is going to prove. In essence it is your thesis statement.

1st OPPOSITION SPEECH

The first opposition contains elements specific to National Style:

1. Introduction
2. Counter Model (if necessary)
3. Outline "the split"
4. If necessary, attack definitions
5. Opposition team's theme / caseline
6. Clash with Proposition arguments
7. Explain arguments for opposing resolution
8. Conclusion

In the first opposition speech seventy five percent of the speech should be reserved for the constructive matter. The first proposition usually develops two constructive points in their speech, giving each equal time. For example in an eight minute speech:

- The first two minutes would be used for refutation and rebuilding
- The next three minutes would be used for the first constructive argument
- The next two minutes and thirty seconds would be used for the second constructive argument
- Last thirty seconds would be used for a short summary and conclusion

Present Counter Models

A counter model is when the opposition team agrees with the goal of the resolution but believes that the goal can be reached or met in a more effective way. The negative team's job is to fully outline this model in the first speech. In the resolution concerning a carbon tax, the opposition could present a counter model and propose the use of a cap and trade system for carbon emission. This would be fully acceptable.

2nd PROPOSITION SPEECH

The second proposition has fewer, yet equally, as important roles. At the end of this speech the proposition constructive case is over and no new constructive arguments/contentions may be introduced. It is customary for the 2nd proposition to only introduce a single new argument into the debate.

1. Introduction
2. Clash with points made by Opposition
3. Outline team's case approach
4. Further Proposition Arguments
5. Conclusion

During the second proposition's speech about thirty five - forty percent of the speech should be refutation and the rest is reserved for construction. For example in an eight minute speech:

- The first thirty seconds would be used for the introduction
- The next three minutes for refutation of the opposition and rebuilding
- The next four minutes for construction of a single new argument
- The final thirty seconds for the conclusion

2nd OPPOSITION SPEECH

The second opposition's speech is the last constructive speech of the debate. National Style is designed so that as you progress through the debate there is less and less constructive matter presented. During the last opposition constructive speech the elements are the same as the second proposition.

1. Introduction
2. Continue attack on Proposition
3. Outline team's case approach
4. Further arguments against resolution
5. Conclusion

The second opposition's speech has about fifty to sixty percent refutation and the rest is reserved for construction. It is good practice in a debate to only introduce a single argument in the second speech. For example in an eight minute speech:

- The first thirty seconds is used for an introduction
- The next four minutes would be used for refutation
- The next three minutes would be used for the last constructive point
- The final thirty seconds to conclude the opposition side of the debate

THE REPLY SPEECHES

After the constructive speeches are concluded, both the proposition and the opposition teams get a final reply speech. The reply speech is the final place where each team presents their case of the judges. However, distinct from the constructive speeches the reply does not contain any new constructive arguments. Reply speeches, are given by the first speaker from each team. Reply speeches occur in reverse order – the opposition replies before the proposition. The opposition team therefore has two consecutive speeches: the second opposition speech, followed by the opposition reply speech.

Reply speeches are not 'more of the same' – they are not merely a continuation of the second speeches. The aim of reply speeches are to give each team the opportunity to consolidate their ideas and review the debate, in order to present the debate in the most favourable light for each side.

The reply speeches should be different from the other four speeches in the debate. By the time the reply speeches are delivered, the debate is essentially concluded. The goal of the reply speech therefore, is not so much to win the argument, as it is to step back and explain how your team won the debate. You can emphasize the reasons that your team won, and you can constructively criticize your opponents' approach, explaining why they lost.

The simplest approach is to spend approximately half of your reply speech discussing your opposition's case, and approximately half discussing your own. Of course, this does not mean giving an even-handed appraisal of the cases – naturally, you will analytically criticize your opposition's case as you summarize it, and emphasize the strengths of your own case. Ideally, when you summarize your case, you will show how it answered the questions or problems posed by your opponents.

Instead of looking at the specific arguments that have been presented by both sides a reply speech looks at the overall themes within the debate. Offering analysis as to why each of the themes falls on your respective side of the debate.

Look for specific reasons that your opposition may have lost the debate. For example, your opposition may have established criteria that it has failed to meet, or promised to support a model that has not been mentioned since the first speaker. Similarly, your opposition may have forgotten to rebut one of your arguments – you should keep track of this, because it can be a significant point in your favour.

POINTS OF INFORMATION

Points of Information, also known as POIs for short, are used in Worlds Style, plus a variety of other debating forums. Essentially, a POI is a question or statement that one makes while someone is giving a speech as a means of gaining a tactical advantage.

It is expected that every speaker offers and accepts POIs during the round. POIs are only allowed during the constructive speeches, and not during the first and last minutes of these speeches (this is called "protected time"). During the round, the moderator will bang the desk after one minute has elapsed to signal that POIs are now allowed, and again with one minute remaining in a speech, to signal that time is once again protected. Points of information should be short and to the point.

To offer a Point of Information, a debater may stand silently, possibly extending an arm. A debater may also simply say "on a point of information", or "on that point". The speaker has control over whether to accept the point. One may not continue with their point of information, unless the floor is yielded by the speaker. The speaker may do one of several things:

- a) reject the point briefly, perhaps by saying something like "no thank you" or "not at this time". The debater who stood on the point will sit down. It is also acceptable for a debater to politely wave down the speaker without verbally rejecting it and disrupting his/her speech.
- b) accept the point, allow the point of information to be asked, and then proceed to address the point. A speaker may address the point briefly and move on, choose to merge and answer what they were going to say, or state that they will deal with this later on (in which case be sure you do!)
- c) say something like "just a second", or "when I finish this point", and then yield the floor when they have finished their sentence or thought.

It is expected that each debater will accept at least two POI's during his/her speeches. Each debater on the opposing team should offer, at least, two POI's to the debater delivering the speech. Adjudicators are instructed to penalize teams if the lower limits are not attained! How well a debater handles themselves in the rough and tumble of offering and accepting POI's is key in this style of debate.