

Karl Popper Format of Debate

The Karl Popper Debate format focuses on relevant and often deeply divisive propositions, emphasizing the development of critical thinking skills, and tolerance for differing viewpoints. To facilitate these goals, debaters work together in teams of three, and must research both sides of each issue. Each team is given the opportunity to offer arguments and direct questions to the opposing team. Judges then offer constructive feedback, commenting on logical flaws, insufficient evidence, or arguments that debaters may have overlooked.

**The resolution of our debate is MASS EDUCATION IS A LEVELLING SYSTEM. Roles will be assigned in the beginning of the event.*

** We do understand that it is almost impossible to prepare full-fledged speeches in 20 minutes that will be given to you. We just hope to hear your opinions, so you can continue discussing the topic with us. Don't worry! (:*

Basic Terms

Resolution: the opinion about which two teams argue. A suggestion that is offered for consideration or acceptance.

Affirmative team: agrees with the resolution.

Negative team: disagrees with the resolution or tries to convince the judges that the affirmative team has a wrong interpretation of the proposition.

Rebuttal: explains why one team disagrees with the other team. These are statements (questions) claiming that some proposition is untrue or incorrect.

Moderator: is in charge of discipline and formal conduct of the debates.

Judges: decide the winner.



The Karl Popper Debate Format

1. The debate begins with a moderator who will give a welcoming speech and announce the resolution. His/Her role is to control the time and make sure that debaters follow the discipline.
2. The debate is composed of ten parts. Six of these consist of speeches – that is, uninterrupted presentations by a designated speaker. The remaining four consist of cross examination – that is, a series of questions and answers involving one speaker from each side.

SPEAKER	TIME
Affirmative Speaker 1	6 minutes
Negative Speaker 3 & Affirm. Speaker 1	3 minutes (rebuttal/cross-questioning)
Negative Speaker 1	6 minutes

Affirmative Speaker 3 & Neg. Speaker 1	3 minutes (rebuttal/cross-questioning)
Affirmative Speaker 2	6 minutes
Negative Speaker 1 & Affirm. Speaker 2	3 minutes (rebuttal/cross questioning)
Negative Speaker 2	6 minutes
Affirmative Speaker 1 & Neg. Speaker 2	3 minutes (rebuttal/cross questioning)
Affirmative Speaker 3	5 minutes
Negative Speaker 3	5 minutes

3. Affirmative Constructive (1A) In this speech, the affirmative team is expected to offer its complete argument *in favor of the resolution*. Although later affirmative speakers may repeat points and expand on them later in the debate, the first affirmative speaker must present the entirety of his or her team’s case, including whatever criteria or definitions the team views as instrumental.
4. First Negative Cross-Examination The two debaters are expected to face the audience (as opposed to each other). *The negative debater is expected to ask questions rather than make speeches. The affirmative debater is expected to answer these questions; he or she should not make speeches or ask questions in return.* The affirmative debater may make concessions during this cross-examination, but it is incumbent upon the negative team to capitalize on these concessions in the speech that immediately follows. Team members should not assist their teammates by offering suggestions or by answering questions on their behalf. During the cross-examination period, only the examiner may ask questions and only the speaker may answer them. No spoken communication between either the examiner, or the speaker and his or her teammates, is allowed.
5. Negative Constructive (1N) Like the affirmative team in its constructive, *the negative team is expected to offer a complete argument against the affirmative’s position.* The affirmative’s definition, if not challenged at this point, should stand. Similarly, if the negative does not offer competing criteria, it is assumed that the criteria articulated by the affirmative team will govern the round. Finally, the negative team must challenge the affirmative’s arguments; otherwise, it will be assumed that these arguments are acceptable.
6. First Affirmative Cross-Examination The rules of procedure for the “First Negative Cross-Examination” also apply here.
7. First Affirmative Rebuttal (2A) The affirmative speaker has two tasks in this speech. *First, he or she must outline their refutations of the negative arguments. Second, he or she must respond to the refutations made by the negative team (that is, the negative’s objections to the affirmative case).* If the affirmative speaker does not refute a given point in the negative case, then the point stands; if the affirmative speaker does not respond to a particular negative objection, then the objection is conceded. New evidence for existing arguments may be presented.
8. Second Negative Cross-Examination The rules of procedure outlined above, under “First Negative CrossExamination” also apply here.

9. First Negative Rebuttal (2N) As with the affirmative rebuttal described above, the negative speaker has a dual task: *first, he or she must respond to the refutations made by the affirmative, and second, he or she should continue to attack the affirmative case.* At this point in the debate, the negative speaker may start to draw the judge's attention to points that have been dropped. That is, he or she will indicate items to which affirmative has not responded. Such a dropped point is treated as a concession made by the affirmative team. New evidence for existing arguments may be presented.
10. Second Affirmative Cross-Examination The rules of procedure outlined above, under "First Negative Cross Examination," also apply here. 5
11. Second Affirmative Rebuttal (3A) The task of the affirmative speaker in this speech is reactive. He or she should renew refutations that have not been addressed adequately. Usually, this means pointing out flaws in the negative rebuttal. At this point, most good debaters will deliberately let some points drop and will focus the judge's attention on the key issues in the round. The speaker may or may not instruct the judge; that is, the speaker may or may not articulate a standard of judgment for the round. New evidence for existing arguments may be presented.
12. Second Negative Rebuttal (3N) In essence, the second negative rebuttal is similar to the second affirmative rebuttal. Judges should be especially wary of speakers introducing new arguments at this point since the affirmative team has no chance to respond, so a new argument is especially unfair. The judge should ignore any new arguments that are introduced.

The Role of Judges

Team of judges consists of 3 students. Judges decision should be based on the content of the debate. The content of the debate includes the substantive arguments presented in a debate along with the supporting evidence used to support them. *As long as the speakers communicate their ideas clearly, it does not matter if they used sheets of paper instead of note cards, or if they read parts of the speeches.* Naturally, the style of speaking affects the ability to persuade. However, though it is more persuasive if speakers do not read their speeches, they should not be marked down heavily unless it impinges on the speakers' ability to convey their arguments clearly and persuasively to the audience. Structure is generally more important than communication style, as it determines whether the speakers presented clear arguments. A good question for judges to ask themselves is: At the end of the debate, was the audience left with a clear impression of the team's arguments? Judges should make their decision on which team won or lost the debate based on the performance of the team as a whole.



Rules During Karl Popper Debate

1. No research is permitted. Once the debate begins, the participants may not conduct research via the Internet, nor through electronic or other means. *Additional: we will give about 20 minutes to discuss the topic with the team and prepare your speeches. During this time, you are allowed to use any sources you want, but do it wisely and carefully!*

2. No outside assistance is permitted. No outside person(s) may conduct research during the debate and provide information directly or indirectly to the debaters. Debaters, however, are allowed to consult whatever research materials they have brought with them to the debate.

3. Debaters should be able to provide sources for direct citations. When debaters refer to any public information, they should be prepared to provide, upon request, complete source documentation to the opposing team and to the judge. A team's documentation of cited material must be complete enough for the opposing team and the judge to locate the information on their own. Ordinarily, such documentation would include the name of an author (if 3 any), the name and date of a publication (and a page number, if available), or the URL of a Web site. *Additional: since you don't have a lot of time to do your research and to cover all necessary materials we will not pay much attention on citations, however, be sure that you use only credible sources!*

4. Debaters should practice intellectual honesty. Students should cite arguments and statistics truthfully, and never fabricate sources or data.

5. Debate should be approached as a team activity. Each debate team is composed of three individuals who will speak in the roles they announce at the start of the debate. Debaters may change their role in the debate from round to round. *Additional: we will have only one round of debate, so during it you cannot change the roles that will be assigned to you.*