

Ontario Engineering
Competition
2010

UNIVERSITY OF
Waterloo
FACULTY OF **ENGINEERING**

Parliamentary Debates Outline

Rules

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Competition Format

In the preliminary round, each team will take part in four different debates, each against a different opponent. The four teams with the highest point totals upon the completion of this round will earn a place in the semi-finals. The winners of the semi-finals will advance to the finals.

Rules

The OEC Rules regarding the preparation and procedure of parliamentary debates are provided below. Please read these rules *carefully* prior to the competition.

Briefing

At the beginning of each round, all competitors will meet in the Briefing Room to receive the resolution and find out whether they are representing the Government or the Opposition and who they will be debating against. A coin toss will determine which team represents the Government and which team represents the Opposition in each pairing.

Preparation Time & Late Arrivals

The resolution will be revealed at the start of the debate. Teams will have fifteen (15) minutes to prepare their initial arguments. The Government will be given the task of preparing an initial argument defending and arguing for the resolution. The Opposition will be given the task of preparing an initial argument refuting and arguing against the resolution.

If a team arrives late to the debate, without a valid reason, their preparation time will be reduced by the amount of time they are late. If they arrive after the scheduled starting time of the speeches, without a valid reason, they will forfeit the debate and automatically be assigned a loss. The debaters may present their reason to the speaker of the house who will rule "valid reason", or "invalid reason."

The Debate

In the house, the Government shall sit on the speaker's right with the Opposition on the speaker's left.

The debates will have the following format:

Prime Minister	5 minutes
Member of the Opposition	5 minutes
Member of the Government	5 minutes
Leader of the Opposition	7 minutes (includes 2 minute rebuttal)
Prime Minister	2 minute rebuttal
Total	24 minutes

Any debater exceeding the time limit will be granted fifteen (15) seconds grace to finish their sentence after which they must sit down.

Debaters must address all arguments to the speaker and must refer to all persons in the third party. For example, a debater must not directly address an opponent and state, "Your argument is ridiculous because ..." but must directly address the Speaker and state, "Mr. (or Madam) Speaker, the Prime Minister's argument is ridiculous because ..."

If a Point of Order or Point of Privilege is raised (Points of Information are not allowed), the Speaker stops the debate and the time clock, the debater who was speaking sits down, and the debater raising the Point of Privilege stands and explains the point in 10-15 seconds. The Speaker will issue a ruling on the point indicating "point well taken", "point not well taken", or "point taken under advisement" which trusts the judges to decide whether or not the point was well taken. The Speaker may inform the judges of the severity of the point for marking purposes.

Points of Order or Points of Privilege raised on very minor technical issues are discouraged. Any team raising excessive unnecessary points will be penalized.

Scoring

Each debater on the team is graded out of a total of fifty (50) points for a combined maximum total of one hundred (100) points per team. In the event of a tie, the debate is awarded to the Government. The team scores will remain confidential.

In the event of a tie between two or more teams at the end of the preliminary round, the following OEC rules will be used to determine the winner(s):

1. The highest judge's score and lowest judge's score of the tied teams awarded during the preliminary rounds will be deleted and the total points will be recalculated. The team(s) with the corrected highest total points will be placed higher.
2. If the tie is still not broken and the tied teams debated each other during the preliminary rounds, then the Government of that debate will be placed higher ONLY if they won that debate.
3. If the tie is still not broken, the tie will be broken by a coin toss.

Debaters will be penalized for any Points of Order or Privilege "well taken" against them during the debate. The amount of the penalty is dependent on the severity of the offense and is at the discretion of the judges.

Debaters exceeding their time limit during the debate will be assessed a deduction by the judges. Debaters who use significantly less than the allotted time will not be assessed a timing penalty; however, it will likely affect their scoring in accordance with the marking scheme.

Debate Content

Guidelines for Defining the Resolution

The Prime Minister must define the resolution and state the contention of the debate during the opening speech.

- **The definition of the resolution must be debatable.** The Prime Minister may not define truistic or tautological case. A truism is something that is generally accepted to be true (i.e. the space race accelerated research into rocket design). A tautology is something that is by definition true (i.e. professional engineers are licensed to practice the profession of engineering).
- **The definition of the resolution must be fair.** The Prime Minister may define a resolution that puts the Government, but not the Opposition, at a disadvantage. For example, the definition "The earth is round" is an unfair definition that is difficult or impossible to oppose. On the other hand, the definition "The earth is flat" is a fair definition since it puts the Government, not the Opposition, at a disadvantage.
- **The definition of the resolution must not force the Opposition into an immoral position.** For example, the definition "Innocent people must be protected against engineering mistakes" would force the Opposition to argue that innocent people should not be protected, which, by most people, would be considered an immoral position.
- **The resolution must be interpreted at face value (i.e. literally).** In other words, the debates may not be squirreled.
- **The definition of the resolution should be tasteful.** This is left to the discretion of the debaters.
- **The definitions of the resolution are to be based on the present "here and now".** The Government may not change the setting of the debate to another time and/or location. This is also known as "time-place setting".

If the Prime Minister does not follow these guidelines when defining the resolution, the Member of the Opposition may redefine it in a debatable manner that meets the above guidelines.

Allowed References

Debaters may only refer to things that are likely within the knowledge base of an intelligent, reasonably informed person. In other words, debaters may not utilize "specific knowledge" in an argument. For example, an intelligent, reasonably informed person is expected to know that Professional Engineers Ontario regulates the profession of engineering in Ontario, but the same person isn't expected to know that Professional Engineers Ontario spent "x" dollars regulating the profession of engineering last year.

Rebuttals

No new arguments may be presented during the rebuttals. This does not prohibit debaters from bringing up new evidence in support of or counter to a previously raised point as long as the new evidence is brought up in direct response to something that has already been mentioned.

Heckling

Heckling is allowed if it is short and witty. Speeches from the floor will not be allowed during the preliminary or semi-final rounds. Speeches from the floor will be allowed after the final debate at the discretion of the speaker and after the judges have left to evaluate the debate.

Points of Order, Privilege and Information

Points of Order will be allowed for the following:

- the debater's time has elapsed
- unprofessional or offensive behavior or language
- failure to meet the guidelines for definition of the resolution (i.e. definition of a truistic or tautological case, an unfair case, a case which forces the opposition into an immoral position, a "squirreled" case, or a case using time-place setting)
- interpretation of a resolution not at face value
- speaking to the opposition instead of the speaker
- the argument relies on specific knowledge not presented to the house
- presenting new arguments or facts during the rebuttals

Points of Privilege will be allowed for the following:

- personal slandering or insults
- direct misquotation by the person speaking

Points of Information will not be allowed.