

First Speaker Debate Guide: Everything You Need to Know

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SUMMARY

The video provides a comprehensive guide for first speakers in World Style Debate (WSDC) and Asian Parliamentary (AP) tournaments, detailing their roles and responsibilities. It emphasizes the importance of structure in their speeches, including setup, defining terms, presenting arguments, and preempting opposition points.

- *The first speaker (Prime Minister or Leader of Opposition) sets the debate's framework and defines key terms.*
- *A strong introduction should present a problem or context related to the motion.*
- *The setup involves asking specific questions that clarify the debate's parameters and the team's burden.*
- *The burden is a clear statement of what the team needs to prove to win, linked directly to the motion type.*
- *Argumentation should be limited to one or two well-developed arguments to maintain clarity and depth.*
- *Preemptive rebuttals can strengthen the first speaker's position, especially in longer speeches.*
- *The Leader of Opposition should focus on rebutting the Prime Minister's claims and can agree with some of their setup if accurate.*
- *First speakers are encouraged to adopt a rigid structure initially, allowing for flexibility as they gain experience.*

Hello. So, I'm going to make a very short video series, uh I mean four videos that go over what speakers should do as first [music] speaker, second speaker, third speaker, and reply speaker in WSDC and >> [music] >> AP tournaments. So, basically over the role fulfillment and the [music] structure of all of those speaker roles in uh World Style Debate and Asian Parliamentary Debate.

>> [music] >> So, today the first video that we'll do will go over the first speaker, which makes sense, right? Uh I want to talk to you about what the first speaker should have in their speech, what that structure might look like, [music] um what I would focus on in terms of sort of how they prove your first speaker, and just overall tips on how to be a great first speaker. Uh but before we do that, I want to go into what is first speaker. So, first speaker, or some people call them the prime minister if they're in the proposition side, or leader of opposition when they're when they are in the opposite side, is [music] basically the person who sets up the debate and the rules of the debate, right? So, whenever you get a debate motion, that motion will have will be a certain motion type, right? It might be a motion about creating a policy, [music] or it might be an actor motion that is talking about the incentives of a certain actor, or it might be a regrets motion where you are retrospectively looking at something that happened in the past and saying whether we regret it or we don't regret it.

Either or, the motion comes out and you read the motion, and there are terms in the motion, and that motion has a certain motion type. Uh the first speaker is [music] the person that delivers the judge and says the judge what this motion should really be about, what the different keywords in the motion look like, or what the

definition or the model of those keywords should [music] be. Um, so the the Prime Minister does a lot of the heavy work when it comes to this.

Uh, the Leader of Opposition does this as well, but the Prime Minister and the Leader of Opposition speeches are very different from each other. So, I'm going to talk about them slightly separately and what their role fulfillments are. So, let's first talk about the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister will begin their speech I I I would highly recommend they begin their speech with a fun little intro um that sets up what they think about the debate [music] or that lays out a problem that's happening in the status quo um >> [music] >> before they go into their setup. And setup is just an overall term for the talking about your definitions, talking about what the framing of the status quo or the counterfactual is, talking about your uh model, talking about [music] the stakeholders, uh all of these things.

Setup is just the word that encompasses all [music] of this. Um, there are many ways to do setup, uh many structures to doing setup, but I prefer a very sort of flexible form of doing your setup >> [music] >> as the first speaker, as the Prime Minister or the Opponent. So, usually for setup, I would usually have the first speaker to ask two or three or four questions of setup. [music] And these questions would be specific questions uh depending on the burden of the motion. For example, if there was a policy motion that you were given, one of your questions of setup would be [music] what is our model? Or if you were the opposition and you wanted to create a model as well, your question could be what is our counter model?

Okay? Or say this is an actor motion, [music] one of your questions could be what are the incentives of blank actor? Or what does blank actor look like? >> [music] >> Right? Um or if it's a motion about preferring different worlds, like this prefers prefers this world to that world, then one of your questions could be, what does blank world look like? Right? But usually I like to frame the setup with multiple [music] questions. So again, two or three or four questions, depending on how many questions are necessary to set up that debate and depending on [music] the type of debate motion that you are doing.

So, that is your setup. Your setup would define the terms of the the motion. It would set up the model if there needs to be one. It would set up what the stakeholders look like. It would set up what these worlds look like or what the status quo looks like or what the counterfactual looks like. And it creates an image and gives us a sense of what this debate is. After the setup, the speaker should give their burden.

The burden that their team has to prove to win the debate. >> [music] >> So, a burden is basically a line or a sentence or two sentences that says what [music] the that team needs to do in order to win the debate. And the burden is always linked directly to the motion type. Right? So, if it is a actor motion, the burden of any team is to prove that their policy or their action or their whatever is in the incentives and to the benefit of that actor in that motion. Or if it's a policy motion, the proposition's burden would be to prove [music] that their policy is not only justified but just beneficial to the society, basically. Um >> [music] >> it really depends on what type of policy motion it is, but overall, the burdens [music] are directly linked to the type of motion that you're doing. By the way, one last thing, uh your setup questions can be separate from your burden question, which is what is our burden in this debate or what is our burden? Or you could just link them together if you want to have your

your question of what is our burden as part of the setup questions, you could say [music] we have four questions to set up in this debate and have the question about the burden being the last question [music] of setup. Um either or is fine. It's really not a huge difference [music] either way.

After you say your burden, you'll now start to [music] give your arguments. All right? So the Prime Minister is likely to have either one or two arguments. I'm not a big fan of having three arguments as Prime Minister. [music] It makes it so that you underdevelop each of your arguments even when there is a you are doing an 8-minute speech. All right? Um especially when you are in the junior level and you're doing an 4-minute speech, definitely do not have more than two arguments. But in a lot of uh debate strategies, you can actually just run one argument. Even in the 8-minute speech, where you can run one mega argument. Or >> [music] >> uh in the 4-minute speech, I'll more recommend the having just one argument, but you can also run two. So the the Prime Minister will say one argument or they'll say two [music] arguments uh and then they'll go through uh all the the structure of argumentation, which I will not talk about in this uh video because that would take way too long. There I have other videos that talk about the structure of argumentation. I'm sure the video editor will make that over there.

The last thing the first speaker can do after their argumentation is do some preemptions. So a preemption is when you predict what the other team is going to say and then you preemptively respond to what they are going to say. That's always like a [music] reputation, but a reputation where you are guessing what they will say. This I would only recommend for speeches that are maybe 6 minutes or 8 minutes or 7 minutes long, ones that are longer because why would you waste time doing preemptive rebuttals if you [music] have very little time in your speech. But in an 8-minute speech, uh preemptive rebuttals would be actually quite strong because it shows that you can predict what the other team will say and attack what they will say before they even say it. Um which makes you seem >> [music] >> I would say like you understand the debate very well. So, uh the last thing that a speaker can do as a Prime Minister [music] is preemptive rebuttals or preemption.

And then have a conclusion that sort of mirrors our introduction or mirrors how your speech was able to align and prove the burden of the debate. And then your Prime Minister speech is up. The Leader of Opposition speech is a little bit different. And so, I'm not going to talk about the ways in which it is similar. Uh you still should have an introduction. You still should have your setup. And you still should have your burden and such. But the the main difference is that Leader of Opposition also does setup, but there are a lot of pieces of setup that you won't have to do because the government might have already done it and might have set up those terms or set up those ideas in ways that are quite charitable that you agree with.

>> [music] >> So, if you agree with some of the setup that's already been given by the Prime Minister, then there's no need to [music] to say that again and waste time inside your speech. What I will probably do is to say, "Uh they defined blah is this. We we generally agree with that." All right? But you want to do setup in the areas in which you disagree, where you don't think that the framing or the analysis in [music] the setup from side government is correct. Or if government or proposition side didn't understand the debate very well, right?

Then you want to explain within your setup what they didn't understand >> [music] >> and why the debate

looks different or the burden of the debate is different [music] than what government side said. Um, furthermore, opposition side can also have a counter model, or they can have a counter narrative. They can have basically, >> [music] >> um, use their fiat, or use the their side to say what they stand for, right? And so that's really important in the setup of the leader of the opposition.

I usually like to hold rebuttals until after the setup. So, um, the leader of opposition, as I said earlier, should do their introduction, do their points of setup, and then do their rebuttals. Um, [music] the leader of opposition doesn't have to focus a lot on rebuttals, and I don't think that that's important, because the [music] that is really the wheelhouse of the deputy speaker, or the second speaker. And a lot of argumentation is very strong when it comes from the first speaker. So, you should focus more on argumentation. However, if you do do rebuttals, and you should probably do rebuttals as the leader of opposition, strategic rebuttals are quite strong, and pointing out ways in which the proposition's model is lacking, or ways in which they >> [music] >> did not fully understand what the burden of the debate should be, or that they don't understand what this debate should look like. And those rebuttals are really strong, >> [music] >> and some really quick and concise rebuttals that attack the validity, the truth of government's main [music] claims. I think those rebuttals are fine as well. But try to it like if it was an 8-minute speech, I would probably try to have less than 2 minutes of rebuttals, [music] maybe even like a minute.

Um, then you move on to your substantive, um, material. >> [music] >> And that's the same thing as side government. Um, substantive material from side opposition, so argumentation, should probably just be one or two arguments. Never three. Three is overkill. If you have three arguments, it means that they're underdeveloped. That's just what it means, [music] right? Um or it means that you talk two times faster than every other human being. Oh, but that's also a bad idea, right? Cuz nobody could understand you.

>> [music] >> And so, that's the gist of the leader opposition. You'll do the um you'll do the argumentation, and then you could do a preemption, but that doesn't really make sense cuz you're not really preempting anything because the uh proposition speaker has already said two arguments, >> [music] >> and you can maybe preempt what the third speaker would say, but it probably is um not there's really no point there. You could just If you have rebuttals, you could just integrate it into the rebuttal [music] section of your speech.

Um so, that's the Prime Minister and the Leader Opposition. Prime Minister and the Leader Opposition are a little bit different. The Leader Opposition has a chance to rebut and attack the arguments of Prime Minister, and Prime Minister is mostly just setting up the terms of the debate, setting up what the debate looks like, [music] and giving the argumentation um that they're for their case, [music] right? And one other big difference between Prime Minister and Leader Opposition is that the Leader Opposition's introduction can be a little bit more different. It could be a little bit more aggressive on what Prime Minister said. And the Leader Opposition has to be a little bit more flexible. I would say Prime Minister is hard because of the fact that since you are the first speaker to speak in the debate, it's really difficult to get a sense of what that debate is going to look like and what the debate should be about. Uh so, that's the difficulty of Prime Minister. But the difficulty of Leader Opposition is [music] in noticing what is deficient and what is wrong with the Prime Minister's speech. And what is wrong especially with how they set up the debate. Uh did they understand the motion correctly, or did

they define things incorrectly? Why is it fight incorrectly, and how does that impact the round, and why does it make it so that proposition should probably lose?

Being able to explain these things and be flexible as leader of opposition is quite difficult. And so, [music] that's the difficulty of leader of opposition. Also, first speakers are eligible in the WSDC and the AP formats to be reply speakers as well. So, they will do their first speaker speech, and then [music] uh prepare the reply speech after they've done their first speaker speech. In in WSDC debate or AP debate, I would highly recommend first speakers to be the reply speakers and not the deputy speakers.

The reason why is because the first speakers have a lot more time to prepare the reply speech than the deputy speakers do. Um however, there are cases where there's just like a really really smart, very strong debater, uh and and those debaters can do second and reply, and [music] that actually can be very strong and is a really good strategy to leverage and to use the strengths of a one really really strong debater um as second and reply.

But, first speaker is, I would say, the speaker role that you everybody should start by learning. Not everyone needs to be a first speaker, and not everyone likes being a first speaker, but it is the core of what debate is about, and you [music] cannot be a good whip speaker, you cannot be a good deputy speaker, or second speaker, or third speaker without learning first speaker first. Because first speaker is the person or the the role that allows um people to learn what debate actually is, or what debates look like, and what burdens are.

Um and I would highly recommend that when you try out [music] first speaker, that you try to create a really rigid structure first, right? There are some first speakers that have [music] very flowy structures, where the the speech style is more conversational and that is a great style, but I would not recommend starting [music] with that style. I would only recommend learning that style after you've learned how to rigidly structure your first speaker speech with very [music] clear signposting on each part of your speech. So, before you say the setup, you can say, "Uh we have blank questions of setup for this debate."

>> [music] >> or "Three questions of the setup." and then go into your questions. And then if you have three questions, you would say, "One, blah blah blah blah blah. Two, blah blah blah blah blah." Same thing for the argumentation. Before you move on to your argumentation, you can [music] say, "Um moving on to argumentation." and then give the title of the first argument. All right. So, a very rigid structure when you first start learning first speaker and then if you want to, you can become a little bit more conversational.

[music] You don't have to. You can still thrive as a rigid, very clear first speaker [music] with a very rigid structure and that's totally fine to do that for the rest of your debating >> [music] >> career and journey. Um or you can transition if you'd like to. So, that's first speaker in a nutshell. This is a bit of a long video, but it's um I would say I think it's a really good overview on what the first speaker is, how you approach this the speech, and uh basically what you need to focus on.

All right. Thanks for watching the video and if you want to, you can move on to the video about the second speaker, the deputy speaker.