

Rules for NZ Young Farmers Debates

All debaters must be financial members of the NZYF Club for which they are debating at the time of each debate.

1. Each team shall consist of three speakers.
2. Responsibilities of competing teams:
 - a. **The home team shall:**
 - select the Topic and advise the away team not less than 21 days prior to the proposed debate date.
 - provide the venue,
 - arrange 2 of the 3 adjudicator's, provide a chairman and marking sheets,
 - arrange the timekeeper, timing device and time sheet.
 - b. **The away team shall:**
 - decide to affirm or negate the subject given by the home team and advise them not less than 14 days prior to the proposed date for the debate
 - provide an adjudicator
 - forward a copy of the result sheet to NZYF National Office..
3. Speaking times shall be 3 - 4 minutes for each speaker except that the leaders in reply shall speak for 3 minutes. Material presented outside the time limit will not be considered by the adjudicator(s).
4. Timing shall be by means of bells, as follows: 1 minute to go: 1 ring of bell: expiry of speaking time: 2 bell rings

Timing commences from the moment the speaker first starts communicating with the audience, verbally or otherwise.

Time taken by points of order shall not be included as speaking time.

5. No new material shall be presented by leaders during their reply.
6. The NZYF Debating Score Sheet shall be used by the Adjudicators.(1 for each team to each adjudicator)
7. Interjections from the audience and teams shall only be allowed if agreed by both teams. No interjections shall be allowed during leaders replies.
8. Points of order for breaches of these rules will be ruled upon by the Chairman whose ruling shall be final. A point of misrepresentation shall not constitute a point of order but the Chairman may allow a statement from a member of a team at the conclusion of the speech during which the alleged misrepresentation took place.
9. Debates are to be conducted in a seemly manner; bad language and unseemly behaviour is to be penalised by the adjudicators.
10. A team unable or unwilling to debate at the agreed time and place for the debate, or which is unwilling to agree to a time or place for the debate, automatically loses by default.

Chairman's Duties

Prior to the Debate:

- A. Ensure, not later than 10 days prior to the proposed date for the debate, that the wording of the topic and the side each team takes, and the date, time and place arranged for the debate are clearly understood by the teams.
- B. Ensure the timekeeper has the necessary bell and timing equipment and is aware of the time, date and place of the debate.
- C. Ensure that the adjudicators are aware of the time, date and place for the debate.
- D. Obtain sufficient copies of the NZYF Score Sheets for the adjudicators

At the Debate:

- A. Ensure the adjudicators are seated in a suitable position to see and hear the debate, have score sheets and have been informed of the names of the teams and the wording of the moot.
- B. Ensure water and glasses are provided for the debaters.
- C. Ensure that the bell is easily heard from the debaters' speaking position.
- D. Welcome the teams, adjudicators and audience.
- E. Read the rules for the debate, including the timing requirements.
- F. Announce the teams and name the members
- G. Ascertain the teams' wishes regarding interjections and announce the resulting ruling.
- H. Read the wording of the topic to be debated.
- I. Ask if there are any questions from the debaters or adjudicators.
- J. Introduce each speaker in turn, ensuring the adjudicators are ready before doing so.
- K. Before the Leaders' replies, announce that interjections are not now permitted.
- L. When the Chief Adjudicator is ready, introduce him/her to the audience.
- M. At the conclusion of the Chief Adjudicator's remarks, call upon the leader of the team to propose a vote of thanks, to be followed by the leader of the winning team.
- N. Ensure that adjudicators, and time-keepers have been thanked and recognised for their participation.
- O. Ensure the away team knows they have to advise NZYF National Office of the result as soon as possible.

"The Debate"

The Debate is a contest between two teams, each of three members, arguing a subject of discussion known as "the topic". The topic is an affirmative statement that is capable of being argued from either the affirmative or negative viewpoint.

The object of each team, the affirmative and the negative alike, is to convince the audience that they have the most persuasive argument. To win the debate certain technical rules must be complied with and the Adjudicators will take this into account in addition to the soundness of argument and skill in presentation.

Debating may be compared with building a structure with blocks of stone. The Affirmative team begins the building whereas the negative team attempts to take out crucial blocks that cause the affirmative's structure to collapse. The Negative team should not try to build a better structure of their own but needs to counter the argument put forward by the affirmative, showing the weaknesses of their case. If the affirmative argument is intact at the end of the debate the negative will have failed in their objective.

Debating should be fun. It should be approached by accepting the challenge to persuade an audience of unbiased onlookers. It is an excellent way of improving speaking skills and is particularly helpful in providing experience in developing a convincing argument. It adds a new dimension to the NZYF speaking experience and is recommended for extending members speaking experience.

Debating teams comprise three members on each side whose duties are explained in more detail on page 3. A subject for the debate is decided upon with, one team taking the affirmative and the other the negative case. The teams each need to decide on the speaking order for their speakers, the team strategy and the allocation of subject matter to each speaker. This will normally require a couple of meetings followed up with telephone discussions to ensure that each member is fully aware of his/her role in the team effort and where it fits into the team strategy. It is, of course, helpful if one team member comes across material which may be helpful to another in their allocated subject to contact them with the information in time for it to become incorporated in their presentation. Remember that debating, in addition to being an individual performance, is also very much a team exercise - no team can win on the performance of one member alone.

Speakers' Roles

General

Each speaker is required to move forward to face the audience, recognise the Chairman and then address the audience - speakers should avoid addressing the presentation to the opposing team, it is the audience and adjudicators that they should be seeking to persuade.

Speakers should open with a strong sentence to gain audience attention. The address should have clearly recognisable points that should be strongly summarised in a firm conclusion in a final peroration. Speakers need to finish within the allocated time as judges will not take into account any points made after the time has expired.

The roles of the individual speakers are summarised as follows:

1. Leader of Affirmative

- A. Define the meaning of the topic clearly and precisely. The definition should be one which will meet with general acceptance. This avoids having the debate degenerate into one on the meaning of the topic rather than on the arguments presented by the two teams.
- B. Give a general outline of the team's case and indicate the aspects of the subject to be discussed by each of the team members.

E.g.: "We are affirming the proposition that marriage leads to divorce. As leader I shall show that only married people become divorced. My second speaker will indicate the reasons for this. And my third speaker will show that single people are free from the problems that lead to divorce."

- C. Develop the introductory arguments for the side - this should represent some 60% of the address.
- D. Summarise.

2. Leader of Negative

- A. Consider the definition given by the leader of the affirmative. If it is fair and reasonable it should be accepted - it will be difficult to create a viable alternative to a reasonable definition put forward by the affirmative. Remember, it is the moot which is to be debated, not the definition. However, if the affirmative definition is selective and unreasonable it is possible to appeal to reason and seek to have the subject debated on what would be generally understood by the wording of the topic.
- B. Outline the team's case and the allocation of each speaker's role.
- C. Rebut any major points put up by the leader of the affirmative which can be effectively countered.
- D. Be sure to introduce points that support the negative case.
- E. Summarise.

3. Second Speaker Affirmative

- A. Re-emphasise major point of your leader.
- B. Develop major points of team's case - this is the major role of the second speaker and should occupy 75% of the speaking time.
- C. Rebut any major points put up by the leader of the negative that can be effectively countered.
- D. Summarise

4. Second Speaker Negative

- A. Develop rebuttal of previous two affirmative speakers (up to 50% of speaking time).
- B. Add arguments supporting negative view.
- C. Support own leader's case. Summarise.

5. Third Speaker Affirmative

- A. Develop rebuttal of previous two negative speakers (at least 50% of speaking time).
- B. Add final arguments supporting affirmative case.
- C. Support previous affirmative speakers.
- D. Summarise.

6. Third Speaker Negative

- A. Develop rebuttal of all affirmative speakers' arguments (70% of speaking time). Effectively destroy affirmative arguments.
- B. Add final arguments supporting negative case.
- C. Summarise.

7. Negative Leader's Reply – Sum up

- A. Convincing summary of own team's case - no new material allowable.
- B. Forceful summary of rebuttal already presented - no new material allowable.
- C. Persuasive conclusion to convince audience of superiority of negative case.

8. Affirmative Leader's Reply – Sum up

- A. Rebut any major points of negative third speaker and leader's reply.
- B. Convincingly summarise own team's arguments - no new material allowable.
- C. Forcefully summarise previous rebuttal of negative case - no new material allowable.
- D. Persuasive conclusion to convince audience of superiority of affirmative case.

Debating Speeches

As in all speeches, debating speeches have definite component parts. Marks are awarded for each part and these aspects are covered in the NZYF score sheet. The main points are:

1. **Content** - The subject matter of the speech.

The 'Argument' should appeal to a 'reasonable' person.

Sound argument wins points by using: "common-sense" argument; logical reasoning, beliefs, attitudes or feelings that appeal to the audience.

Support for argument from quoted well-known authorities helps build up the case.

All relevant arguments of the opposition should be answered - points not answered are taken as having been conceded.

The definition should not be a lengthy recitation of dictionary quotations but rather a logical and concise explanation of common usage is generally preferred, dictionary support being used in the event of need or dispute.

Quotations should be brief and relevant to the point being made.

Expert opinion may be used to support arguments but should be from well-known qualified authorities.

Tabling of material should only be done at the request of the opposition. Tabled material can be viewed by the opposing side during the debate and it therefore pays to ensure that it cannot be used by the opposition to find an alternative viewpoint as this tends to destroy the credibility of the point being made.

Airy, general or wild statements unsupported by evidence will not gain marks.

Teams must attack as well as rebut and engage in argument and counter-argument on the subject under discussion

Humour can appeal if relevant and will maintain audience interest in the argument being presented.

Rebuttal should be soundly based and effectively counter the opposing argument, but unsupported rebuttal will not be effective.

2. **Delivery**

Stance & Appearance

Clothing and grooming are important in that they convey strong impressions upon the audience.

Distracting mannerisms will reduce the effectiveness of the presentation.

Voice

Speakers must be heard - attention must be paid to the site of the hall and surroundings.

Pronunciation and articulation are important to ensure the speaker is understood.

A monotonous tone quickly bores an audience and, as a result, the speech will lose impact.

Gesture

Movement of arms, body, face and hands for emphasis can add dramatically to the presentation but meaningless, nervous and repetitive gestures should be avoided.

Persuasion

Both material and method combine to influence an audience.

Appearance, enthusiasm, humour, personality and sincerity all contribute to the persuasiveness of a speaker.

The speaker needs to be fully understood throughout the entire presentation to achieve a persuasive result.

Anecdotes, emphasis and repetition all combine to help get the message across. Rhetorical questions are dangerous as they invite hostile interjections.

Notes

Small and unobtrusive cards should be used (when notes are necessary) to avoid distracting the audience from the material and method of presentation.

If proper preparation has been done only very abbreviated notes should be necessary to remind the speaker of the order of the major points to be covered – ie use 6 – 7cm²cards.

Reading directly from or bad handling of notes will lose marks.

Interjections

The acceptance of interjections requires the agreement of both teams. If one team does not wish to accept interjections they are not to be allowed. It is the chairman's responsibly to ascertain the wishes of the teams prior to the commencement of the debate.

If interjections are allowed they may come from both the audience and the opposing team, however, the opposing team may lose valuable rebuttal material if it engages in refuting argument by interjection.

Interjections should always be brief and preferably witty. Five or six words is sufficient - more than that and the impact will be lost.

Heckling (that is repetition of such words as 'rhubarb', 'boring', 'rubbish' or the like), engaging in a running debate with the speaker or general interruptions are not allowed. Should they take place and not cease on the chairman's request he should rule that no further interjections of any sort be allowed. An unruly audience can ruin a good debate and speakers have a right to be heard.

There are two general ways of dealing with interjections

- ignore them and speak over them in a strong voice;
- respond to the interjection with a quick and cutting reply - this is difficult to achieve but will win marks from the judge.

3. Construction

As in all speeches, there needs to be a structure with:

- an arresting opening to gain the audiences attention;
- the body of the speech containing:
 - the speakers points of argument,
 - rebuttal of the opposing argument where appropriate; ·
 - a strong, positive peroration (or conclusion; which summarises the whole presentation).

The speech should not be too fully prepared or it will be difficult to respond to the opposing arguments - the object of the debate is for both teams to engage the topic and persuade the audience that their own stand is the more valid.

Timing is important - the peroration should be commenced soon after the green light is shown as no marks are gained for any points made after the red light is switched on.

4. Team Work

The speakers for each team must combine to present a cohesive argument. Any material which contradicts a previous speaker of the same side helps destroy the team argument.

Each speaker should cover the general area allocated by the leader in his introduction.

Marks allocated for team work can help swing the debate in favour of the well organised team and win the debate for them.

5. Leaders Replies

No new material is allowed to be introduced by the leaders in their replies, which should summarise what has gone before and show how the speaker's team has presented the most persuasive argument.

Interjections are not allowed during the speaker's replies irrespective of whether they had been allowed during the body of the debate.

Adjudicating or Judging

Where possible three adjudicators should be appointed to judge a debate so that, as far as possible, individual prejudices are eliminated and the judgment is objective rather than subjective. The Adjudicators should be experienced debaters who are well aware of the objectives of debating.

The NZYF Score Sheet should be used for marking Young Farmers debates. (example page 9)

Marks should be awarded within the categories shown in the mark sheet - audience reaction should be an important influencing factor in arriving at marks to be awarded.

The adjudicator should award marks to the team which raises a point of order which is correctly upheld by the chairman but deduct points where a point of order is incorrectly raised.

It is not the role of the adjudicator to judge the rights or wrongs of the topic under discussion - it is the effectiveness of the speakers and teams in presenting and defending their case and attacking the opposing case which is being assessed.

The adjudicators will come to a general impression as to the outcome of the debate and the marks awarded should reflect this general impression. If the result is different then there is something wrong about the manner in which the marks have been allocated. The marks available for teamwork are important. It needs to be remembered that a debate is more than the sum total of the efforts of each individual as a persuasive speaker. All the parts go together to make up a cohesive argument and any individual who detracts from that single argument, no matter how competent the speaker, detracts from the effectiveness of that team's presentation.

Marking should take place during and immediately after each individual speech so as to maintain objectivity. This means that there needs to be at least a minute between speeches to allow the adjudicators to mark each speech.

At the conclusion of the debate the Chief Adjudicator should retire with each of the sub-adjudicators. Each adjudicator should complete their mark sheet and allocate the winning team two points. The three adjudicators should then tally the points to decide the winning team. Each speaker should be similarly marked with six points for the best speaker, five for the next, and so forth. The marks should also be tallied so that the best speaker on the night may be ascertained.

When the winning team and the best speaker are ascertained the Chief Adjudicator should then announce the result and give some constructive suggestions for each speaker and each team, pointing out the most effective aspect of each sides performance.

Summary of General Rules

- Each team has 3 debaters.
- Teams consist of the leader (first speaker), second speaker and third speaker.
- Two teams participate in a debate.
- Each speech should be between 3 and 4 minutes long, (3 minute bell 1 ring, followed by 2 rings at 4 minutes) except for the summaries, which should be between 2 and 3 minutes long (1 bell at 2 minutes followed by 2 bells at 3 minutes). Material over these limits won't be considered by the judges.
- The teams debate in this order:
 1. Affirmative leader (Define topic, introduction of argument and overview of fellow team members arguments)
 2. Negative leader (Accept the topic definition or redefine, introduction of own argument and overview of fellow team members arguments)
 3. Affirmative second speaker (Further arguments, rebuttal)
 4. Negative second speaker (Further arguments, rebuttal)
 5. Affirmative third speaker (Mostly rebuttal)
 6. Negative third speaker (Mostly rebuttal)
 7. Negative leader (Summary, no new arguments, no interjections)
 8. Affirmative leader (Summary, no new arguments, no interjections)

(Rebuttal means making counter-arguments to what your opponents have said)

Judging to NZYF Score Sheet

Here are the things your debate will be judged on

Definition & Introduction

Define Topic for debate

Introduce your argument & your team members with an overview of their arguments.

Team Leaders **10 possible marks**. Other Speakers **5 possible marks**

Argument/Coverage of Points/Arrangement & Development of Case/Logic of Arguments

Subject Knowledge, Quoted Authorities, Relevance, Argument and Logical Reasoning & Humour.

Team Leaders **50 possible marks**, 2nd Speakers **40 possible marks**, 3rd Speaker **25 possible marks**

Eloquence & Deportment

How you Stand, Gesture and how often you refer to notes. Appearance, Personality, Language and Persuasiveness.

30 possible marks for all Speakers

Reasoning and Criticism

Speech Structure, Introduction, Technique, Rebuttal of other Speakers Arguments, and Strategy

Team Leaders **10 possible marks**, 2nd Speakers **25 possible marks**, 3rd Speakers **40 possible marks**

Conclusion

All speakers must conclude their argument. Use the 30 seconds to go bell as indicator.

5 possible marks for all Speakers

Leaders Sum-Up

Importance of Points Attacked and Effectiveness of Arguments. (Loss of points for introducing new material)

35 possible marks

Summary

15 possible marks

Points Of Order

1.0 Points of Order may be made on the following grounds only:

- (a) That the speaker or any person present is conducting himself in an unseemly manner.
- (b) That the speaker is using personal abuse or offensive language.
- (c) That the speaker is misquoting an earlier speaker on a material point in the debate.
- (d) That the Leader, in his reply, is introducing new matter into the debate.
- (e) That the speaker is introducing material clearly not relevant to the subject of the debate (e.g. comments on how the subject was selected.)
- (f) That any of the Rules for the conduct of the debate is not being observed.

1.1. A Point of Order may be raised by the speaker then speaking or by any other member of the two teams during the debate.

1.2. The Chairman should rule on the Point of Order without debate but may, if he is in doubt, allow members of the two teams to speak briefly to the Point of Order, and the Chairman may stop the discussion at any time.

1.3. The Chairman must rule one way or the other on any Point of Order which is properly raised.

1.4. When a Point of Order is raised, the speaker shall resume his seat until the Chairman has delivered his ruling, except for the time when he is speaking to the Point of Order if permitted to do so by the Chairman.

1.5. A Point of Order shall be allowed only if it is raised during or immediately after the breach.

