

Speaker Scores:

Introduction: What are speaker points?

1. In addition to deciding which team won the debate round, judges also rate debaters individually by assigning speaker points (speaks) to each debater and then ranking them from best to worst in the round.
2. Higher speaker scores are better, and lower ranks are better. Speaker scores range from approximately 15 to approximately 35, though there is some flexibility at the extremes for truly exceptional (or exceptionally awful) speeches. Ranks are from 1 (best) to 4 (worst).
3. Speaker points and ranks indicate **what each debater contributed individually to winning (or losing) the round**. The debater who did the best job demonstrating that their side should win should receive the highest speaks and the lowest ranks.
 - For this reason, there are no “low-point wins.” A team that lost, by definition, did less to win the round, and thus the cumulative speaker score of how much they did to win the round must be equal or lesser than the other team.
 - Speaker scores **do not** exist to reward or reflect the debaters who spoke with the most pleasing rhetorical style.

Describing the Speaker Scale:

1. The speaker scale ranges from 5 (awful) to 45 (amazing) with most speeches clustering around a 25. A 25 is considered an average speech. **Speaker points can only be whole numbers.**
 - Keep in mind that an average speech is probably good.
 - Given that the majority of debaters on the circuit have been debating for quite a while, you shouldn't expect a speech to score above a 25 simply because it was not bad. Use the information in the table below to guide you in assigning speaker scores.
2. Speaker points below 15 and above 35 are discouraged, but permitted. Speaker points below 15 and above 35 almost certainly must be justified to the tab staff (the people who run the tournament). Essentially, you need to justify why this person should receive that score because the default presumption is that it is unlikely that the score is deserved.
 - Speaker points below 15 are reserved for significant misbehavior and rule violations. If someone verbally abused the judge and their opponents, frequently interrupted their opponents' speeches, or gave arguments that were inadjudicably offensive, they could receive speaker points below a 15. This is intended to be punitive because such behavior should cause a team to automatically lose.
 - Speaker points above a 35 require the speaker to have given one of the best speeches any debater will give all year. The number of 35+ speeches given at a tournament can usually be counted on one hand, and thus requires the judge to have high confidence this is such a speech.
3. Scores are described below as guidance. Keep in mind that scores, reflecting a debater's contribution to winning the round, are most often constrained by the speech's limiting factor (warranting/impacting/weighing/engagement/argumentation quality) rather than the strongest, therefore, **choose the lowest category that the speech falls into when allocating speaker points.**

Criteria	5 to 7	8 to 12	13 to 17	18 to 22	23 to 27	28 to 32	33 to 37	38 to 40	41+
Warrant quality (evaluated without considering the opposing team's arguments)	Warrants were either non-existent or providing little to no reason to believe the claim.	Warrants were either non-existent or providing little to no reason to believe the claim.	Warrants provided little to no reason to believe the claim.	Warrants provided limited reason to have confidence in the truth of the claims.	Warrants provided a substantial, but not decisive, reason to have confidence in the truth of the claims.	Warrants provided a nearly decisive reason to have confidence in the truth of the claims.	Warrants provided a decisive reason to have confidence in the truth of the claims.	Warrants provided decisive reason to have confidence in the truth of the claims, and were decisive in the context of opposing warrants from the other team.	In addition, these speeches or this speech was able to select and deploy argumentation, warranting, impacting, and weighing so effectively that the judge has near- certain confidence that: If debating against a team with two debaters who gave flawless speeches, this speech made up for the flaws in a partner's speech to the point of winning the round.
Impact quality	Impacts were either non-existent, vague to the point of being unweighable, or predicated on unwarranted claims.	Impacts were either non-existent, vague to the point of being unweighable, or predicated on unwarranted claims.	Impacts were connected to warranting, but vague or difficult to understand in places.	Impacts were connected to warranting, but difficult to precisely determine and their importance was somewhat vague.	Impacts were connected to warranting, even if, at times, the precise degree or kind of impact was unclear.	Impacts were connected to warranting, with an explanation of the degree or kind of impact where most crucial.	Impacts were connected to warranting, with a consistent explanation of the degree and kind.	Impacts were clear, including the degree or kind of impact, and carefully tailored to match the weighing to clearly establish the RFD.	
Weighing quality	Weighing either was not done by this debater or merely asserted.	Weighing either was not done by this debater or merely asserted.	Weighing either was not done by this debater or merely asserted.	Weighing was something that this debater only partially, did and with insufficient justification.	Weighing was something that this debater did completely, albeit with insufficient justification.	Weighing the importance of specific impacts within each type of impact was something that this debater did completely, albeit with insufficient justification.	Weighing the importance of specific impacts within each type of impact was something that this debater did completely, with reasonable, although limited, justification.	Weighing the importance of specific impacts within each type of impact was something that this debater did completely, fully developed with justification.	

Engagement	Crucial, round-winning material from the other team's speeches was unresponded to by this debater in a way that substantially impaired their team's ability to win.	Crucial, round-winning material from the other team's speeches was unresponded to by this debater in a way that substantially impaired their team's ability to win.	Some potentially round-winning material from the other team's speeches was unresponded to by this debater in a way that substantially impaired their team's ability to win.	Some important material from the other team's speeches was unresponded to by this debater in a way that substantially impaired their team's ability to win.	No important material from the other team's speeches was unresponded to by this debater, but more engagement with that material would certainly have increased their team's ability to win.	No important material from the other team's speeches was unresponded to by this debater, but more engagement with that material is likely to have increased their team's ability to win.	No important material from the other team's speeches was unresponded to by this debater, nor was more engagement with that material is likely to have increased their team's ability to win.	No important material from the other team's speeches was unresponded to by this debater, nor would more engagement with that material have substantially increased their team's ability to win.	
Argument quality (argument selection, warrants, impacts, and weighing)	The existence of this debater's speech/speeches did more to help the other side win than silence in the place of what occurred would have.	The existence of this debater's speech/speeches likely did no more to help their side win than the other side win, a net equivalent to silence in the place of what occurred.	The quality of argumentation was weak enough that it could be reasonably beaten by an average person.	The quality of argumentation would be unable to withstand quality argumentation from the other team.	The quality of argumentation was strong despite exploitable flaws	The quality of argumentation was strong with minimal exploitable flaws.	The quality of argumentation was strong with no clearly exploitable flaws.	The quality of argumentation was strong with no exploitable flaws.	