



Lincoln-Douglas Debate: A Few Practical Tidbits

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Things to Know to Be Prepared for Your Round

There are a few practical things that you need to remember so that you are prepared for every debate.

First, you should always come to the round pre-flowed. What does that mean? As we discussed earlier, flowing is your form of note taking throughout the round. However, since you know what your case says, presumably, because you wrote it, you are able to flow those arguments before you even get into the round so that you are ready when your opponent stands up to answer them.

Second, make sure that the room is set up properly. Some judges want debaters to sit on specific sides of the room depending on whether you are affirmative or negative, so make sure you accommodate the judge accordingly. When you are sitting down, your desk should be facing the judge so that you can make eye contact with him/her and it does not look like you are pushing him/her away.

Third, you should always have a timer on you. Timers are your best friend: they ensure that you know exactly how much speech time you have left, as well as ensuring that your opponent does not go over his/her time.

Fourth, you should not enter the room until the judge is present. Although this rule is not a hard and fast rule, you will find that many tournaments have posted signs on the door stating that you could be disqualified if you enter the room before the judge. If you are unsure if this is the tournament's policy, you should always err on the side of caution.

Fifth, after the debate is over, do not ask the judge who won or for an oral critique; if s/he is going to announce this, then s/he will let you know, but many judges are annoyed by questions like this. If the judge makes no indication that s/he will be giving critiques or announcing the winner, just say "thank you," and leave the room with your opponent.

Sixth, flow every speech! Even if you are negative and you don't need to flow the 2AR, you should always be paying attention to what the affirmative is doing for a few reasons. First, if you look like you've checked out of the debate, the judge may find that disrespectful and take away speaker points, or worse, give you the loss. Second, if you don't listen to the 2AR, then if you lose you won't be able to fully understand what you did wrong and how you can go about fixing that problem.

Seventh, if you are flight 1 (or A) you should always be at your room waiting at least five minutes before the posted starting time in case your judge, or your opponent, also decides to show up early. Flight 2 (or B) debaters should be outside of their room 30-40 minutes after the start of the first round to give them ample time to make it to the room.