British Parliamentary (BP) Debate

Opening Government (OG)

Prime Minister

The job of the PM is to present a debatable, persuasive case in support of the motion. To this end, a speaker should:

- **Define the motion**. This might include: defining specific terms in the motion, advocating specific policy change(s), and/or articulating the roles of relevant stakeholders.
- **Provide a complete case.** Establish that a problem exists, and provide reasons why your team's advocacy resolves it. If necessary, signpost the new material your partner will add.
- **Avoid being too clever.** Aim to set up a *debatable* case that supports the most obvious interpretation of the motion.

Deputy Prime Minister

The DPM closes for the Opening Government, and should:

- **Rebuild.** Defend your team's case by answering the LO's refutation. Reiterate the key elements of your team's position.
- **Refute the LO's case.** Be specific. Criticize what you've just heard. Compare it to your team's position.
- **Follow through on promises.** If your partner declared that you would present new material in support of your team's position, do so. At the very least, add depth to the original case by providing additional details, examples, or explanation.

Opening Opposition (OO)

Leader of Opposition

The Leader should oppose the motion and the case presented by the PM.

- **Refute the PM's case.** Be specific. Criticize the case you've just heard.
- **Oppose.** Why is the motion itself problematic? State your team's position and provide reasoning to support it. As you prepare for this speech, consider that the motion might possibly do more harm than good, foreclose better alternatives, or be tethered to a destructive worldview.
- **Recognize that the first two tasks on this list are not always separate.** A good PM speech will allow you to oppose both at the same time.

Deputy Leader of Opposition

The DLO concludes the first half of the debate for the Opposition, and should:

- **Rebuild.** Defend your partner's case from the DPM's refutation. Reiterate the key elements of your team's position.
- **Refute.** Address new, relevant material presented by the DPM. Illustrate any important tension(s) between the PM & DPM speeches. Highlight LO refutation that was ignored or insufficiently covered by the DPM.
- **Add depth.** Add something to your team's case. You can provide additional examples, explanation, or analysis to support a previous claim. You can present a new argument.

Closing Government (CG)

Member of Government

The Member of Government opens the second half of the debate, and should:

- **Refute.** Address any new contribution(s) from the DLO. Consider engaging in holistic refutation of the OO, or even preempting what the CO is likely to claim.
- **Offer an "extension."** Add something new. You might choose to present an entirely new argument, or you might opt to develop an important argument that the OG underdeveloped.
- **Explain how the CG's position fits into the debate.** Avoid contradicting the OG case. Explain why what you're adding is important *in relation to* the OG case.

Government Whip

The Government Whip should:

- **Identify the 2-3 most relevant concepts in the debate.** These concepts should serve as the main points of your speech. At some point, explain why your conceptual breakdown is the best way to view the debate.
- **Sell the "extension."** Demonstrate how your team's material relates to other important content in the debate. Articulate why your position defeats the most important arguments presented by the Opposition.
- **Refute.** Answer the contribution made by the Member of Opposition. Engage in holistic refutation of the Opposition.
- **Avoid making new arguments.** You may, however, add details or examples in support of previous claims.

Closing Opposition (CO)

Member of Opposition

The Member of Opposition should:

- **Refute.** Answer the new material presented by the Member of Government. Consider engaging in holistic refutation of the entire Proposition bench. Look for and exploit contradictions/tensions between the OG & CG.
- **Make a contribution.** Add something new. You might choose to present a new argument or to further develop an OO argument.
- **Explain how the CO's contribution fits into the debate.** Illustrate why your position is important *in relation to* the OO case. Avoid contradicting the OO if you can.

Opposition Whip

The Opposition Whip closes the debate, and should:

- **Identify the 2-3 most relevant concepts in the debate.** The CG will have just done this. Identify *different* concepts. Argue why your concepts *are more relevant than* the CG's concepts in understanding the competing claims. The concepts you identify should then serve as the main points of your speech.
- **Sell your contribution.** Explain how your team's position relates to other important arguments in the debate.
- **Avoid making new arguments.** You may, however, add details or examples in support of previous claims.

British Parliamentary (BP) Debate

British Parliamentary debate, or *BP*, is the most popular style of intercollegiate debating in the world. It is the style used at the annual World Universities Debating Championship (WUDC). Some people refer to BP as "Worlds" or "WUDC format."

Each round of debate focuses on a different motion (topic). The motion is disclosed 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the first speech. During the 15-minute preparation time before the round, you may speak *only* to your partner. You can use *only* printed materials to prepare. Accessing electronic information about the motion is prohibited.

You will learn of your team's position in a given round just before the motion is announced. Four teams participate in a BP round. Two teams represent the Government (in support of the motion), and two teams represent the Opposition (opposed to the Government and motion). Here are the names of the teams, and the names of the individual roles:

Opening Government (OG)	**Opening Opposition (OO)**
Prime Minister & Deputy Prime Minister	Leader & Deputy Leader of Opposition
Closing Government (CG)	**Closing Opposition (CO)**
Member of Government & Government Whip	Member of Opposition & Opposition Whip

The Government opens the debate, and the Opposition delivers the final speech. Each speaker presents one 7-minute speech. The speeches proceed in this order:

1. Prime Minister
2. Leader of Opposition
3. Deputy Prime Minister
4. Deputy Leader of Opposition
5. Member of Government
6. Member of Opposition
7. Government Whip
8. Opposition Whip

During the middle 5 minutes of a speech, any participant *across* the table may request a Point of Information (POI). The speaker chooses to accept or reject any POI request. Every speaker should accept at least one POI, and it's a good idea for a team to accept around 3 in total. The first and last minutes of each speech are considered "protected time," and no POIs can be requested. The chair (judge selected to run the debate) will ensure that clear time signals are maintained throughout the debate. A POI takes the form of a question (or sometimes a statement), and if accepted a questioner has 15 seconds to speak.

After the conclusion of all speeches, the chair asks all participants to leave the room. The chair and panelists (other judges selected to judge a given debate) then spend a few minutes deciding the debate. Each team is given a ranking (first place, second place, third place, fourth place). Each speaker is assigned a speaker score on a 0-100 scale. When the decision is finalized, the judges invite the debaters back into the room. The decision is announced, and the chair provides some reasoning to support the rankings. Always show respect toward the decision and the judging panel.

Your ranking in each debate translates to points. You need to earn a certain amount of cumulative points (depending on the size of the tournament and the number of preliminary rounds) throughout the preliminary rounds in order to advance into the elimination debates. You must reach the elimination rounds in order to place in the tournament. A ranking of "1" = 3 points, "2" = 2 points, "3" = 1 point, and "4" = NO points.