



The 30-Minute Prep Workflow: Minute by Minute.

A printable schedule for the half hour between the draw and the speech. Practice it until each step is a habit, then adjust the timing to fit your own style.

Why a schedule matters

Thirty minutes feels long until a speaker spends 20 of them searching files. A fixed plan keeps you moving, protects time to **practice out loud**, and leaves a buffer for the walk to your room. The times below are a **coach's suggestion, not a rule**; many strong speakers shift a few minutes either way. Also learn how your league counts the half hour: in UIL the clock is running from the moment you are called to draw, and in Stoa the 30 minutes includes the walk to your room.

The schedule

MINUTES	TASK	OUTPUT
0 to 2	Choose the question	One question circled
2 to 5	Decide your answer	One-sentence thesis
5 to 8	Pick your 3 points	Three short claims
8 to 18	Pull files, choose evidence	1 or 2 facts per point with sources
18 to 22	Plan the introduction	Attention-getter, background, preview
22 to 24	Plan the conclusion	Recap and closing line
24 to 29	Practice aloud	Whole speech, standing up if possible
29 to 30	Pack up	Ready to walk

Step details

- 1 Choosing the question (2 min).** Pick the question you can answer with the most specific facts, not the one that sounds most impressive. Do not switch after the first two minutes.
- 2 Thesis (3 min).** Write: "The answer is ___ because of A, B, and C." If you cannot finish that sentence, your question may be too broad; narrow the angle.
- 3 Three points (3 min).** Make each point a different type of reason (for example: economic, social, political). Overlapping points make a repetitive speech.
- 4 Evidence (10 min).** Go to the folder for each point. Find a fact, the outlet, and the date. Write the cite as a short phrase you can say aloud.
- 5 Intro (4 min).** Write your attention-getter word for word because nerves are highest at the start.
- 6 Conclusion (2 min).** Tie back to the opening line.
- 7 Practice (5 min).** Speak the full speech at conversational pace, even whispering. Note where you stumble.

What goes on your outline

Keep it to key words only. NSDA notes that many tournaments prohibit consulting notes during the speech, so train to speak without them.

SECTION	WRITE DOWN
Intro	Hook, question (exact), thesis, 3 point labels
Point 1 to 3	Claim, source name + date, key number, link
Conclusion	Thesis, 3 labels, closing line

Drills

- ♦ **15-minute sprint.** Do the whole workflow in 15 minutes to build speed, then give a 5-minute speech.
 - ♦ **Evidence-only drill.** Draw a question and spend 10 minutes finding facts only. Share them with a parent or coach.
 - ♦ **Intro-only drill.** Write five different attention-getters for one question in 5 minutes.
- ☐ I answered the question as written.
- ☐ My three points are different from each other.
- ☐ I have at least one source for each point.
- ☐ I practiced aloud at least once.
- ☐ I know my first 30 seconds by heart.

Coaching note

Want a plan built around your speaker? Book a free consultation with Scholar Coach at the link below.

Built from public guidance: NSDA Competition Events Guide: Extemporaneous Speaking · UIL Texas Extemp Prep Room guide · Stoa Extemporaneous Rules (2024). Rules change by league and tournament, so always confirm against your tournament invitation and current league rules.

NOTES

Want a plan built around **your** debater?
Book a free consultation. The short intake takes about a minute and opens right away.

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