



# Extemp Debate Explained: Plus a Tournament-Day Parent Checklist.

Extemp Debate blends quick thinking with one-on-one argument. See the speech order, learn how to adapt your extemp skills, and use the parent checklist for tournament day.

## What Extemp Debate is

Extemporaneous Debate is a one-on-one event. Each round has a new resolution, so debaters argue many topics instead of one. NSDA says debaters are guaranteed **at least 30 minutes** to prepare, and sides are assigned by computer. Evidence is permitted, but the event puts reasoning, structure, and delivery ahead of heavy research. NSDA lists it as a supplemental event at its national tournament; availability at local tournaments varies. Speech times are protected, meaning the opponent and judge may not interrupt a speaker.

| ORDER | SPEECH                           | TIME      |
|-------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1     | Proposition Constructive         | 2 minutes |
| 2     | Cross-examination of Proposition | 1 minute  |
| 3     | Opposition Constructive          | 2 minutes |
| 4     | Cross-examination of Opposition  | 1 minute  |
| 5     | Mandatory prep, both debaters    | 1 minute  |
| 6     | Proposition Rebuttal             | 2 minutes |
| 7     | Opposition Rebuttal              | 2 minutes |
| 8     | Mandatory prep, both debaters    | 1 minute  |
| 9     | Proposition Final Rebuttal       | 2 minutes |
| 10    | Opposition Final Rebuttal        | 2 minutes |

This is the order and these are the times NSDA lists. Check your tournament's event description in case a local version differs, and ask whether internet use is allowed during prep, because that is left to each tournament.

## Adapting extemp skills

| EXTEMP SKILL          | HOW IT TRANSFERS                                          |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Three-point structure | Use two or three clear contentions in your constructive   |
| Spoken citations      | Name the source and date for key facts                    |
| Analysis starters     | Explain impact: "This matters because ..."                |
| Timing                | Practice 2-minute speeches, much shorter than 7           |
| Files                 | Use broad facts; the event stresses reasoning over detail |

- 1 **Read the resolution.** Decide what each side must prove.
- 2 **Build your side.** Two strong arguments with one fact each.
- 3 **Predict the other side.** Write two responses to their best argument.
- 4 **Plan questions.** Prepare two short cross-examination questions that expose a weakness.
- 5 **Crystallize.** In the final rebuttal, tell the judge the one or two reasons to vote for you.

Keep a flow (notes on every argument) on two sheets, one per side, with a column per speech. With only two minutes per speech, abbreviations matter.

## Tournament-day parent checklist

Whether your student competes in speaking or debate, the day runs more smoothly with a plan.

- ☐ Confirm the schedule, location, and check-in time the day before.
- ☐ Pack formal or business-casual clothing and comfortable shoes.
- ☐ Bring a pen, a watch or timer if allowed, water, and healthy snacks.
- ☐ Bring files or devices only as permitted by the tournament rules.
- ☐ Charge phones and other devices if electronics are permitted.
- ☐ Arrive early; draw and check-in rooms often have set start times.
- ☐ Learn where the posting board or tournament website is for pairings and results.
- ☐ Let your student warm up quietly; avoid last-minute coaching.
- ☐ After each round, ask: What went well? What would you change?
- ☐ Celebrate effort, not only ranking.

### Good to know

Rules about observers, electronics, and room entry vary by tournament. Check the invitation or ask the tournament director.

## Between rounds

- ♦ Read the ballot comments together and pick one fix.
- ♦ Keep the mood calm; a bad round is practice for the next.
- ♦ Hydrate and eat something light.
- ♦ Remind your student that rank is one judge's opinion on one day.

### 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 Extemporaneous Debate event page · NSDA Competition Events Guide: Extemporaneous Debate. 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?

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