



Flowing PF: Shorthand and Layout.

Flowing is note-taking built for debate. This guide shows how to set up your paper, what symbols to use, and how to practice with a podcast or a family member before round day.

Why flow

A flow is a visual record of the round. Flowing helps you answer every argument, notice dropped points, and keep track of what you said. Many judges also flow, so a clear flow of your own helps you speak in a way they can follow.

Paper layout

Use one page (or a landscape sheet) for each contention, plus a page for definitions or framework. Turn the paper sideways and draw vertical columns, one per speech. Read left to right.

COLUMN	FILL WITH
1: Constructive (Pro)	Pro's contention taglines, warrants, evidence
2: Constructive (Con)	Con's contention taglines, warrants, evidence
3: Rebuttal (first)	First rebuttal responses, lined up to the argument they hit
4: Rebuttal (second)	Second rebuttal responses
5: Summary	Which arguments are kept, plus weighing
6: Final focus	Final voting issues

- ♦ Draw arrows from each response back to the argument it answers.
- ♦ Leave space between arguments for responses.
- ♦ Use two colors: one for your side, one for theirs.

Shorthand cheat sheet

Shorthand is personal, so adapt these. The goal is to write less than a full word.

+ or up arrow

increase, benefit, more

w/

with

b/c

because

~

approximately

- or down arrow

decrease, harm, less

w/o

without

⇒

leads to

C1, C2

contention one, two

Pro / Con

P / C

\$

money, cost, economy

Star

important or dropped argument

Δ

change

?

unanswered or unclear point

x

no, not, or false

Flowing practice plan

- 1 **Start slow.** Pick a short speech or interview online. Pause every minute and fill in the flow.
- 2 **Write only taglines and numbers.** Skip full sentences.
- 3 **Add evidence names.** Write author and year only.
- 4 **Review.** After each practice, check: did I get every main point?
- 5 **Try real speed.** Run the audio without pausing. Compare with a partner's flow.

- ☐ Pens in two colors and extra paper or a legal pad.
- ☐ Page labeled for each contention.
- ☐ Column heading for every speech before the round starts.
- ☐ A star next to arguments the other side did not answer.
- ☐ Flow during crossfire too, since answers can matter later.

MY PERSONAL SHORTHAND

Want a plan built around your debater? Book a free consultation at the link below.

Built from public guidance: NSDA Public Forum Debate event page (speechanddebate.org) · Wikipedia: Public forum 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?

Book a free consultation. The short intake takes about a minute and opens right away.

BOOK NOW →