



Impromptu Motion Prep: A 30 and 60 Minute Workflow.

When a motion is announced and the clock starts, teams need a routine. Use these timed schedules for a three-person team to go from a blank page to a split case, a model, and responses to the other side.

What impromptu prep looks like

In many World Schools rounds the motion is released shortly before the debate and teams prepare on their own. Prep length **varies by tournament**. The NSDA manual gives teams one hour from the release of the motion, and other tournaments may use a shorter time. At that event up to five team members may prepare together, no one else (including coaches) may help, and no internet is allowed. Teams may bring only a published English or bilingual dictionary and one single-volume encyclopedia or almanac; no digital resources. A phone may be used for timing only, in airplane mode. Read your own tournament instructions, since these details vary.

Golden rule

Spend the first third of prep understanding the motion, not writing the speech. Teams that rush to arguments often debate the wrong question.

30-minute schedule (adjust if your prep time differs)

MINUTES	TASK	WHO
0 to 5	Read motion and any info slide. Define key words. Pick the obvious meaning	All
5 to 10	Brainstorm arguments for your side and the other side; choose the team line	All
10 to 20	Write the split: assign 2 or 3 arguments, model if needed	Speaker 1 and 2 build arguments; Speaker 3 lists opposition arguments and answers
20 to 27	Speakers outline their own speeches on one page	Individual
27 to 30	Agree on POI plan and reply speaker	All

60-minute schedule

MINUTES	TASK	NOTES
0 to 8	Understand the motion; define terms; test the definition for fairness	Write the definition in one sentence
8 to 18	Brainstorm both sides on a shared page	Ask: who is affected, what values clash?
18 to 30	Choose the team stance and the 3 strongest arguments; build a	Pick the stance that is hardest to

MINUTES	TASK	NOTES
30 to 42	Develop arguments with reasons and examples; assign speakers	Use the assertion, reason, example, impact pattern
42 to 52	Predict the other side's best arguments; draft responses	Third speaker leads
52 to 58	Practise your opening and the split aloud	Time it
58 to 60	Final checks: reply speaker, POI plan	All

Roles on the team

- ♦ **Facilitator:** keeps time and calls each stage.
- ♦ **Scribe:** writes the shared page everyone can see.
- ♦ **Devil's advocate:** argues the other side so the team hears the best opposing points.
- ♦ Rotate roles in practice so every student can do each one.

Only three speakers deliver speeches, but teams can have more members who help prepare before the debate starts.

After-prep checklist

- ☐ Definition is one sentence and fair.
- ☐ Every speaker knows their arguments and speech outline.
- ☐ We have agreed the split and the model.
- ☐ We have two responses ready for the likely top opposing argument.
- ☐ The reply speaker is decided and knows the reply template.
- ☐ We know how to take POIs.

PREP NOTES FOR PRACTICE MOTION

Built from public guidance: NSDA USWSDI Manual (2023) · NSDA World Schools Norms (2023) · NSDA World Schools Adjudicator Guide. 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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