



Beginner Glossary and a 10-Week Practice Plan.

Sixteen terms every new World Schools and Big Questions debater should know, followed by a week-by-week plan that builds from first speech to full practice round.

Glossary

Motion

The statement being debated, often starting with "This House"

Opposition

The side arguing against the motion

Reply speech

A 4-minute summary of the debate; no new arguments

Definition

The Proposition's explanation of what the motion means

Split

How a team divides its arguments among its speakers

Rebuttal

Answering the other side's arguments

Constructive

In Big Questions, the 5-minute opening case

Consolidation

In Big Questions, a 3-minute speech (called consolation in some NSDA documents) that narrows the debate to its core

Proposition

The side supporting the motion (also called Government)

Substantive speech

One of the three 8-minute main speeches each team gives

Point of Information (POI)

A short comment or question offered to the speaker by the other team

Model

A short outline of how a proposed action would work

Clash

A direct disagreement between the two sides

Content, Style, Strategy

The three World Schools judging criteria (what, how, why)

Warrant

The reasoning that shows a claim is true

Rationale

In Big Questions, a final 3-minute summary of why you won

The 10-week plan

Practise three or four times a week for 30 to 45 minutes. Choose neutral, school-appropriate practice motions. Check the current season's motions or resolutions with your league.

WEEK	FOCUS	MAIN ACTIVITY
1	Learn the format	Read the format guide; watch or sit in on a round; define ten terms
2	Motion analysis	Analyze five motions with the first-five-minutes routine
3	Arguments	Build four arguments with assertion, reason, example, impact
4	Speaking basics	Daily voice and pause drills; record a two-minute speech
5	Points of Information	Run the six POI drills; offer and accept in practice

WEEK	FOCUS	MAIN ACTIVITY
6	Case building	Write definition, model and split for one motion
7	Rebuttal	Respond to a sample speech; practise third-speaker comparison
8	Reply speeches	Write and deliver a four-minute reply with the template
9	Timed prep	Run a 30 or 60 minute prep, then debate a full round
10	Full simulation	Mock tournament with feedback using content, style and strategy

Big Questions track

In weeks 6 to 10, swap in five-minute constructives, free-flowing three-minute question segments and a 3-minute rationale. Switch sides each practice.

Weekly review

- ☐ I practised the number of sessions planned.
- ☐ I recorded or got feedback on at least one speech.
- ☐ I know one skill that improved and one to fix.
- ☐ I tried arguing the side I disagreed with.

WEEK NOTES

Built from public guidance: NSDA USWSDI Manual (2023) · NSDA World Schools Norms (2023) · NSDA World Schools Adjudicator Guide · NSDA Big Questions Debate: Judge Training (2023). 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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