



# Ace Peak x Ziggy The Judge Manual

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# The Basics

## What is Debate?

Debate is a formal competition of ideas. Debaters take turns giving speeches, trying to convince the judge (you) to support or oppose a statement. All you need to do is listen carefully and take notes, then fill out a ballot at the end.

Debates take 45 - 90 minutes, depending on format. Filling out the ballot afterward takes about 15 minutes.

## Who's in the Round?

Debaters compete by themselves or in teams of two. If all participants consent, spectators are welcome to observe - but they aren't allowed to make any sound or cause any delays.

## You Represent a Debater

At Ace Peak x Ziggy tournaments, debaters are responsible for providing judges for a certain number of rounds. The debater who recruited you is counting on you to show up to the round and submit your ballot on time. If a scheduling conflict comes up, let your debater know immediately so they have time to find a replacement. If you're having difficulty during the tournament, [reach out](#) to a tournament official for help.

Ask the debater who recruited you about which times you'll be needed to judge.

**BUT I'M NOT  
QUALIFIED!**

Most judges feel intimidated when they get started with this activity. Don't worry! If you are 18+ years old and fluent in English, you are ready. You don't need to know anything about the topic.

Debaters are responsible for adapting their message to you in a clear, organized way. If you're confused, that means the speaker is failing, not you.

We want debaters to learn how to communicate complex ideas to a "person on the street." So while we do have experienced judges, our favorite is one with no experience at all. They force the debaters to learn skills that will be most valuable after graduation.

# Getting Started

## What do I need?

To judge effectively, all you need is pen and paper for taking notes, a stopwatch (or stopwatch app) for timing the speeches, and a device that can handle video calls (laptop, tablet, phone, etc) with speakers and microphone. A webcam is encouraged but not necessary.

## Ziggy Registration

The Ace Peak x Ziggy tournament will use the Ziggy tournament website to manage rounds and create ballots.

When students register for the tournament, they will also list information for their judges. You will receive an email within a few days after the student registers. This email will have instructions on how to activate your account on Ziggy and reset your password. You'll log in using the email address the student signs you up with.

Once you've changed your password, log in, and click the Ace Peak x Ziggy tournament. This page will serve as a central place for you to view debate round information such as matchups and start times for each round.

## Signing up for Rounds

Signing up to judge rounds will be done through the Ziggy tournament site, described above. Click [here](#) to access it.

A list of matchups - or "Postings" will be emailed to participants at least 20 minutes before the round is set to start. You will be pre-assigned specific rounds to judge. Once you have been assigned to judge a specific debate matchup, you will receive an email telling you that you are signed up to judge a debate. That email will have a link to the specific page containing the names & contact information of all the teams, and your ballot.

## Before the Tournament

You were recruited to judge by a competitor at the tournament. When they signed up to compete, they listed you as a judge who would be available for up to 4 rounds. That means you're already in the system and will be scheduled to judge rounds.

We prefer that you judge people you don't know and haven't judged before. You'll receive an email after registration closes with a list of all competitors. Please use the

### WHAT'S YOUR PHILOSOPHY?

Debaters might ask for your background or judging philosophy before the round. You're welcome to say as much or as little as you like.

When in doubt, a good answer is:

*"I'm new to debate, so please be extra organized and explain everything."*

linked form to name competitors that you can't judge objectively (like your children or their close friends).

You may also request that we not schedule you for certain rounds. We'll do our best to accommodate your requests but make no guarantees. You must be available for all rounds or find a substitute.

The tournament schedule is posted on the Ace Peak tournament registration page. Note the start times of each debate round; you'll need to log on a half hour before each one to see if you're scheduled to judge that round.

All tournament times are Central Standard Time. If you're in a different time zone, take extra care to make sure you're on time.

## Joining the Server

A list of matchups - or “Postings” - will go up on the Ziggy website at least 20 minutes before the round is set to start. On the matchup page that lists the debate teams, the judge, and the ballot, there will be a “Room” link which will take you to the debate.

Debates are hosted on a website called Discord. To join, just click the link to your assigned server, then click “Join the Debate” on the left. We recommend installing the [Discord app](#) and setting up a username in advance. That makes joining servers a breeze.

If you prefer, you can use the app anonymously from your browser. When you click the server link, you’ll be asked to enter a temporary username and your birthday. Discord will then encourage you to claim your account. If you don’t want to, just left click the dark gray area around the popup to go past it.

On the left side of the screen, you’ll see a “Join the Debate” voice channel with a yellow exclamation mark next to it. When you join, you may be asked to let Discord use your microphone and webcam.

Turn on video with the Video button in the bottom left. Mute yourself with the microphone icon below it. Please mute your microphone when you are not speaking.

Debaters may ask if they can add spectators to the server. That’s fine if everyone in the room - including you - is okay with it and they don’t cause any disruptions or delays.

## Starting the Round

The affirmative competitor(s) will start the round after confirming that everyone is ready.

Before their speech, most debaters will ask you if you are ready. Just unmute, answer, and mute yourself again. Besides that, you probably won’t need to speak at all until the round is over.

## After the Round

After the round, the debaters may thank you for judging and say goodbye. Be polite, but don’t give them any verbal feedback.

When you’re all done, right click the big blue server number on the left. Then click Leave Server.

## Filling out Your Ballot

When the round is over, you’ll need to submit your ballot using the online ballot on the Ziggy tournament site, available by clicking [here](#). The ballot will show up when you’ve been assigned to judge a round. Click “Start ballot,” fill out your comments, speaker points, decision, and reason for decision, and then click “Finalize.” A computer is strongly recommended for this (although you can use your phone, it is not recommended).

# Timing

It is your duty to make sure that the timing rules are followed. Start your stopwatch whenever a speech or cross-examination begins. Debaters will have their own timers going, so you don't need to tell them how much time they have left.

Speakers may not begin a new sentence after their speech time has ended. Going slightly overtime to finish a sentence is acceptable. Penalize speakers who go more than a few seconds overtime.

Lincoln-Douglas		Team Policy	
Affirmative Constructive	6	1 <sup>st</sup> Affirmative Constructive	8
Negative Constructive	7	1 <sup>st</sup> Negative Constructive	8
1 <sup>st</sup> Affirmative Rebuttal	4	2 <sup>nd</sup> Affirmative Constructive	8
Negative Rebuttal.	6	2 <sup>nd</sup> Negative Constructive.	8
2 <sup>nd</sup> Affirmative Rebuttal	3	1 <sup>st</sup> Negative Rebuttal	5
		1 <sup>st</sup> Affirmative Rebuttal	5
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Negative Rebuttal	5
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Affirmative Rebuttal	5
Preparation time	3	Preparation time	5
Cutoff time	1hr	Cutoff time	2hr
Submission time	2hr	Submission time	3hr

## Cross-Examination

Constructive speeches are followed by a 3-minute cross-examination, in which a member of the opposite side asks questions and the person who just spoke answers.

## Prep Time

Debaters also get a certain amount of preparation (prep) time between speeches. Unused prep time carries over from one speech to the next. Debaters should tell you if they are going to use prep time so you can time it.

## Cutoff Time

Cutoff time is a certain number of hours after the start time. The round should be over well before the cutoff time. If the round is still going, end it and vote against the speaker/team most responsible for the delay. This is to keep the debate fair and the tournament on schedule.

## **Submission Time**

Submission time which is a certain number of hours after the start time. You must submit your ballot before the submission time elapses.

# Theory

## The Judge is Always Right

There is no “technically correct” way to vote. It is the responsibility of the debaters to persuade you to vote for them. That means they need to adapt their presentation to what you will understand and care about.

You can vote any way you choose for any reason you choose. We only ask that you base your decisions on the content of the round as much as possible, and to set aside personal biases and special knowledge.

## Rules vs Theory

You are responsible for making sure that the rules are followed. Intervene as needed to enforce them. If a speech is overtime, you can stop it. If someone fabricated evidence, you can vote against them. Rules are mostly concerned with making sure the tournament is fair and on time.

This manual gives you an overview of the most important rules. Review the complete rules on the Ace Peak website.

Theory is mostly concerned with what people say in their speeches. Everyone’s theory is a little different. Debaters are welcome to use theory that breaks with what you see here. As you learn more about debate, expect to develop your own unique theory.

## Resolutionism

The resolution is a statement that both sides contest. A vote for the affirmative means that the resolution has been proven true; a vote for the negative means that it has been proven or presumed false.

Typically, every argument in the round should relate to whether the resolution is true.

Many resolutions begin with the words “Resolved” or “This house believes ...” This is debate convention signaling that what comes next is a resolution.

## Policy

Policy resolutions propose a change. Example: “The United States should forgive all student loan debt.” Team debate uses policy resolutions.

The affirmative tries to find one example of the resolution that is true - a Plan. They’ll offer details on their plan and reasons why you should support it; the negative will give you reasons you shouldn’t.

At the end of the debate, ask yourself two questions:

- 1) Is the plan an example of the resolution?
- 2) If the plan is passed, will the world become a better place?



If the answer to both questions is yes, vote affirmative. If not, vote negative.

## **Value**

Value resolutions assign worth to something. Example: “Freedom is more important than security.” Lincoln-Douglas debate uses value resolutions.

Typically, both debaters will propose a value - an external measure for the resolution. Then they’ll use the value to assign worth to the things in the resolution. For example, they might argue that freedom creates more happiness than security.

Good value debaters won’t just give you a strong position, they’ll explain why their position is better than their opponent’s.

At the end of the debate, ask yourself:

- 1) Is the affirmative case a coherent support of the resolution?
- 2) Is the negative case a coherent refutation of the resolution?

If the answer to only one of these questions is yes, pick the coherent case. If both cases are coherent, or if neither of them are, pick the debater whose arguments you liked best.

## **New Arguments**

Debate is all about testing ideas against each other. Debaters are expected to present all new lines of argumentation in the constructive speeches. That ensures that there’s enough time for a back-and-forth discussion of the issues.

If a debater presents a new line of argumentation in a rebuttal, ask yourself: “Could this argument have been presented in a constructive?” If the answer is yes, you’re not going to get a chance to hear a proper debate on that argument. Consider reducing the weight you place on that argument, or throwing it out completely.

## **Dropped Arguments**

Both sides should respond to each other’s arguments. If a speaker has a chance to respond to an argument and doesn’t, we call that a “Dropped argument.” Most judges treat drops as if the dropping side conceded the argument.

A common exception: in team debate, the negative often divides their arguments between their first two speeches. It’s fine if the negative doesn’t respond to the 1AC right away, as long as they do so before the constructives are over.

The other exception: if one side speaks very quickly and runs a lot of bad arguments to try to overwhelm their opponents, it’s okay if some of them are dropped. We encourage debate with a conversational style and high-quality arguments over “speed-and-spread.”

# Filling out the Ballot

## No Verbal Feedback

Please do not give the debaters any verbal feedback during or after the round. Just listen carefully and take notes, then leave the server when the debate ends.

Do not tell debaters how you voted. They'll find out after the tournament when they get a copy of your ballot.

## Online Ballot

On the individual pairing page where you're signed up to judge a set of debaters, click the "Start Ballot" button. Then fill out all the information. If you had to judge a team that you already knew or had previously judged, please click the "Conflict" button so tournament officials are aware (this button will already be selected if you have previously judged one of the teams). Then double-check everything, and click "Finalize."

You have one hour after the round cutoff time to submit your ballot.

This means that for an LD round, you have 2 hours to submit your ballot after the start time, and for a TP round, you have 3 hours to submit your ballot after the start time. *(If a TP round starts at 10 AM CT, you must submit it no later than 1 PM CT. If an LD round starts at 10 AM CT, you must submit it no later than 12 PM CT.)*

## Speaker Points

Rank the speakers in each category with 1-5 points. The numbers will automatically add up.

## Speaker Rank

Rank the speakers overall, with 1 being the best. Ranks should match the speaker point totals, so someone with 26 points must have a better rank than someone with 23 points. If speakers are tied in speaker points, give the better rank to the speaker you preferred.

## Reason for Decision

Explain why you voted the way you did. Debaters find it helpful when you identify specific arguments that persuaded you.

### HOW MANY SPEAKER POINTS?

Speaker points help us break ties if two debaters have similar win records. At the end of the tournament, we give awards to speakers with consistently high speaker points.

You can assign as many or as little speaker points as you like. Here's a rough idea of what the debaters expect:

Beginner: 18

Intermediate: 22

Advanced: 26+

## **Additional Feedback**

You're encouraged to give individual speakers additional notes about what you did and didn't like. Feedback is important. Competitors will read your thoughts carefully to learn how to improve for the next tournament. Anything you can share about the round, like your perception of the speakers or things about the round that stood out to you, will help.

## **Non-Constructive Feedback is Best**

You don't have to be a debate expert to give great feedback. Instead of telling the debaters what to change, tell them what your experience of the round was and let them figure out what to do about it. Examples of good feedback:

- *"Your last speech was well organized."*
- *"Your Roman Wars argument confused me."*
- *"You had good evidence that specifically supported your case."*
- *"Your attitude in cross-examination struck me as disrespectful."*

# Additional Resources

## Read the Rules

The complete rules are available online at the [Ace Peak website](#).

## Contact a Tournament Official

If you have questions about making a decision, submitting your ballot, or any other judging matter, contact an Ace Peak tournament official by [clicking here](#). We're happy to help.