

The Format for a Lincoln-Douglas Debate

The following is a brief outline of the format for a Lincoln-Douglas value debate and the objectives for each speech. For further discussion of debate strategies, including case writing and rebuttal technique, please see sections on debating Affirmative and debating Negative.

1st Affirmative Constructive (1AC)	6 Minutes
Negative Cross-Examination	3 Minutes
1st Negative Constructive (1NC)	7 Minutes
Affirmative Cross-Examination	3 Minutes
1st Affirmative Rebuttal (1AR)	4 Minutes
1st Negative Rebuttal (1NR)	6 Minutes
2nd Affirmative Rebuttal (2AR)	3 Minutes
Total	32 Minutes

Preparation Time: Most debate tournaments offer between two and four minutes of preparation time per debater per round to be used at the debaters discretion before speaking. Preparation time does not need to be used in one sitting. Commonly, debaters portion out their preparation time. For example, if three minutes is offered, many use one minute before the 1NC and two minutes before the 1NR. The use of preparation time varies from round to round.

1st Affirmative Constructive (1AC)

The Affirmative presents a 6-minute case affirming the resolution. A case generally includes definitions of key words, phrases, and terms in the resolution, the presentation of value and criteria argumentation, and contentions that demonstrate how the criterial standards for weighing competing value claims are met. A case can be thought of as a traditional essay with the definitions and value/criteria argumentation introducing a thesis (the main argument) and the contentions offering evidence in support of the thesis. This is a prepared, read speech.

Negative Cross-Examination

During this period the Negative has 3 minutes to ask the Affirmative questions. These questions usually concern ideas introduced in the affirmative case, and may also include other issues of resolitional significance. Cross-examination time is best spent clarifying positions that are not understood and discussing one or two topics of concern in depth.

1st Negative Constructive (INC)

Traditionally, the negative constructive presents arguments against the resolution, including value and criteria argumentation, in the form of a negative case (similar to the affirmative case, but shorter). The remaining time is spent refuting the affirmative case. Commonly, debaters spend between 3 to 4 minutes presenting a case with the remaining time used to refute the affirmative case. However, many negatives choose not to read a case, spending most or all of their time directly refuting the affirmative case.

Affirmative Cross-Examination

During this period the Affirmative has 3 minutes to ask the Negative questions. These questions usually concern ideas introduced in the affirmative case but may also include other resolutionally significant issues. Cross-examination time is best spent clarifying positions that are not understood and discussing one or two topics of concern in depth.

1st Affirmative Rebuttal (1AR)

This is considered to be the most difficult speech in the round. The Affirmative has 4 minutes to cover all arguments presented. The 1AR includes first time responses to the negative case and answers to negative arguments against the affirmative case. A time split of 2 minutes for both affirmative and negative arguments is often employed.

1st Negative Rebuttal (1NR)

The Negative refutes arguments presented in the 1AR and presents the judge with key voting issues (usually 2-4). This is the last negative speech in the debate.

2nd Affirmative Rebuttal (2AR)

This is the last speech of the round. Traditionally, the 1AR presents key voting issues (usually 2-4); however, many 1AR's cover most arguments in the round ("on the flow") and then present key voting issues. Some present key voting issues while covering the "flow". See section on debating affirmative for further discussion.

REMEMBER: BOTH THE AFFIRMATIVE AND THE NEGATIVE HAVE EQUAL SPEAKING TIME—13 MINUTES.

This information was obtained from The LD Debate Guide by Isaac Gottesman, the Assistant Coach of the Univ. of Wash. Speech and Debate Society. <http://www.uoregon.edu/~forensic/LDValue.html>