

The Junior State of America



Moderator Handbook



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Revised 2007 Edition

The Junior State Moderating Handbook

The purpose of the Junior State is to spread political awareness. But how can this be accomplished when others cannot share their ideas coherently? That's where you, the moderator, come in. As a moderator, you will be responsible for maintaining order in a room full of high school students. The job may seem

intimidating, but with this revised and simplified handbook, you will be well prepared for even the most intense debates. Just remember your goal – to promote a fair and robust exchange of ideas in an atmosphere where people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts.

Standard JSA Debate Procedure

1. Call the debate to order
2. Read the resolution
3. Introduce the main speakers
4. Appoint a timekeeper
5. Affirmative (pro) opening speech [6 min.]
6. Negative (con) opening speech [6 min.]
7. Select subsequent speakers (alternating pro and con) [3 min. each]
8. Motion to previous question
9. Negative (con) closing speech [3 min.]
10. Affirmative (pro) closing speech [3 min.]
11. Read the resolution again
12. Vote on the resolution
13. Announce the results
14. Pass out and collect Best Speaker ballots

Pre-debate Procedures

As the individual in charge of the debate, it is important that you arrive about ten minutes early to your debate. Before the debate begins...

- Introduce yourself to both main speakers.
- Make sure you know how to pronounce the main speakers' names.
- Know the exact wording of the debate resolution.

1. Call the debate to order

Although some individuals may wander into the room late, try to start your debate as promptly as

possible to ensure maximum time for subsequent speakers.

To initiate the debate, start by standing up and saying **“This debate is now called to order”** in a clear, firm voice. If necessary, tap your gavel to get the audience's attention.

Spend a minute or so explaining the debate procedures to the audience. Don't spend too much time on this, as many people in the audience are already familiar with the basic debate procedure. You may also want to thank them for attending and ask them to turn off or silence electronic devices. Establishing a firm but personable relationship with the audience is key to a successfully moderated debate.

2. Read the resolution

After explaining the procedure, read the resolution in a loud, clear voice. Make sure the audience knows the exact wording, especially if the resolution is very wordy or specific.

3. Introduce the main speakers

Introduce both main speakers very casually by stating their name, school, and position. For example, “Our pro speaker is Joe Smith from

Jefferson High School.” Also introduce yourself as the moderator.

4. Appoint a timekeeper

Ask someone in the audience to serve as timekeeper for the debate. He or she must have a watch or stopwatch (a cell phone or iPod will work, too). Inform the timekeeper of the following time signals...

Signal	Meaning
Two fingers up	Two minutes left
One finger up	One minute left
A fist or clenched fingers	Half a minute left
10...9...8...fingers	Last ten seconds
Form a “T” with hands	Time is up

5. Affirmative (pro) opening speech

The pro speaker now has **six minutes** to speak (unless otherwise noted). Introduce the speech by saying, “We will now hear a six minute speech from the proponenty.”

Let the speaker speak until his or her time is up. If they go over their time limit, politely remind them their time has expired. If there is less than **thirty seconds** remaining, announce, “The Chair will absorb the rest of the time.” If there is more than thirty seconds, they speaker can choose one of the following...

Yielding to Questions

The speaker is asked questions by the audience. Just a few rules...

1. YOU choose who asks the questions.
2. Each person can ask ONE question (NO FOLLOW-UPS).
3. Make sure the person has a question, and not simply a statement they want to announce.

Yielding to The Chair

The speaker simply forfeits any remaining time and the debate moves to the next step.

NOTE: A main speaker’s time CANNOT be extended, nor can their time be yielded to another speaker. Don’t let the audience trick you into believing this is a valid motion. (For more on motions, see “Parliamentary Motions.”)

6. Negative (con) opening speech

See Step #5, it’s the exact same procedure.

7. Select subsequent speakers

When the con speaker is finished, a subsequent speaker may speak on behalf of the proponenty, then the opponency, and so on in alternating order.

Ask the audience if anyone would like to deliver a speech for the proponenty. Several people may raise their hands, so choose the one who looks most prepared (some people jot down notes during the debate, so if you see a piece of paper, it’s likely they have something good prepared).

Subsequent speakers have **three minutes** to speak. If time remains at the end of their speech, they may yield to questions, yield to the chair, or yield to another speaker.

Yielding to Another Speaker

The subsequent speaker may choose to yield his or her remaining time to another speaker on the SAME SIDE. The second speaker only has the first speaker’s remaining time to speak, and they cannot yield to a third speaker (but they can yield to questions or the chair).

8. Motion to previous question

When there is about **ten minutes** left in the debate, ask the audience, “We are a little short on time. Do I have a motion to previous question?” Someone may motion themselves by stating, “I motion to previous question” if the debate is losing steam and becoming boring. If there is still a lot of time in the debate, you can deny the motion and continue with speeches.

For how to entertain a motion, see “Parliamentary Motions.”

9. Negative (con) closing speech

Both main speakers will now present their closing speech, beginning this time with the con speaker. He or she has **three minutes** to sum up their argument.

Time for closing speeches CANNOT be extended, and remaining time can ONLY be yielded to The Chair.

10. Affirmative (pro) closing speech

See Step #9, it’s the exact same procedure.

11. Read the resolution again

Before you take a final vote, read the resolution again in a loud, clear voice. Make sure the audience knows what the exact resolution is, because speakers may try to skew the real resolution in their favor.

12. Vote on the resolution

After reading the resolution, ask the audience, **“All those in favor of this resolution, please raise your hand.”** Ask the timekeeper to help you count. Record your results. Then, ask the audience, **“All those opposed to this resolution, please raise your hand”** and do the same. Finally, check for abstentions by

asking, **“All those abstaining, please raise your hand.”**

At many large debates, it is much easier to ask those in the audience to stand instead of simply raising their hands.

13. Announce the results

After tallying the votes, announce to the audience in a clear, loud voice...

“This resolution [passes/fails] by a vote of ‘X’ to ‘Y’ with ‘Z’ abstentions.”

ALWAYS read the affirmative votes first.

NOTE: Abstentions do not count in determining if the resolution passes or fails.

14. Pass out and collect Best Speaker ballots

Ask someone in the audience to help you pass out a Best Speaker ballot to every member of the audience. While you are passing them out, ask everyone who spoke during the debate (main and subsequent speakers) to stand and state their name and school. Make sure you collect the ballots and tally them up, but **DO NOT** reveal the Best Speaker to the audience or the main speakers.

Post-debate Procedures

After the debate, make sure to fill out the “Moderator’s Organization Sheet” completely and give it to one of the Debate Directors.

NOTE: DO NOT RELEASE THE AUDIENCE IF THE DEBATE FINISHES EARLY! KEEP THEM IN THE ROOM!

Parliamentary Motions

Parliamentary motions are motions from the audience during a debate that requires either a decision by the chair or a vote from the audience. For a list of all official JSA parliamentary motions and how to resolve them, see Robert's Rules of Order Reference Chart at the back of this handbook.

Voting on Motions

When a motion is made:

1. Ask for a second if it is required.

2. Take a voice vote by asking "All those in favor say 'aye.' All those opposed say 'nay.'"
3. If the result is unclear, take a hand vote. Only do this if time permits.
4. The chair can override the vote for time purposes.

If the chair is required to decide the outcome of the motion, use your best judgment. As you become more experienced, you will be able to predict which motions will pass and which motions will fail.

Frequently Asked Questions

What do I do if an audience member is making a statement instead of asking a question?

Politely ask them if they have a question to ask. Remind them that if they want to make a statement, they can give a subsequent speech. This happens most often at larger debates on heated topics.

What do I do if the main speaker goes overtime?

If it is only a few seconds, simply ignore it. If they continue to talk, politely ask them to conclude their speech.

What if the audience is too noisy?

This is where your moderating skills come into play. Different audiences are rowdier than others. The conventional way to deal with a noisy audience is to stand up, tap your gavel on the

table, ask the audience to "respect the speaker," and wait until they are quiet to continue.

What if an audience member begins to argue with the speaker?

Interrupt the audience member and remind them that there are not follow-up questions. Also remind them that they can give a subsequent speech if they have an opinion or statement they wish to make known.

How do I handle an "extreme speaker"?

There are three types of "extreme speakers": vulgar, emotional, and comedic. Vulgar speakers use profane language, and the best solution is to ask them to tone down the profanity or they will have to end their speech. Emotional speakers are ones who tell vivid, personal stories in an attempt to sway the audience. If their story is too graphic or sparks disorder in the audience, remind them that a debate is not the time to share highly personal stories. Comedic speakers vary from

simply telling jokes to putting on a Borat accent and insulting someone in the room. Only allow comedic speakers if there are no more serious issues the audience wants to bring up.

How do I resolve a tie vote?

As the moderator, it is your responsibility to break the tie. If you do not wish to vote, the tied vote means the motion fails. This applies to parliamentary motions as well as the debate resolutions.

What do I do if audience members are being disruptive?

Between speakers, remind them that they need to respect the speakers. If they are causing serious distraction, you may interrupt the speaker to remind them. If they continue being disruptive, you have can ask them to leave the room. Don't let disruptive behavior go unaddressed, as it will disappoint the rest of the audience and portray you as a weak moderator.

What if a speaker isn't loud enough?

Politely ask them to speak up. If there is a microphone and the debate is in a large room, ask the speaker to use the microphone, but do not stop a debate to go hook up a microphone system unless it can be done very quickly.

What if the debate seems to have stalled and nobody wants to give a subsequent speech?

This is rare, but it can sometimes occur in smaller debates on less-heated topics. To gain the interest of the audience, you can entertain a motion to caucus for a few minutes so the audience members can prepare a speech. During these caucuses, main speakers may interact with the audience and give them ideas for a speech. If there are still no volunteers, the main speakers may continue to speak as subsequent speakers.

If there are no volunteers for only one side of the debate, ask if someone wants to play "Devil's Advocate" and give a subsequent speech against the side they support.

What do I do if the subsequent speaker is speaking on the wrong side of the debate?

Politely interrupt the speaker and remind them of the resolution. Ask them if they are certain their speech supports the side of the debate they are speaking on. If they do support the side they are speaking for, allow them to continue. If they were confused about the resolution and realize they are speaking for the wrong side, allow them to return to their seat and call them up the next time their side speaks.

Now You're In Control!

Congratulations! You now know how to moderate an official JSA debate! To begin moderating, attend a moderating training session or contact your state-wide Director of Moderating. Remember, as a moderator, you are responsible for keeping the debate running smoothly, ending the debate on time, and maintaining order in the room. Keep these three

goals in mind and you'll be able to moderate any debate with the upmost efficiency.

Remember, as the moderator, YOU are in control!

Respect the Speaker

It may be a good idea to read the following to the audience before the debate begins.

The phrase “Respect the Speaker” is all too often used during JSA debates, and as a result it has lost most of its meaning. In JSA debates, all the moderator asks of you is to remain quiet and respectful so that the audience does the same when it’s your turn to speak. To ensure that all of the debates this weekend create an open environment for the exchange of ideas, remember to “Respect the Speaker” by **NOT**...

- Using cell phones, MP3 players, or iPods.
- Talking or carrying on side-conversations.
- Shouting or excessively cheering to the point of distraction.
- Sleeping during a speech.
- Eating or drinking to the point of distraction.
- Leaving trash or loose papers lying around the room.
- Leaving the room during the debate.
- Straying from JSA debate procedures.
- Interfering with the moderator’s job.
- Room-hopping during debates.

Also keep in mind to listen to the moderator’s instructions carefully during the debates. By “Respecting the Speaker” we can ensure that the debates this weekend run smoothly and efficiently.

Moderator Checklist

- Call the debate to order
 - Stand; get the audience's attention; and say, "This debate is now called to order" in a loud, clear voice
 - Read the "Respect the Speaker" rules of debate etiquette.
- Read the resolution
- Introduce the main speakers
 - State their name, school, and position
 - "Our pro speaker is Joe Smith from Jefferson High School"
- Appoint a timekeeper
 - Make sure they know the signals (see Handbook if they forgot)
- Pro opening speech
 - Announce, "We will now hear a six minute speech from the proponenty."
 - If there are **more than thirty seconds** left at the end of the speech, they may take questions if they wish to do so.
 - If there are **less than thirty seconds** left at the end of the speech, announce "the chair will absorb the rest of the time."
 - Reminder: Main speakers' time may not be extended.
- Con opening speech
 - Announce, "We will now hear a six minute speech from the opponency."
 - Same rules as above
- Select subsequent speakers
 - Alternate: Pro, Con, Pro, Con, etc.
 - Three minutes each
 - Remember to write down their name and school on the Moderator Organization Sheet.
- Motion to previous question
 - An ideal time to motion to previous question is when there is about ten minutes left in the debate.
 - Announce to the audience, "We are a little short on time. Do I have a motion to previous question?"
 - If nobody motions, remember you can automatically enforce the motion and move on to closing speeches.
- Con closing speech
 - Announce, "We will now hear a three minute closing from the opponency."
 - Three minutes
 - No questions are allowed (even if there is time left over)
 - No time extensions
- Pro closing speech
 - Announce, "We will not hear a three minute closing from the proponenty."
 - Same rules as above.
- Read the resolution again
- Vote on resolution
 - Good idea to take a standing vote instead of a hand vote.
- Announce the results
- Pass out and collect Best Speaker ballots
 - If you have time after the debate, please count the ballots and determine who won Best Speaker. (DO NOT REVEAL THE WINNER!)
- Make sure to fill out the Moderator Organization Sheet entirely and return to the registration desk.

Moderator's Organization Sheet

Resolved, _____

Moderator's Name: _____ School: _____

<p>For JSA State Conventions:</p> <p>Block #: _____</p> <p>Room Name: _____</p>
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Main Speaker – Pro

Name: _____

School: _____

<p>Standard JSA Debate Procedure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call the debate to order 2. Read the resolution 3. Introduce the main speakers 4. Appoint a timekeeper 5. Affirmative (pro) opening speech [6 min.] 6. Negative (con) opening speech [6 min.] 7. Select subsequent speakers (alternating pro and con) [3 min. each] 8. Motion to previous question 9. Negative (con) closing speech [3 min.] 10. Affirmative (pro) closing speech [3 min.] 11. Read the resolution again 12. Vote on the resolution 13. Announce the results 14. Pass out and collect Best Speaker ballots

Main Speaker – Con

Name: _____

School: _____

Subsequent Speakers – Pro (Name and School):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Subsequent Speakers – Con (Name and School):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Voting Results: **Pro:** _____ **Con:** _____ **Abstentions:** _____ **Pass** __ **Fail** __ (check one)

Best Speaker: _____ **School:** _____

Please fill this out completely and return to one of the Directors of Debate

Robert's Rules of Order Reference Chart

Name of Motion ¹	Purpose	May Motion Interrupt Speaker?	Does Motion Need a Second?	Is Motion Debatable?	Vote Needed to Pass Motion
Rise to a point of order ²	Correct an error in parliamentary procedure	Yes	No	No	Moderator's Decision
Rise to a point of personal privilege ²	Make a personal request during proceedings	Yes	No	No	Moderator's Decision
Rise to a point of parliamentary inquiry ²	Ask a question about the proceedings	Yes	No	No	Moderator's Decision
To adjourn	Dismiss the meeting	No	Yes	No	Majority
To recess or caucus ³	Pause the meeting for a specified length of time	No	Yes	Only the length of time	Majority
To suspend the rules	Take action contrary to established rules	No	Yes	No	Two-thirds
To extend the speaker's time ^{4, 6}	Take action contrary to pre-set time limits	No	Yes	Only the length of time	Two-thirds
To call the previous question	Stop debating and go to closing speeches	No	Yes	No	Two-thirds
To amend ⁵	Modify or change resolution	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Main motion or resolution	Introduce business or present a resolution	No	Yes	Yes	Majority

Notes:

1. The higher a motion appears on the chart, the higher its priority or importance. Deal with higher priority motions first.
2. The top three motions are required to keep the debate running smoothly. Immediately decide on the action.
3. Calling for a caucus may only be passed once per debate for a maximum of a five-minute recess.
4. Motion may be adopted only once per speaker for a maximum of a one-minute extension.
5. May only be made with prior notice to assembly and required both main speakers' approval.
6. Motion may only be used for subsequent speakers.

This Handbook Revised by Adam Quaal, Director of Moderating, Southern California, 2007-2008