



Some pet peeves of mine have been showing up again when I last judged debates. So, dear debaters, I humbly ask that...

a. You don't turn around and walk to your opponent when taking his point of information.

You know what happens then? I get to see your untucked shirt under your blazer or your painfully undeveloped ass. I don't want to see it. Why are you walking to your opponent? Trying to stare that person down? Your squinty myopic eyes behind your glasses are scaring nobody. If you advance your cases at the 6th minute of an 8 minute speech and complain that you lack time, why don't you save all that time walking to and fro and just concentrate on your speech then? hmm? Which moronic judges / coaches told you to go gaze into the POI giver's soul? please call them up, arrange a meal together and give them a tight slap. Thanks.

b. You wear something nice and formal. Students are expected to wear the appropriate uniform for activities in which they are representing your school. For debate, that's expected to be the number one attire or school uniform with tie. Please adhere to that. Please don't use the opportunity to show off your nice converse shoes. And don't pretend that you are too poor to buy proper shoes. Those converse shoes cost a bomb. I sure would have been yelled at if I had turned up for track events in my pajamas. Coaches, please yell some! (To the student who was debating in t shirt and track suit pants because all your uniforms are in the wash, please plan your laundry better).

c. You start your speech, please. This is not that serious an issue but still demonstrates a lack of understanding of the speaker's role. Once you have been given the floor, you decide when to start speaking. It's an advantage. Use it. Kindly stop this habit of coming up to the floor, staring at me with doe eyes and waiting for me to say go ahead. You look retarded. If you think the judge is still writing things down and is not ready, then stay in your seat till he or she is.

d. You take more than one POI. I don't know when it suddenly became acceptable to take just one POI on the circuit but it seems to be the rage nowadays. DON'T. The expectation is that you take two at the JC level. Take two. It shows you can plan your speeches well and that you are not afraid to take POIs and engage. At least if you plan for two and forget to take one, you still have one left. If you plan for one and forget to take one, you have zero. A big no no. I have been docking points for those who fail to take two POIs. You need to allocate your time better. Try to avoid taking a walk to your opponent's table during the speech. I hear it saves some time.

e. You tell your supporters, teammates so keep their butts glued to the chair while people are speaking. Something is very wrong when I judge three rounds and in all three rounds, someone gets up in the middle of a speech and walks out of the room. Hey, buddy.

That's very very rude. It's annoying and disrupts the speakers. It also distracts the judge, which is not a nice thing to do in an event where the judges need to listen hard to the speakers. If you walk out when the opposing team is speaking, that's almost like you are cheating. Why not bring drums next time? If you walk out when your own speaker is speaking, then that's just dumb. Speakers, slap them.

f. You find some examples. I believe new depths in Singapore debate has been reached when the example cited by a team is "Country A" vs "Country B." It's even sadder when the opposing team picks up the same example here. If you had to resort to such measures due to your utter inability to think of anything, I thank you for not just making up random examples. However, perhaps a long term solution involving some reading and inclusion of examples into your speech might be an even better idea! oh, do try it, please! I swear judges won't penalise you for having examples! Scout's honour!

g. You thirds -gimme new stuff! Oh third speakers, please please add more to the debate? I don't need new constructive material from you (even though your teammates' decision to advance at 6 min means your points are painfully underdeveloped and desperately needs some TLC). I would like you to develop the points raised, bring in new rebuttals and definitely some new examples. I know you like your first speaker and have a secret crush on your second speaker. But that's no excuse for you to repeat everything they have said and pretend that's a third's speech. If that was enough for thirds, why, I'd just replace all thirds with tape recorders and play back the first two speakers' rebuttals instead. okie?

h. You use the loo nice and early. When your are given 1 hour to prepare, you have 1 hour to prepare. Within that one hour, I highly recommend that you visit the washroom, do the necessary, and return to the set. When the match is slated to start at 1pm, I want to start at 1pm and not at 1.15pm because I have to run around trying to find the speakers. And one of these days, you will really regret this habit when a cranky judge who had just returned from India

refuses to let you all use the bathroom. hmm. Then again, this might stop you all from walking all over the place during POIs. Better pack your diapers boys and girls.