Public Forum Debate

Public Forum involves opposing teams of two, debating a topic concerning a current event. Proceeding a coin toss, the winners choose which side to debate (PRO or CON) or which speaker position they prefer (1st or 2nd), and the other team receives the remaining option. Students present cases, engage in rebuttal and refutation, and also participate in a “crossfire” (similar to a cross examination) with the opportunity to question the opposing team. Often times community members are recruited to judge this event.

As a team event, students who compete in Public Forum need to be able to work well with a partner. Balanced teams, both in terms of preparation before debates and contributions within a debate, helps provide a competitive advantage during tournaments. PF is the newest form of debate in the Association and looks at current event topics. Students who do Public Forum must be prepared to debate in front of judges without any formal debate training. Being able to persuade a range of judges is a central component to this event. Additionally, PF is focused upon debating varying resolutions that change frequently, which exposes students to a variety of topics during a singular competitive season.

Time Limits

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| **Speech** | **Time Limit** | **Purpose** |
| Team A Speaker 1 – Constructive | 4 minutes | Present the team’s case |
| Team B Speaker 1 – Constructive | 4 minutes | Present the team’s case |
| Crossfire | 3 minutes | Speaker 1 from Team A & B alternate asking and answering questions |
| Team A Speaker 2 – Rebuttal | 4 minutes | Refute the opposing side’s arguments |
| Team B Speaker 2 – Rebuttal | 4 minutes | Refute the opposing side’s arguments |
| Crossfire | 3 minutes | Speaker 2 from Team A & B alternate asking and answering questions |
| Team A Speaker 1 – Summary | 2 minutes | Begin crystallizing the main issues in the round |
| Team B Speaker 1 – Summary | 2 minutes | Begin crystallizing the main issues in the round |
| Grand Crossfire | 3 minutes | All four debaters involved in a crossfire at once |
| Team A Speaker 2 – Final Focus | 2 minutes | Explain reasons that you win the round |
| Team B Speaker 2 – Final Focus | 2 minutes | Explain reasons that you win the round |

\*Each team is entitled to two minutes of prep time during the round.