

BDC's "New Year's Resolution" Debate Event

Welcome to the "New Year's Resolution (Jan. 7th, 5-7:30 pm)" event guide. This will be a speech and debate contest for elementary, middle school, and high school students (grades 3-12). This event is a modified version of Public Forum Debate: Each debater presents a 1-2 min speech, answers one question from each opponent, and when all four debaters are finished presenting and answering, the debate ends with a "grand" crossfire*. The particulars are described below (including the debate topics).

*Crossfire is similar to cross-examination, yet it uses a more back-and-forth style of arguing and differs quite a bit from traditional cross-examination.

Elementary Topic: ***On-balance, switching to 100% renewable energy is desirable.***

MS/HS Topic: ***On-balance, regulation of the cryptocurrency industry is desirable.***

Before moving on, a brief thank you to our supporters. We are offering this event at no cost, exclusively for the students who participated in BDC's six-week beginner course. We have invited more experienced students to help mentor and judge the younger and less experienced students as a means of earning volunteer credit. We have invited adults to supervise and judge the speech and debate performances.

"Thank you," for volunteering your time and energy to this worthy cause – we are deeply appreciative of your support, and we hope we can count on you to volunteer again.

Volunteer Opportunities: <https://bluegrassdebate.org/volunteer-opportunities/>

Guiding Principles of the Event:

Three Burdens in Debate: Proof, refutation, and rejoinder.

https://debate.uvm.edu/dcpdf/Gary_Rybold_Speaking_Listening_Understnding_2006.pdf (pp 12-14)

1. **Proof:** Students will have researched their points. If you hear a citation, the student has gone above and beyond. If you are hearing "because" and students are explaining more than just "what" a robot can do, but also "how and why," then they are meeting their burden of proof. Using evidence and/or examples are considered proof.
2. **Rebuttal:** Student are expected to ask questions related to the speech or the crossfire point made by their opponent. We taught them to use evidence-based thinking and ideas when phrasing their questions and answers. Is the question relevant to the current issue? Did the speaker actually answer the question? These are excellent questions that judges should be listening for. Let's not make this a beauty pageant where beautiful fluency is rewarded more than actual critical thinking and debate. They are young – please don't be harsh about it.
3. **Rejoinder:** Students will give a speech (consisting of just one argument supported by two reasons/evidence) and each opponent will ask that speaker a question (hopefully related to the speech). The speaker is expected to defend their argument by answering the questions that are acting as a challenge against the speaker's argument. Are they simply repeating (for fluency)? Are they actually engaging the question with their answer? You as the judge will decide.

Guiding Principles of the Event: Continued...

Three Artistic Proofs for Persuasion (Aristotle): Logos, Pathos, and Ethos.
<http://www.atlas101.ca/pm/concepts/logos-ethos-and-pathos/> (Rhetorical Appeals, Aristotle)

1. **Logos:** The speech is expected to last no more than 90 sec (2 min max). The student is providing an introduction, one argument, and a simple conclusion. Was the speech organized? Could you understand their explanations? Does their speech make sense? Please give positive encouragement about this.
2. **Pathos:** Students were asked to engage the listener by speaking in a convincing manner. Did the speaker look and sound like they were concerned about the topic? Did they have passion and/or enthusiasm in their speaking mannerisms?
3. **Ethos:** Students are expected to speak to you and not just read to you – there is a difference. Can you tell? Are they looking into the camera (or at least in its direction)? They are encouraged to speak from limited notes, but a manuscript is allowed. Did they speak with confidence (facial expressions, body posture, smooth gestures)? Did they use evidence that sounded to you like a strong source? There are many things a speaker can do to gain credibility in your eyes!

Making the Decision:

1. **Ranking the Speakers:** Each speaker is to be ranked relative to each of the participants, including their partner. Ranking: 1-4.
2. **Rating the Speakers:** Each speaker is given “speaker points” indicating how well they spoke and how well they debated. Please use the “principles” to help guide your decision. Rating: 1-30 (preferably = 24-30 & No ties! .5 = tie breaker!)
 - a. 29.5 to 30 = outstanding, nearly perfect!
 - b. 28.5 to 29 = excellent
 - c. 27.5 to 28 = above average
 - d. 26.0 to 27 = average(Anything lower? = please check with us before giving a “below average” score.)
3. **Choosing the Side:** This decision is independent of how well they spoke; which team was most effective in presenting/defending their side? Perhaps you may consider the overall impact of one side vs the other? We ask you NOT to choose the side that you personally agreed with. Which team did the better debating? You get to decide – no ties are allowed. ***Please be fair-minded!!!***

The Modified PF Debate Format: Coin Flip for ***Their Side*** or ***Speaking First/Second***.

1. Speaker 1, from Team A: Presents one argument with proof (Up to 2 min).
Speakers from Team B: Each asks one question; related to the argument.
Speaker 1, from Team A: Answers each question – one at a time (2 total).
[Process Repeats: Team A, then Team B, back to A, ends with B.]
2. Grand Crossfire: Both teams will argue in the grand crossfire style (3 min total).
3. Judges write their ballot (sent electronically) and gives oral feedback to all.
Link to the online ballot: <https://bluegrassdebate.org/ballot-public-forum-debate/>