



"Bringing Debate to the Bluegrass!"

225 Funkhouser Building, #225
Lexington, Kentucky 40508
<https://bluegrassdebate.org/>

BDC's "Youth Leadership Conference" (Championship Event)

Welcome to the **BDC Youth Leadership Conference (State Championship)**, which takes place on Saturday, May 7, 2022, from 9 am to 7 pm (Eastern). This will primarily be a "public forum" style debate contest for students, (grades 6-12), yet we are planning to host leadership-themed workshops and breakout activities throughout the conference. We believe that debate is a powerful vehicle for delivering a deeper learning educational experience for our students. We at the **Bluegrass Debate Coalition (BDC)**, value diversity, equality, and inclusion and we demonstrate these values through our relationships within the communities, schools, and organizations that we serve. **Respect** is of paramount importance. When we show respect for others it speaks volumes about how we see ourselves and our relevance to our community and our relationship with the people around us. Demeaning behavior, manipulation of evidence, or distortion of definitions will not be tolerated – a spirit of intellectualism, a culture of kindness, and a genuine respect for others is expected and is considered a vital component toward building a foundation of leadership that seeks to develop and enhance 21st-century skills, which can open tremendous pathways of success both in the here and now and in the future to come. The BDC is a non-profit organization at the University of Kentucky - we welcome you to our campus for an in-person debate event.

Topic: *On balance, increasing organic agriculture in the United States is desirable.*

This event utilizes the **Public Forum Debate** style (following the [NSDA Guidelines for high school](#)). In this style of debate, students work in pairs to present arguments (speech), refute opposing arguments, and defend their arguments, working as part of a team, with each partner fulfilling specific expectations. The BDC will follow the National Speech and Debate Association guidelines as closely as possible, and the BDC will make a fair, yet final determination for anything not clarified in those guidelines (see guidelines for some minor changes). During crossfires, students are encouraged to interact assertively and with confidence, yet are discouraged from interrupting others, speaking in a long-winded manner, or making excessive evidence demands – such behavior is discouraged and those employing such tactics can expect an automatic point reduction to their speaking score. Civility and respectful decorum are expected at all times. This is a leadership conference, and we expect our young leaders to engage each other with dignity, and respect, toward effective collaboration when engaged in argument – we want to see constructive behavior and true sports behavior from our competitors.

Shortly after the debate, a panel of judges will provide an oral assessment of the debaters' performance. Prior to that, participants are encouraged to write a self-assessment of the debate in a journal, which students can later review with their parents and/or teachers – it is perhaps best to write down the ideas while they are still fresh in your mind. In addition to writing self-assessments, please have the students take notes from all the feedback given by the judge (or judges). The judges will often write feedback on the judging form (ballot), yet this is often limited in comparison to the oral assessment.

"Thank you," to those 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 in the future. Being a judge requires no prior experience. All we ask is that you be fair-minded in your decision-making and that you provide objective and honest feedback to the students. It is their job to convince you about their arguments and ideas, so please don't feel as if you (the judge) need to have done any research about debating or about the debate topic. Please stay off your phone and give the debaters your full and undivided attention.

Tips for Judging Effectively:

1. Try to focus on the skills they are demonstrating for you. They present arguments, ask/answer questions, and refute arguments from the opposing team. The issues matter in this format – so, please take notes.
2. Be kind in your demeanor. Students can get nervous and when this happens it might affect their performance. Try using a reassuring tone and help keep things calm.
3. Work diligently to avoid bias. You may find yourself favoring certain facts or ideas not because of what the debaters are doing, but because of your own feelings or knowledge.



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)

To better understand these terms, please refer to Dr. Rybold's textbook. Here are my (Bill Eddy) comments:

1. **Proof:** Students are expected to have researched their arguments and ideas. Please try not to be overly critical about how a student cites their sources. If a student is explaining ideas using how and why (using "because") and not just 'what' organic agriculture does, then that student should be credited with having met their proof burden. Evidence is preferable to non-evidence.
2. **Rebuttal:** Students are expected to disagree with each argument made by their opponent. This should be well-organized, contain proof (as above), and be spoken with kindness and respect. ex. They said..., we say..., because..., and therefore... (This format is encouraged; not required)
3. **Rejoinder:** Students are encouraged to defend their arguments by refuting the rebuttals made against them. Simply repeating and summarizing the argument is not refuting and thus is not meeting debate expectations. Does the debater engage the rebuttal or simply speak around it?

Three Artistic Proofs for Persuasion (Aristotle): Logos, Pathos, and Ethos.

<http://www.atlas101.ca/pm/concepts/logos-ethos-and-pathos/> (Rhetorical Appeals, Aristotle). Comments are from me...

1. **Logos:** The speech is expected to last no more than 4 minutes (without grace). The student provides an introduction, some arguments, and a simple conclusion (if time permits). Was the speech organized? Could you understand their explanations? Does the 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 using eye contact? 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 little things a speaker can do to gain credibility in your eyes!

Making the Decision:

1. **Ranking and Rating the Speakers:** Each speaker is to be ranked relative to the others (1-4).
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 = 26-30 & No ties! .5 = a 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 (Please try not to give anyone a "below average" score.)
2. **Choosing the Winning Side:** This decision is to be based either on how well the debaters performed their roles as a team **or** by winning certain issues in the debate. Please do not choose a side because you personally agree with it. So, which team did the better debating? Trust yourself – no ties are allowed...
Please be as kind, objective, and fair-minded as possible!
3. **Submitting the Ballot:** After the debate, either submit it electronically or return the paper ballot ASAP. Please be mindful of the need to return the ballot vs. the amount of oral feedback given.



Public Forum Debate: A *Coin Flip* for *The Side* (pro or con) or *Speaking Order* (First or Second).

<https://bluegrassdebate.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Public-Forum-Debate-Revised-Slightly-by-BDC-2022-03-28.pdf>

1. Presentation of Arguments (Presenting Our Team's Arguments): 4 min.

Speaker 1 (Team A), presents 2-3 arguments with proof [4 min].

Speaker 1 (Team B), presents 2-3 arguments with proof [4 min].

[3 min Crossfire: back-and-forth arguing (being respectful is critical) between these speakers.]

The key to judging the "presentation" has a lot to do with clarity and confidence. Were the debaters speaking clearly, confidently, and with passion? Did they use solid logic, reasoning, and evidence to back up what they were saying? How was their fluency (um's, uh's, and like's)? It is their burden to make their arguments clear and meaningful to you... if they spoke too fast or were unclear, then it is not you (the judge) who has done something wrong – the debaters need to modify their presentation to meet a professional standard for delivery, and clarity – how will these debaters become effective leaders if the people don't understand what these future leaders are saying?

2. Rebuttals (Refuting the Opposing Team's Arguments): 4 min.

Speaker 2 (Team A), refutes Team B's arguments with proof [4 min].

Speaker 2 (Team B), refutes Team A's arguments with proof [4 min].

[3 min Crossfire: back-and-forth arguing (being respectful is critical) between these speakers.]

The key to judging the "rebuttals" has a lot to do with how organized the debaters are. Were you able to take notes on what the debaters were saying? Did they make it clear to you, which argument they were refuting, and did they also make it clear to you when they moved on to start refuting a different argument? Here is something that separates a high-functioning debater from someone who is still in the earlier stages of development in the activity; the experienced debater is using evidence/reasoning to disprove specific things the opponent said, whereas the less experienced debater often sounds like they are simply "presenting" information to you that sounds like it goes against the opposing team's case, but this might not actually be the case. Please try your best to take notes on what is being said and if the debaters are not making that easy for you, then that is exactly the kind of thing they should be made aware of on your ballot and/or in the oral assessment at the end.

3. Rejoinders (Refuting the Opposing Team's Rebuttals): 3 min.

Speaker 1 (Team A), defends their side's arguments with proof – refuting the rebuttals [3 min].

Speaker 1 (Team B), presents 2-3 arguments with proof min [3 min].

[3 min Grand Crossfire: back-and-forth arguing between all the speakers. *Using Civility and Respect!*]

The key to judging the "rejoinders" is very similar to what was written above. One of the things to listen for is whether or not the speaker is repeating their original point for a purpose or as their primary goal for the speech. An experienced debater will briefly summarize (repeat) for the purpose of clarifying the point before moving on to refute the rebuttals made by the opposing team. A less experienced debater might not have much evidence and/or reasoning to refute the specific rebuttals against the argument, so they will spend an excessive amount of time reminding you what was said previously and either attempt to ignore those rebuttals or to assert (not prove) that the rebuttals are somehow irrelevant. Taking notes is important – when someone uses repetition as a strategy and prewrites really strong summaries, it can sound really persuasive, yet it 100% fails in meeting the expectations of debate – rebuttals must be refuted or else it is understood by all that the speaker has agreed to those points. This is critical to understand – repeating is not a rejoinder! The rejoinder is a burden in all forms of debate. By not refuting a rebuttal, no matter how eloquent the speaker was in their "summary speech" (a proper pronoun in this style of debate), the speaker has failed their burden and the argument being defended is lost.



4. Closing Speeches (A final appeal to the judge(s) – often referred to as “voting issues”): 3 min.

Speaker 2 (Team A), refutes Team B’s defense (optional). with a final appeal to judge(s) [3 min].

Speaker 2 (Team B), refutes Team B’s defense (optional). With a final appeal to judge(s) [3 min].

[Debate Ends: Self-reflection and oral assessment for 5+ min – Pls be mindful of the schedule!]

IMPORTANT: NSDA guidelines call for a 2 minute “final focus” speech. BDC offers 3 minutes instead.

The key to judging the final speeches (called the “Final Focus”) is to listen carefully and try to determine whether or not you agree with the debaters’ assessments. If the debaters are claiming that certain arguments were “dropped” (not refuted) and they communicate the importance of these arguments, then the debater seems to be doing well with you. If your notes don’t back up what the debater is saying, there are two issues of concern, with the first being it was their burden to make things clear, so if it is not clear then they must accept the consequences of you not agreeing with what they’re saying. Another important factor is whether or not the point is relevant to you (the judge), especially in comparison to other issues in the debate that you deem to be of greater significance than the issue before you. Here is the key... be as fair-minded as possible and try to give them the benefit of the doubt, but if it’s not in your notes or possibly it has become distorted in the debate (they said something similar to this point, but not exactly the point being made to you now), then trust your instincts on the matter and find a different argument to settle the debate in your mind. There will often be subjectivity involved in your decision – this is unavoidable and that’s why we ask you to be mindful of your own bias and be fair-minded as a listener. No matter what the decision you make is... it is not wrong so long as it was as objective as possible and was not based on matters outside the debate. Picking the specific issue or reason for why you chose one team over another is often the most difficult part of making a decision as a judge. We thank you for making the effort to be fair.

IMPORTANT: Baseless accusations and/or accusations aimed at the character of one or more of the debaters is not to be tolerated. If either of the debaters were to resort to making false, claims about missing evidence or dropping important points when it is obvious to you that no such thing has happened – it is an automatic point reduction (severe) and can be the basis for voting against a team altogether. If there really was “missing evidence” and the team was respectful in the way, they pointed it out – respect is the key. Making unfounded accusations is the part that matters most. Making it personal as an attack on one’s character is the unprofessional part that needs correction. Please do not reward teams for these tactics! It is part of a toxic culture here in Kentucky that is best addressed by judges not rewarding it. No matter how powerful a debate team is... if they use ‘dirty’ tactics and personal attacks, snobbery and/or intellectual bullying as part of their strategy, they should not be rewarded with perfect speaking scores. Teams must be held accountable for the way they conduct themselves in a leadership conference.

5. Crossfires: 3 min (each).

Note: For those who are not aware of the crossfire style of debating, it is a back-and-forth style of arguing. They are matching their wits and research against that of their opponents. Try not to allow things to become aggressive during the crossfire – part of their score is based on how kind and respectful they are – please don’t reward overly intense or overly assertive behavior... it is the role of the judge to keep things calm and civil. If you stop the timer, you can redirect the behavior, then with kindness, encourage them to be nicer and resume the crossfire.

Note: You are fulfilling the role of the adult in the room – if you laugh and go along with snobbery, people cutting off their opponent in the middle of a point, or saying snide comments, then the debaters will take their cue from your attitude, and this may encourage them to become harsh or to attempt to assert dominance, which are not among the traits of professionalism we are encouraging for our students.
Judges who cannot or will not fulfill this role will simply be removed from the event.



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Youth Leadership Conference (State Championship)

Schedule for BDC Debate Championship:

Saturday, May 7, 2022, 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM

09:00 AM to 09:30 AM = Orientation

09:45 AM to 10:45 AM = Round 1

11:00 AM to 12:00 PM = Round 2

12:15 PM to 01:15 PM = Round 3

01:30 PM to 02:00 PM = Lunch (Free Food is Provided!)

02:15 PM to 03:15 PM = Round 4

03:45 PM to 04:45 PM = Round 5

05:00 PM to 05:30 PM = Awards (After awards, we are switching to a different building!)

06:00 PM to 07:00 PM = Finals (Both)

Location on Campus:

Patterson Hall [\[MAP\]](#),

120 Campus Dr,

Lexington, KY 40508

Nearest Cross: Limestone and Avenue of Champions

An ideal dop-off: McDonald's! You can see the building from McD's parking lot.

Note: We can watch (or walk with) your child from there to our building – it is very close.

Parking is free (Cornerstone Parking Garage):

The Cornerstone [\[MAP\]](#),

401 S Limestone,

Lexington, KY 40508

Nearest Cross: Limestone and Avenue of Champions

Tournament Information:

Link: <https://bluegrassdebate.org/leadership/>

Interactive Campus Map: <https://maps.uky.edu/campusmap/>

Tournament Contact:

Bill Eddy (aka Coach Bill)

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714/655-8135 (text is preferred)