SADA

South Australian Debating Assocation Inc

GUIDE TO ADJUDICATING

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ABOUT THE SADA

Founded in 1965, the South Australian Debating Association (the **SADA**) is South Australia's leading debating association, providing coaching, adjudicators and education services to students of all ages and abilities. The SADA co-ordinates the State's largest and longest running schools competition and the State's only adults debating competition. As the sole South Australian affiliate of the Australian Debating Federation the SADA administers the South Australian Schools' State Debating Team. National affiliation recognises the quality of the SADA's debating program and rigorous adjudicator accreditation process. This affiliation affords the SADA access to the latest developments in debating both Australia-wide and internationally, ensuring that the SADA continues to run an engaging program which benefits students' personal and academic development.

The SADA adjudicator pool is the highest standard of any South Australian debating organisation. A number of senior adjudicators are nationally accredited by the Australian Debating Federation. All SADA adjudicators are university graduates or students studying law, medicine or humanities disciplines.

PREFACE

This guide is primarily designed to assist adjudicators who adjudicate debates for the SADA. The guide is also a valuable resource for debaters, coaches and school debating co-ordinators as it discusses all the requirements for successful schools debating. It should be read in conjunction with the other education materials produced, or provided by, the SADA.

This guide is produced with the authority of the SADA Executive. It represents the SADA's view on how debates should be adjudicated and the SADA's expectations of adjudicators. This resource may be valuable in understanding how an adjudicator awards a debate. Whilst this guide outlines the principles an adjudicator should observe any decision must be adapted to the nature and standard of any given debate to ensure a fair and reasonable result. This guide should not be considered an artificial rule book on how to adjudicate but rather a general reference resource on debating.

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1.   Introduction

The adjudicator determines which of the teams has performed better in a debate. This determination is made according to which team was more persuasive within the rules of debating, not according to which side of the argument an adjudicator agrees with.

To determine the result an adjudicator allots a mark to each team out of a maximum of 300 of which 100 marks are apportioned to each speaker on the following basis:

- Matter: maximum 40 marks
- Manner: maximum 40 marks
- Method: maximum 20 marks

Matter is the substance of the speech, manner is the presentation of the speech and method is the structure of the speech and arguments.

2. Matter

An affirmative team must offer arguments in support of the topic and a negative team must refute the topic. It is not sufficient for a negative team to attempt merely to prove that the affirmative case is wrong. The negative is required to put forward a definite case showing how and why the proposition is incorrect.

2.1 Judging Matter

The adjudicator is not expected to be an expert on the debate's subject matter. An adjudicator should never allow their own view on, or knowledge of, a topic area influence their judgment. Determining who has the most persuasive matter requires each team's matter to be compared against the other. The team with the best matter will have more successfully advanced their own arguments whilst also undermining the opposition's material.

2.1.1 *The Reasonable Person Test*

The adjudicator must weigh the matter put forward as an average reasonable person. Any relevant argument which would logically and substantively appeal to the average reasonable person must be given credit and will stand until rebutted by the opposing team. In deciding whether an argument would appeal to the average reasonable person, the adjudicator should assure themselves that the argument is supported by logical reasoning based on any or all of the following:

- commonsense;
- logical explanation which details and justifies the chain of reasoning;
- general knowledge; and
- quoted authority which is explained and analysed by the speaker.

It is not for the adjudicator to defend, rebut or add to any of the arguments put forward, but they may, in their adjudication, state why certain arguments or rebuttal appealed to them as an average reasonable person. They should not, however, go outside the points, arguments or rebuttal relied on by the speakers. Under no circumstances should they add arguments or counterarguments of their own.

(i)   Unreasonable Arguments

Where a speaker makes an unreasonable argument the adjudicator may reject the argument if the average reasonable person would not accept the proposition. For example an argument that all children with an IQ of under 130 should not be afforded healthcare would not be accepted by the reasonable person as it is capricious, inhumane and defies mainstream belief in the value of human life and equality of opportunity. In such an instance the adjudicator may deduct matter marks even if the opposition do not provide rebuttal.

2.1.2   *Use of Examples*

The adjudicator should have regard to examples used in support of an argument however the adjudicator should not reward argument by example. The speaker should explain how an example proves the point. Good speakers identify compelling examples, explain their relevance and explore them in sufficient depth to prove their point, rather than merely provide a list of examples.

(i)   Personal Examples

Personal examples are unpersuasive as they apply to personal circumstances rather than establish a general proposition. They are unable to be adequately contested or verified by the opposition without calling the integrity of the speaker into question.

2.2   Rebuttal

Rebuttal is the refutation of the opposing team's case. It is the essence of debating and distinguishes debating from public speaking. All speakers, except for the first

affirmative,[1] are expected to respond to the opposition's case with rebuttal. This should be the first substantial element of a speech.

2.2.1   *Amount of Time Spent on Rebuttal*

The appropriate amount of time dedicated to rebuttal will vary according to the speaker's position and the debate's standard. As a general rule:

- first negative speakers should spend one quarter of their speech to rebuttal;
- second speakers should spend one third of their speech on rebuttal; and
- third speakers should spend over three quarters of their speech on rebuttal.

2.2.2   *What Arguments should be Rebutted?*

All relevant arguments should be answered by the opposing team. If unanswered they stand at the end of the debate and this should be reflected in matter marks. An argument can be refuted if it is shown to be based on a false premise or to have untenable implications or consequences. It is for the adjudicator, acting as an average reasonable person, to decide whether an argument has been effectively answered. Speakers should attempt to rebut an opponent's arguments rather than their examples unless rebutting an opponent's examples refutes their argument, for example where the facts of an example have been misinterpreted or misrepresented.

2.2.3   *Thematic Rebuttal*

Rebuttal should be structured in the same way as a speaker's substantive matter. The most important opposition points should be refuted first and treated thematically. Thematic rebuttal requires speakers to group arguments according to the key issues in the debate. Whilst thematic rebuttal can be considered a requirement in senior grades it is not to be insisted upon at junior and intermediate levels. An adjudicator should however explain and encourage thematic rebuttal in their critique, at junior and

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[1] Advanced first speakers may provide effective pre-emptive rebuttal. Providing the argument is reasonable and pre-emptive rebuttal is not overly employed it may be rewarded.

intermediate levels, when they feel that a speaker would be capable of thematic rebuttal.

2.3 Authorities and Quotations

Reference to authority and quotations should be used in support of arguments, not as argument substitutes. It should be remembered that quotations only prove that someone said it and do not establish arguments. Speakers must explain why a quote or reference supports their case and why it applies to the particular debate. Quotations should be brief. Authorities should be such that they are acceptable to a person with a reasonable general knowledge. The debater's primary concern is to persuade the audience to accept their argument at the time they present it, rather than to show that their arguments are verified by experts.

2.4 Defining the Topic

Interpreting the subject does not require a dictionary definition of single words. Dictionary definitions can be valuable but their usefulness is restricted because the meaning of words is modified by context. For example, topics which employ metaphors or use idioms cannot be defined or interpreted with a dictionary. Speakers should give a clear, reasonable explanation of the topic's meaning that has regard to the spirit and context of the topic.

2.4.1 *Challenging a Definition*

An affirmative team must clearly define the topic. A negative team may accept or challenge an affirmative team's definition. The negative may only challenge the affirmative's definition on the grounds that the negative has a more reasonable definition. Adjudicators should however encourage negative teams to accept the affirmative definition in the vast majority of instances. When mounting a challenge to the affirmative's definition the negative must explain why the Affirmative's definition is unreasonable.

Either team may establish that a definition is unreasonable by proving their opponent's definition is:

- lacking in logic and relevance, for example an affirmative cannot define 'America' as the band 'America' in the topic 'that Obama has failed to unite America';

- self-proving or truistic, for example an affirmative cannot define 'unite' as making all Americans think exactly the same way and argue that as Obama hasn't done this he has failed;

- time-setting, for example arguing Obama failed to unite America at age 12; and

- unfairly place or country setting, e.g. defining 'America' as a town in Southern England that is bitterly divided over social policy. In the topic that 'we should adopt school vouchers' 'we' means Australia, not the western world. However in the debate that 'we should not have invaded Iraq' the definition of 'we' is less clear. 'We' could refer to the 'coalition of the willing' or Australia. Whilst both these definitions are acceptable and reasonable, defining 'we' as the coalition of the willing is preferable as it broadens the scope of the debate.

It is possible for a team to lose the definitional argument but win the debate. This is because the definition is one of many arguments. The weight an adjudicator gives to winning the definitional argument should depend on the extent to which the issue dominated the debate.

If a negative team decides to challenge a definition they should do so at first speaker and the challenge should be the first point of rebuttal, at which point the speaker must propose an alternative definition and explain which it is more reasonable.

(i)   Responding to a Definitional Challenge

Following a challenge, the affirmative team may defend its own definition or accept the negative's definition. If the affirmative team chooses to defend its definition, it should rebut the negative's case on the assumption that the negative's proposed definition is valid. The second affirmative should state the affirmative's position on the challenge.

(ii)   The Relationship between Definition Issues and Team Method

A speaker can lose matter marks for mounting a redundant definitional challenge. A speaker who continues to challenge a definition after it is clear that both teams have

agreed on the definition can be penalised for poor method as this shows a lack of responsiveness. Likewise if a definitional challenge is made for the first time during the second speaker's rebuttal, substantial method marks can be subtracted for not contesting the point at the earliest opportunity.

(iii)   The 'Even If' Argument

If a negative team chooses to challenge the affirmative's definition it must offer a definition of its own and explain why it is the more reasonable of the two. The negative team should also rebut the affirmative case on the assumption that the affirmative's definition is valid. This is often referred to as the 'even if argument', for example 'even if their definition is correct, their case is still weak because…' If an affirmative chooses to reject the negative team's alternate definition they should also rebut the negative's team arguments using the 'even if' approach.

2.5   Types of Topics

Debating topics can be split into two fundamental groups:

a)   model; and
b)   empirical debates.

A third category exists for rare topics which can be interpreted as a combination of the above two groups, namely mixed questions of policy and fact. The headings below discuss each of these types of topics. Teams which fail to respond to the type of topic they have been asked to debate have made a fundamental mistake and should lose matter marks.

2.5.1   *Model Debates*

These debates involve a policy proposal. Where a topic suggests a particular course of action it is necessary for the affirmative to:

a)   explain how the course of action is practically possible; and
b)   that the proposed action is desirable.

This requires the first affirmative to explain what is proposed. This is referred to as a team's 'model'. This must be done early in the first affirmative's speech, usually within the first one to two minutes.

Topics of this nature are characterised by the words 'should' or 'must' for example:

- 'that we should invade Syria'; and
- 'that Australia should become a republic'.

A model should describe what is being changed and briefly detail the reason for the particular model chosen. For example, the topic 'that Australia should do more to combat climate change' could involve an affirmative proposing a carbon tax, an emissions trading scheme or greater investment in renewable energy. The affirmative should explain why they have chosen their particular proposal. This is generally achieved by explaining the key advantages and disadvantages of each option.

In model debates the negative must rebut the affirmative team's model by explaining the disadvantages of its model. In particular, the negative may argue that the model does not address the problem it is designed to, that it is inefficient, that it creates negative problems or that it costs too much. A negative that fails to attack the affirmative side's model should lose substantial matter and method marks.

A negative team may propose a counter model, for example in the debate 'that we should invade Iran' the negative might propose economic sanctions. The negative does not necessarily have to defend the status quo, although they may and often do.

As with a definitional debate, the team that wins the model issue does not necessarily win the debate. Each side must also prove their side of the topic 'in principle' rather than simply showing that there is / is not a workable model to effect the relevant policy.

2.5.2   *The Empirical Debate*

These debates are questions of fact, requiring the teams to argue over whether something does or does not exist. Where a topic involves testing the truth of a statement it is necessary for a set of criteria to be used. These criteria are referred to as 'the test' or the 'benchmark' which if satisfied is taken to establish that the proposition is or is not true. The test must be explained by the first affirmative. The first negative can either apply their own set of criteria or adopt those of the affirmative team.

Topics of this nature are often characterised by the words 'is' or 'are', or in the past tense 'was' or 'has', for example:

- 'that Australia is an environmental criminal'; and

- 'that indigenous Australians are treated as second class citizens.'

2.5.3 *Debates which Involve Mixed Questions of Policy and Fact*

Some topics raise both policy and fact questions. For example the debate 'that ministerial responsibility is an outmoded concept' could either be interpreted as a question of fact 'does ministerial responsibility not longer exist' or as a policy question 'is it appropriate that ministerial responsibility no longer exist'. If a topic is open to diverse interpretations a team could either proceed to frame the debate as one or both of policy and fact. In the above example an affirmative team could concurrently show why ministerial responsibility no longer exists and justify why this is a positive outcome. Alternatively a team could narrow the debate to either a policy or fact question providing it justifies this decision.

2.6 Incorrect Team Cases

2.6.1 *The Invalid Case*

An invalid case is one where a team adopts arguments which, even if accepted as true, simply fail to address the topic under debate. For example if the topic was 'that we should reduce the speed limit to 50km/h on all roads' and the affirmative team only argued that driving at 60km/h is dangerous without arguing that 50km/h is not, they have failed to prove the topic. This does not result in an automatic loss, but the opposition would have to perform quite poorly in order to lose.

2.6.2 *The Hung Case*

In a hung case, the first speaker establishes a premise, the second speaker establishes another premise, and only after the second premise is established can a conclusion be drawn. In other words, it is not possible to prove a final conclusion at the end of the first speaker's speech. For example, in a debate on the topic 'that euthanasia is wrong' the first affirmative argues that euthanasia means the taking of life and the second affirmative contends that taking life is wrong in all circumstances. If the premises are valid, the conclusion follows that euthanasia is wrong in all cases.

This structure is highly problematic as it does not allow each speech to affirm or negate the topic. Hanging a case does not result in an automatic loss, but the opposition would have to perform quite poorly in order to lose..

Sometimes only part of a team's case / speaker's speech may be hung. In this instance a speaker's matter will be penalised and a team may lose method points. Adjudicators should remember that hung and invalid cases, and definitional challenges are rare.

2.7   Standard of Matter

Adjudicators should expect a different standard of matter between secret topic debates and prepared debates. This is particularly pertinent to the use of statistics and examples. Adjudicators should also vary their expectations according to the grade of the debate.

2.8   Scoring Matter

Each speaker is awarded a mark out of 40 for matter. An average speaker will receive 30. The acceptable range for matter marks, and the range that adjudicators must follow, is 26 (very poor) to 34 (exceptional).

Arguments should be judged in the form in which they are presented and not as the adjudicator thinks they should have been presented. Adjudicators should not make the argument the speaker failed to deliver or complete the chain of reasoning where the speaker poorly explained an idea.

The weight to be given any particular argument is at the adjudicator's discretion. They may feel that one strong argument on the one side is worth many of the arguments on the other side. In weighting arguments the adjudicator should take note of which arguments were the most important to a team's case throughout the debate.

In marking matter the adjudicator must divorce the speaker's matter completely from their manner. Matter must be judged as though it appeared in print. It is to be considered on its merits unassisted by the personality of the speaker.

2.8.1   *Introduction of New Matter by Third Speakers*

The final speaker in the debate, the third negative, must not introduce new matter. It is unfair for an issue to be raised at a point in the debate when the opposing team has no opportunity to respond. New matter generally consists of an entirely new argument or issue which has not been canvassed in the debate. New matter does not include:

- the use of fresh examples to further illustrate an earlier argument; and

- an argument which rebuts opposing arguments or defends the negative case.

There are marginal cases which are unclear and require the adjudicator to exercise their discretion. The adjudicator must make a judgment as to whether, in context of the debate, it was fair or unfair for the argument to be raised by the final speaker. For example, an early speaker may make a brief, passing reference to an argument, but not develop it at any length or place much emphasis on it. If the third negative speaker then elevates the argument to a central role in the negative case and reveals implications which had not been explained, it may be new matter.

Where new matter is introduced the adjudicator 'does not hear' such material, and it scores no matter marks. No direct penalty is given for matter however time devoted to material which is 'not heard' may detract from the matter mark as it may result in the speaker presenting insufficient matter. The speaker may also incur a method penalty for a failure of organisation or speaking for longer than their allotted time. It is poor team method to develop an argument which should have been led earlier in the debate.

3.   Manner

Manner is a speaker's style. It includes:

       a)   use of the voice;

       b)   stance, gesture and appearance;

       c)   language;

       d)   personality;

       e)   persuasiveness; and

       f)   eye-contact.

These elements should be combined so that the speaker commands the attention of the audience and wins sympathy to their point of view. Good manner is just as important to a speech as good matter, hence why manner and matter are weighted equally at both a national and international level People who can speak effectively are more persuasive, both when debating but also more generally when presenting ideas in a range of contexts.

3.1   Voice

The speaker must be clearly heard and understood throughout their speech. Equally, the speaker whose excessive volume irritates the audience must also be penalised. The adjudicator should consider pronunciation, enunciation, speed and fluency in determining a speaker's clarity. An adjudicator should look for effective variations in volume, tone, pace, pitch and the use of pauses and emphasis which highlight the relative importance of the material.

3.2   Stance, Gesture and Appearance

Formal rules for stance, posture and the use of notes are not required. Many of the world's finest speakers have differed greatly in style and have broken all or many of the rules commonly insisted upon. The speaker should appear confident, assured and free of awkward movements and distractive mannerisms.

Gestures should be natural, spontaneous, controlled and add interest to the speech. Speakers can be penalised for meaningless, repetitive and distracting movements.

While it is desirable for speakers to rely as little as possible on notes, the effective use of notes is quite appropriate. Notes should be sufficiently small as to be unobtrusive

and should neither distract the audience from the speech nor the speaker from the audience. The adjudicator should encourage students to:

- use handwritten notes which are consistent in size and shape;
- use notes which are approximately A6 in size; and
- actually use notes and to avoid writing the speech out in full. This is particularly to be encouraged in intermediate grades and insisted upon at the senior level.

3.3 Language

The adjudicator should consider vocabulary, sentence structure and grammatical correctness. While correct grammar is expected an adjudicator should not treat trivial flaws in a pedantic way if they do not hinder the speaker's style. Whereas written material may be studied until its meaning has become clear, the spoken word makes only one impression. The speaker must be understood almost immediately if they are to have the desired effect on an audience. Use of rhetorical questions, repetitions for emphasis, colourful and dramatic words and phrases and figures of speech can help to achieve this, though they should not be overused. The expected vocabulary and grammar level will vary according to the grade of the debate.

Speakers may misspeak due to a range of factors. In determining whether this will impact on the speaker's manner mark the adjudicator should consider:

- how often the speaker misspeaks, marks should only be deducted for frequent linguistic spasms;
- the grade of the debate; and
- the standard of the debate.

Mispronouncing of words in junior grades, which are clearly beyond the grade, is dealt with by telling speakers they should only use words they understand.

3.4 Personality

An effective speaker wins an audience by the individuality of the speaker's style, together with sincerity and enthusiasm in their presentation. Adjudicators should expect and not be concerned by diverse styles providing the speaker's personality is persuasive.

3.5 Humour

The use of humour is one method of gaining the audience's sympathy. Humour should be part of the argument, relevant to the subject and carefully chosen. Humorous arguments should be judged according to the same requirements as all other arguments – they must be relevant and logical. Appropriate use of humour will contribute to a speaker's manner score. Humour which is irrelevant, detracts from the substance of the debate or is in poor taste may result in a speaker losing method marks and failing to accumulate matter marks if it takes up too much time.

3.6 Eye Contact

Speakers should make eye contact with the all members of the audience in equal measure, not with the opposition or the wall behind the audience. Speakers should be penalised for reading to the audience. It is frequently useful for the adjudicator to demonstrate the difference that a conversational speaking style makes in comparison to a speaker who reads to the audience.

3.7 Scoring Manner

Manner can be a notoriously subjective concept. It is not uncommon for two adjudicators to view the same speech and to award radically different marks for manner. As adjudicators may prefer different styles of manner, the most appropriate means by which to assess manner is for an adjudicator to ask whether a speaker's manner was effective or persuasive.

In some cases the answer to this question should be clear; for example a speaker who mumbles and fails to make eye-contact with the audience at all is most unlikely to convince an adjudicator that they have a convincing case to make. At other times adjudicators may legitimately disagree about the effectiveness of hand gestures or whether a speaker's vocabulary was eloquent or impenetrable. Whilst these conflicts cannot be avoided, adjudicators should at all times ask themselves whether the

speaker would have convinced the average reasonable person, not whether they liked the way the speaker presented themselves.

The ultimate measure of a debater's style is their ability to convince their audience. Adjudicators should not attempt to separate the component parts of manner and to allot separate marks for each; they should assess the overall impression made by the speaker and give a single mark accordingly.

4.   Method

Method is to be considered under two main headings:

a)   the structure of a speech in itself (*internal method*); and

b)   debating technique and strategy (*team method* or *external method*) which reveals itself through teamwork and the extent to which each team ensures that there is constant interplay of argument through the debate.

A good speech is ordered so as to give its material the maximum effect. This is usually achieved by ensuring that the speech flows logically and that the time spent on each argument is proportional to its importance in the overall case. The adjudicator should consider the following factors:

- whether the arguments were set out in a logical and orderly fashion which was easy for the audience to follow;

- whether the speech had 'form' i.e. whether it had an organised plan of development with an effective introduction, body and conclusion; and

- whether the speaker 'signposted' their material by telling the audience at the start of their speech, in one to two lines, what their main arguments will be. Furthermore speakers should make it clear when they are moving from one key argument to another.

4.1   Speaking to Time

Good method requires that a speaker speaks to time. Material delivered by the speaker significantly after the time limit should not be awarded any matter marks and not be taken into account in assessing the persuasiveness of a team's case. The adjudicator simply 'does not hear' this material. Before a penalty is imposed a speaker is allowed leeway after the second bell of approximately thirty seconds.

The duration of a speech may affect both a speaker's matter and method marks, but the two should not be conflated. A short speech, which is typically one which finishes before the first bell, may still warrant a high matter score if the speaker makes strong points, though a speaker may lose method marks for speaking under time. However a short speech may also result in lower matter marks through a lack of argument where the arguments offered are poor.

4.2   Working as a Team and Engaging in the Debate

Speakers should act as members of a team and not give unconnected individual speeches. However, it is likely that the relative importance of the main issues for debate will change from speech to speech as new substantive and rebuttal points are raised and each succeeding speaker should modify the weighting they give to points within their speech accordingly.

In assessing teamwork the adjudicator should take the following into account:

- whether the speaker performed the tasks expected of them according to their position;
- whether they took up the points in issue;
- whether they apportioned their time wisely amongst their various points, giving due emphasis to the main issues; and
- whether they responded to the dynamics of the debate.

Responsiveness impacts on both method and matter. In terms of matter, the response should be assessed for its logic and relevance. In terms of method, speakers should not merely repeat arguments made earlier in the debate but should engage in new material presented by the opposition.

4.3   The Roles of Different Speakers

The roles played by each speaker in a team are summarised as follows:

4.3.1   *First Affirmative Speaker*

- Provide a context in which the debate takes place that flags the key issues.
- Define the affirmative's interpretation of the topic.
- Provide a model / test.
- Give an outline of the team structure, indicating the basic theme of the team's case and the aspects to be dealt with by each speaker. This is often referred to as the team split.
- Deal with the arguments allocated to them.

4.3.2   *First Negative Speaker*

- Identify the major areas of initial disagreement, including definition issues if appropriate, with the affirmative case and rebut. It is vital that first negative speakers analyse the affirmative's test and model.

- Give a clear outline of the negative's structure.

- Deal with the arguments allocated to them.

4.3.3   *Second Affirmative and Negative Speakers*

- Rebut opponents' case and arguments, including mounting a defence of their own team's case against rebuttal by previous speakers.

- Outline their speech's structure and deal with the arguments allocated to them.

4.3.4   *Third Affirmative and Negative Speakers*

- Present an overview of the debate, rebutting the important aspects of the opposing team's case and defending one's own team's case.

- Briefly summarize their team's arguments.

4.4   Scoring Method

As method is worth precisely half of matter and manner a one point movement in method is the equivalent of a two point movement in either of manner or method. Adjudicators should remember this when determining method scores. Method is a far less subjective marking category than manner since it is scored according to the technical principles outlined above rather than broader notions of 'persuasiveness'.

An individual speaker should receive a method mark of 15 if they provide a structure and follow it, perform adequately the role they were expected to and spoke within the appropriate time limits. A speaker who fails to do these two things adequately may lose one method mark. A speaker may only receive a 13 for method, the lowest mark possible for method, if they have entirely failed to do those things which earn a speaker a 15 for method. Speakers should only receive a 16 or 17 if they have performed all of the above mentioned aspects of method to a high standard.

4.4.1   *Marking Team Method*

Team method points will be subtracted where the error occurs, though there may be instances where team method is so bad that it warrants subtracting points from other

team members. There are no rigid rules about marking and adjudicators should be prepared to alter their individual speaker marks when they note team method failures.

5.   Points of Information

5.1   Offering Points of Information

From Intermediate A-Grade upwards, points of information (a ***POI***) may be offered to a speaker by members of the opposing team. An offeror must stand up at the table and clearly say 'point of information'. The speaker will either accept or decline this offer. If it appears that the speaker has not heard the offeror then the offeror may stay standing and repeat the words 'point of information'.

Each speaker must offer at least 3 POIs per speaker (a minimum of 9 for the debate). Ideally speakers will be offering 4 to 5 per speaker. However, speakers should avoid 'badgering'. Determining whether a speaker is badgering is at the discretion of the adjudicator but it typically involves a speaker being offered so many POIs within a short space of time, whether by an individual speaker or a team, so as to have their speech unnecessarily interrupted.

POIs may only be offered after the bell to mark 1 minute and before the bell indicating the final minute of the speech. POIs offered outside of these bells are out of order.

If the speaker accepts the POI the offeror has a maximum of 15 seconds to ask a question or provide a short piece of rebuttal. When the offeror has finished making their point they simply sit down. If the POI exceeds 15 seconds the adjudicator or chairperson may call the speaker to order.

5.2   Responding to Points of Information

Speakers should accept two POIs during their speech. When a speaker is offered a POI, they may accept or reject it by saying 'yes' or 'no, thank you' to the offeror. This should be done promptly; however, it is permissible for a speaker to respond to the offeror after completing their sentence or point or ask the offeror to wait briefly before accepting them by saying for example, 'I will take your point in just a moment'.

A speaker may not seek clarification of a POI they do not understand. It is not an opportunity for a conversation or mini-debate within the debate. If a speaker does not understand a POI they must do their best to answer what they understood. There is to be no conversation between the speaker and offeror once the speaker has commenced answering the POI.

5.3   Scoring Points of Information

5.3.1   *Offering POIs*

Each speaker in the debate will receive a mark between -2 and +2 for POIs. This mark only reflects the offering of POIs. A speaker who receives 0 for POIs has offered the required amount of POIs, irrespective of whether any of these POIs were accepted, and not made notable mistakes. Marks either side of 0 are awarded based on the quality and / or number of POIs offered by that speaker. Most spealers in most debates receive 0 otherwise POI marks begin to have a disproportionate effect.

The quality of a POI is determined by similar standards to those that apply to scoring matter. Good POIs will be relevant, logical, persuasive and short. As the offeror is only allotted 15 seconds to make their point, the best POIs focus on one argument or example only, rather than trying to fit multiple contentions into 15 seconds. Typically the most impressive POIs take the form of a question or a single argument and are only 5 to 10 seconds in length. Good POIs will, like good rebuttal, address the most significant issues in the debate.

A speaker will receive +1 or +2 for POIs if they offered more than the required number of POIs, without being guilty of badgering, and their POIs were of a high standard.

A speaker who receives -2 or -1 for POIs will have offered fewer than the required number of POIs and/or the quality of the POIs they have offered were poor. Scores of +2 or -2 are very rare for POIs.

(i)   Intermediate A and Senior B

In the Intermediate A and Senior B Grades the SADA runs POIs on a 'can't lose marks' basis. This means that all speakers will receive no less than 0 for POIs, unless they engage in excessive badgering, but may be awarded +1 or +2. Equally students should not penalised for poor responses to POIs. This is designed to encourage students to engage with POIs. Adjudicators should bear this in mind when offering feedback to junior debaters who have never used POIs before.

5.3.2   *Responding to POIs*

A speaker's response to POIs is scored within the matter, manner and method categories as part of their speech. A speaker's response to POIs can be judged according to the relevant criteria for each scoring category.

(i)   Matter

A speaker's response to a POI should be succinct, logical and convincing. Such a response could improve a speaker's matter score as it demonstrates they understand the arguments presented in the debate and are able to respond to the dynamics of the debate.

(ii)   Manner

A speaker should endeavour not to allow an accepted POI to interrupt their manner. Ideally a speaker should seamlessly accommodate answering the POI into their speech. Long pauses while considering an answer to a POI are to be avoided. As with rebuttal, a speaker should avoid talking to the opposition or the offeror directly and talk to the audience as they would for the rest of their speech.

(iii)   Method

A speaker must not allow their acceptance of POIs to detract from the structure of their speech. Speakers should try to accept POIs at the most convenient moments in their speech. That is, the acceptance of POIs should interfere as little as possible with the structure and flow of the speaker's rebuttal and substantive arguments. Speakers should avoid accepting POIs during their rebuttal, unless they are a third speaker, and, speakers should not accept a POI during their set-up. Speakers should also refrain from accepting POIs too close together. Finally, speakers should generally not accept more than 2 POIs unless they have a valid concern about not meeting the first warning bell. It is acceptable to accept three POIs when the debate is otherwise content light.

Whether or not a speaker loses marks for not accepting 2 POIs is, to some extent, dependent on the opposition providing enough opportunities. Where an opposition offer too few POIs to a speaker the adjudicator may judge that accepting one POI, or in extreme cases none, may not result in any penalty. If it becomes clear that one side is not offering the required number of POIs, speakers from the other side should still endeavour to accept two POIs during their speech.

5.3.3   *Controlling POIs*

An adjudicator should call a speaker to order by saying 'order' loudly and clearly when a speaker is:

       a)   badgering;

       b)   offering a POI outside of the allotted time; or

       c)   offering a POI which lasts longer than 15 seconds.

6.   Allotment of Marks

An average speaker in any given Grade will receive a mark of 75. This mark comes from:

- Matter: 30 / 40
- Manner: 30 / 40
- Method: 15 / 20
- POI: 0 / -2 to 2

While these marks will vary, there are accepted norms. A speaker's matter or manner score will generally range from 26 (very poor) to 34 (very good). A speaker's method score will generally range from 13 (very poor) to 17 (very good). These limits are extremes and would rarely be awarded; most debates will contain scores ranging from 74 - 76. Half marks cannot be awarded.

As individual speakers' scores vary it follows that margins of debates vary. Once again there are accepted standard margins.

- 1 to 4 points: a close debate
- 5 to 9 points: a clear debate
- 10+ points: an overwhelming win

The adjudicator should see that the degree of difference that they detect between various speakers is reflected in the marks awarded. It is important that the marks show which team won and the relative merits of the individual speakers. Debates cannot be tied.

Do not leave the determination of the marks until the conclusion of the debate. Give each speaker some marks on a scrap piece of paper just after their speech has finished. Assess a speech as it appeared, not in light of subsequent speeches, although adjudicators can review and alter their scoresheet until they are committed to the score sheet. An adjudicator is encouraged to evaluate individual speakers' scores throughout the debate and alter scores at that stage, rather than once written on the score sheet. All adjudicators should finalise their scores before filling in their score sheet.

Upon the completion of the debate, the adjudicator must determine who they believe won the debate. After determining which team has won, the adjudicator should add up their draft scores. Usually these draft scores will reflect the decision the adjudicator has reached and a margin the adjudicator believes is appropriate. If this is the case, the adjudicator should review the individual speaker scores to ensure that they reflect the relative worth of individual speakers and their relative strengths and weaknesses – i.e. if you were particularly impressed with one speaker's manner then they should have the highest manner mark.

Occasionally, an adjudicator's draft scores will not reflect the result they had reached. This is not uncommon in debates which are very close. This is not a sign that the adjudicator should change their mind about which team won the debate. Rather, an adjudicator in this position should review their notes for individual speakers and adjust their scores to reflect the decision and margin they feel is appropriate.

7.   Adjudicator Comments

An adjudicator should stand at the front of the room and face the audience to announce the result and give their critique.

7.1   Structure of an Adjudication

7.1.1   *Introductory Remarks*

While each adjudicator has a naturally different presentation, in general the structure of an adjudication is uniform. Adjudicators should start by broadly congratulating all speakers on their performance if that is reflective of the debate. At this point an adjudicator may choose to make some general observations about particular aspects of the debate which were broadly done well or which could be improved upon. For example, an adjudicator may comment on the standard of rebuttal if it was done well. Alternatively, an adjudicator may comment that method could be improved across the debate and give an example of elements of method which could specifically be improved. Any comments made by the adjudicator at this stage should ideally be kept relatively general and brief. It is also appropriate at this point to invite speakers and members of the audience to privately ask you specific questions they have after your feedback is completed.

It is permissible for an adjudicator during a critique to refer to arguments or examples that were not raised during the course of the debate for the purposes of educating the debaters about how they might improve for the future or how they might have done things differently. However, it must be made clear that an adjudicator is not supplementing what was said and determining the debate on the basis of what the adjudicator thinks should have been said.

7.1.2   *Speaker by Speaker Feedback*

After any initial comments, an adjudicator should offer chronological speaker-by-speaker feedback. The adjudicator should aim to make 2-3 comments or suggestions to each speaker. Try to draw on individual elements of the speaker's speech to improve the relevance of your feedback; accurate note-taking during the debate is essential in this regard. Do not however merely repeat what the speaker said, everyone heard it.

7.1.3   *The Need for Positive and Constructive Feedback*

In general, be constructive; find both positive and negative things to say and ensure your critique is appropriate to the standard of the debate. Explain why you recommend or don't recommend a particular feature of the debate you have just seen. Having made the notes as you listened to the speeches, use them as you give your critique. Obviously you must quote correctly. It is not necessarily suitable for the adjudicator to reiterate the arguments or examples used, but the adjudicator must indicate, if applicable, which arguments, and why, were most persuasive. If the adjudicator considers that the debate was won on manner and / or method this should also be spelt out, especially as it may not be obvious.

An adjudicator's critique should:

     a)   justify the decision he/she arrived at, consistent with scores awarded;

     b)   educate speakers by pointing out faults in argument, style and debating technique and make recommendations for improvement; and

     c)   praise that which was well done.

7.1.4   *Announcing the Result*

Critiques should finish with two to three sentences that briefly explain why one team won the debate. This should identify the two to four reasons why the winning team won. The total adjudication should be under ten minutes.

8. Panel Adjudications

Finals and most intercollegiate debates are adjudicated by a panel of adjudicators. This usually involves a panel of three adjudicators though larger panel may be assembled for grand finals. The process for panel adjudications is as follows.

Each adjudicator comes to an independent decision and fills out a score sheet. Adjudicators must not communicate with each other during the debate. The panel's decision can therefore be unanimous or split (where adjudicators awarded the debate to different teams). Once an adjudicator finishes their score sheet he/she leaves it on the chair person's desk so that its contents cannot be seen before leaving the room. The team to which the most adjudicators awarded the debate is the winner.

Adjudicators then convene outside and discuss the debate with the other adjudicators. The discussion should be about the main issues or points in the debate (models, main themes, manner etc) and why adjudicators awarded the debate the way they did. Each adjudicator should explain to the others how he/she saw those issues and how that informed their ultimate decision. Adjudicators need not worry about individual speaker or comments unless it is pertinent to the result or if an individual speaker award is to be made. This discussion should be directed by the chair of the panel, who will be designated by the Vice President in advance of the debate.

The chair of the panel will then present to the audience a summary of the panel's decision. This should be about 5 minutes and be about the debate as a whole, not individual speakers. The adjudication should explain how the panel system works, the panel's reasons for its decision (including the minority's reasoning) and the result. If the chair of the panel is not in the majority then another member of the panel, usually the next most senior adjudicator, will give the adjudication. The score sheets should be made available for the audience to see after the adjudication. It is then the chair's responsibility to return the score sheets to the Zone Steward.

The chair of the panel is also responsible for communicating with the chairperson, debaters and audience members. This includes organising chairperson and timekeeper forms, score sheets and directing the chairperson to call each speaker. The chair of the panel should not allow a speaker to be called until all panel members are ready to move on to the next speaker.