

## How to Do Public Forum

PF is a game of Generally Understandable Debate, adjudicated by Judges who generally ought to understand it. The bottom line: Debate for the judge(s) in the room.

### → Rule #1: Don't overdebate in a PF round

no jargon

no line by line

no speed

The paradigm in PF is a news broadcast, where your success is measured on your believability. PF is not LD or Policy, where virtually professional judges analyze your case line by line.

*However*, to succeed in PF, you need to apply the secret, which is that we are, in fact, in search of something underlying the resolution.

LD has values and criteria. PF, ostensibly, does not. But all good PF cases achieve an underlying value, and provide a mechanism for weighing whether that value is achieved.

### → Rule #2: Make it easy for the judges

slow, oratorical speaking

big picture

Big picture means making one or two big arguments.

Judges in PF may not be taking notes.

And judges in PF, more likely than not, are parents, or at least don't want to work. They're here because they have kids in the activity, not because they love debate. Make it easy for them. The faster you go, the more convoluted your arguments, the more flow-based you make it, the less likely you are to pick up the average judge.

→ **Rule #3: Keep it easy for the judges**

Provide one simple reason why you are right

Provide one simple reason why they are wrong

Provide one extra reason why you are right, kept in reserve

only brought up again if opp's case warrants it

→ **Rule #4: FOCUS, FOCUS AND THEN FOCUS**

stay on track

find a great argument or two in your research

stick with them

Specifics

Keep this in mind at all times: **Never open your mouth unless there's a piece of evidence in it.** If you are going to claim that your opponent is wrong about something,

support that claim with evidence (i.e., a warrant). If you are going to claim that you are right about something, support that claim with evidence (i.e., a warrant). Evidence is defined as good, believable facts. Opinions are not facts, although opinions can warrant a claim. Opinions, however, are not as convincing in a PF round as facts. Your own analytics (i.e., laying out the logic of your argument to explain it in a convincing way) can be persuasive, but nonetheless facts usually are better. On the other hand, your own analytics are probably preferable to a quoted opinion, even from an expert. Judges like to hear what you think about things, when it comes time to explain the argument. And, especially with PF judges, your explanations will probably be cleared than quoted material.

There are a number of potential in-round strategies, but I recommend this one to start:

**Speech #1 (4 mins):**

Have one big argument why your side is right (1:30)

Have a small backup argument why your side is right (:45)

Have one big generic argument why the other side is wrong (1:45)

You want to convince the judge right off the bat that you are wonderful. There is a basic strategy in PF and it has various names: we'll call it Good Cop, Bad Cop.

**Good Cop:** the kid that is lovable, great speaker

**Bad Cop:** the kid that can see why the other side is a bunch of weasels

Speech #1 is given by Good Cop (both pro and con)

Speech #2 is given by Bad Cop (both pro and con)

**Speech #2 (4 mins):**

One (or two) arguments why the opposite side is wrong (2:00)

Rebuild the one big argument why you are right (2:00)

Backup arg is still relevant?

Add (1:45 refute; 1:15 1st pt; 1:00 second point)

Or Substitute for big if it's better than your big arg

**Speech #3 (summary speech, 2 minutes, both pro and con)**

Good Cop explains one big reason why opposite side is incorrect, then one big reason why this side is correct, (1:00 / 1:00)

**Speech #4 (two minutes)**

Bad Cop has 2 minutes to win the round. Most likely repeat why the big point on his/her own side wins, and big point on why opponents' side is wrong. Finish up, "Because of this, there is no possible vote except for a \_\_\_\_."

After you gain experience as a PFER, you can experiment with different approaches (good cop/bad cop), different allocations of time, etc. But the above provides a good starting point.