

British Parliamentary Briefing

For Debaters and Judges

Will McClary, October 15, 2011

Outline

- Debate basics
- Rules for British Parliamentary
 - Roles
 - Things to avoid
- Tournament format and rules
- How to judge
- Conclusion
 - Questions, please write down to remember

Debate Basics

- A resolution is given to the teams
 - E.g. THBT the Indian Act should be abolished
- There are two sides
 - Proposition must support the resolution
 - Opposition must oppose the resolution
- The debate follows a specified format
 - E.g. British Parliamentary Style
- The debate is judged by an UNBIASED panel
 - The team which makes the better arguments wins
- Not all arguments are created equal

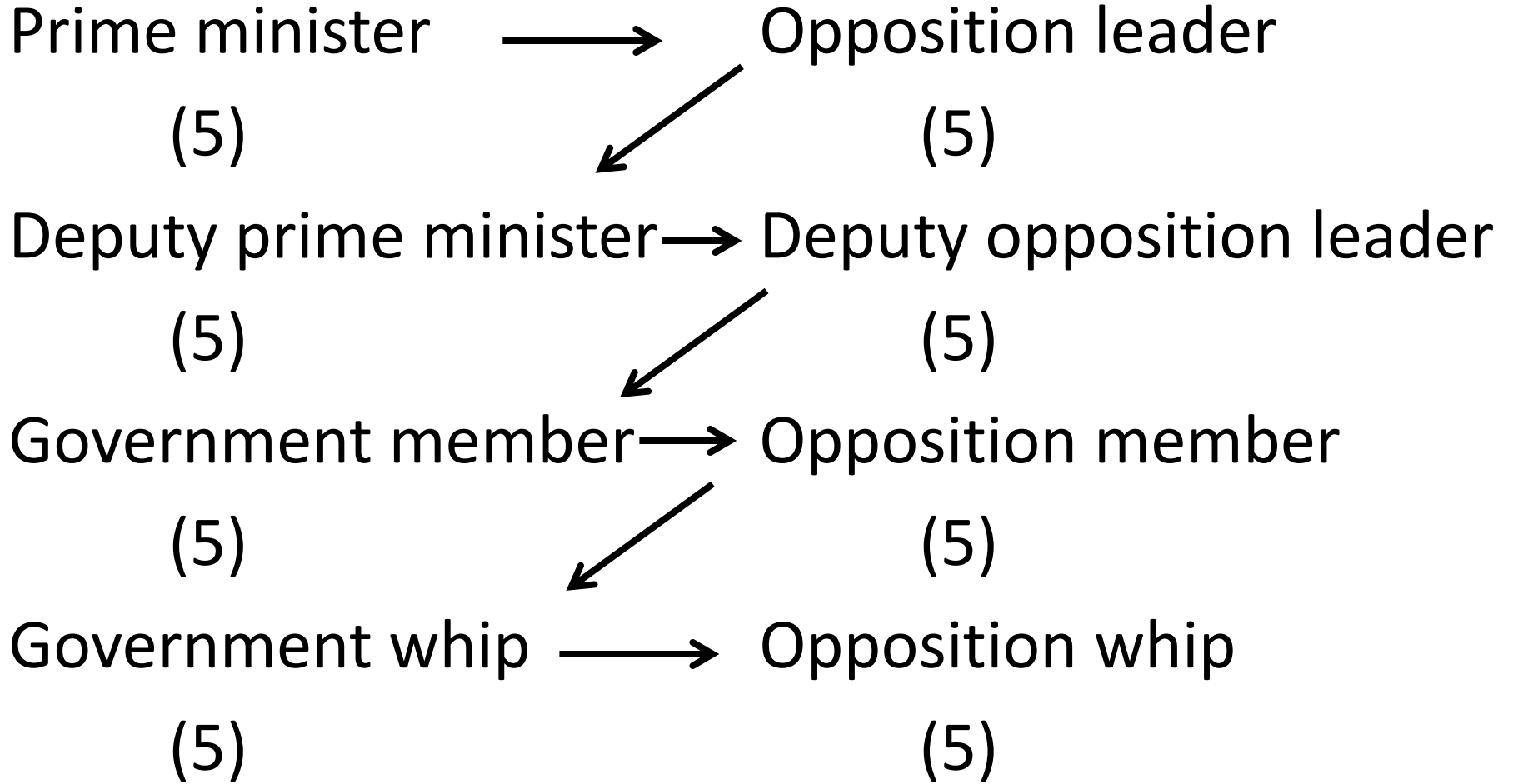
Speech Structure & Style

- Speeches should have a structure, generally:
 - Introduction
 - Points
 - Conclusion
- This is done so the judges can understand it
- There is no one correct structure
- There is also no single correct style
- Please judge debaters based on effectiveness

Rules

- You must follow them
- If unclear, consult the chief adjudicator (me)
 - I'm really approachable (trust me)
- BP is different
 - 4 teams (2 gov, 2 opp)
 - All teams competing against each other
 - Round isn't necessarily decided by which side is more convincing
 - Round flows as follows

Rules



How to Judge & Roles

- Judges should familiarize themselves with the style guide
- Individual scores are judged on matter & manner
 - Matter
 - What the debater said
 - Was it important/convincing?
 - Logical soundness, accuracy , consistency with partners are important
 - Manner
 - How the debater said it
 - Was is compelling/understandable?
 - Organization, structure, pace, tone, eye contact are important
- Role fulfillment is important in BP team rankings
- The roles of each team are outlined in the following slides

Opening Government (OG)

- Definitions
- Constructive matter (arguments)
- Clash with opening opposition (second speaker)
- A good opening government will:
 - Bring forward only relevant arguments
 - Clash effectively with opening opposition
 - Remain relevant through the debate (POIs)
- To judge the opening government, ask yourself
 - Were their arguments relevant?
 - Did they do a good job setting up the debate?
 - Did they (their arguments) remain involved in the debate?

Opening Opposition (OO)

- Accept/challenge definitions as appropriate
- Constructive matter (arguments)
- Clash with opening government (both speakers)
- A good opening opposition will:
 - Bring forward only relevant arguments
 - Clash effectively with opening government
 - Remain relevant through the debate (POIs)
- To judge the opening opposition, ask yourself
 - Were their arguments relevant?
 - Did they deal properly with the definitions?
 - Did they (their arguments) remain involved in the debate?

Closing Government (CG)

- Provide an extension; new matter which can be
 - A case study
 - A new argument (or new analysis of the same point)
 - Must be unique, relevant argumentation
- Clash with opening and closing opposition
- Provide a summary speech (second speaker)
- To judge the closing government, ask yourself
 - Did they provide a reasonable extension?
 - Was their extension argument unique and important?
 - Did their whip speech summarize the round?
 - Did they contradict the opening gov (this is bad)?

Closing Opposition (CO)

- Provide an extension; new matter which can be
 - A case study
 - A new argument (or new analysis of the same point)
 - Must be unique, relevant argumentation
- Clash with opening and closing government
- Provide a summary speech (second speaker)
 - No new constructive in the whip speech
- To judge the closing government, ask yourself
 - Did they provide a reasonable extension?
 - Was their extension argument unique and important?
 - Did their whip speech summarize the round?
 - Did they contradict the opening opp (this is bad)?

Motions & Definitions

- Motions will be straight forward
 - Hopefully you've been reading
- Defining the resolution is necessary
 - For clarity
 - Must be fair, and at the beginning of the first speech
 - Should be clear to the 'person on the street'
 - Can define a place set (if it adds to the round)
- Models are optional
 - If the resolution calls for it, or if you are courageous
 - Can really add to a round
 - Must be presented in first government speech
 - Must not change
- All models and definitions should have an impact

Challenging the Definitions

- Can be done if the definitions are:
 - Tight
 - Low-impact
 - A truism/tautological
 - Nonsense
 - Nonexistent (not really a challenge)
- Must be done by the first opposition speaker
- Opposition can substitute reasonable definitions
 - Only if they're reasonable
 - Please avoid 'definition debates'
 - Seriously, avoid 'definition debates'

Points of Information (POIs)

- Any POINT an opposite member wants to make
- Offered between the first and last ½ minute
- Member stands to indicate desire to speak
 - Accepted or declined by speaking member
- Points should be short, and relevant
- In any speech, points should be offered and taken
- Up to judges to determine appropriate frequency
- Judged based on their contribution to the round
- POIs shouldn't play a major role in judgment

Don't do these

- Points of procedure or privilege – I mean it
- POI your own side of the house
- Time sets – seriously, don't
- Truisms/tautologies – judges will penalize you
- Low impact/tight cases – ditto
- Challenge definitions unnecessarily
- Knives – when you contradict your own side
- Case shifts – change the model/definitions
- Heckle (unfortunately)

Tournament Format

- 4 rounds of British Parliamentary
 - 1 prepared (Indian Act)
 - 3 impromptu (my topics)
- Given 15 minutes for impromptu prep
 - No resources allowed
 - No conferring allowed
 - First prop gets room
- No final round for Sr. category
 - Stick around for awards

Tournament Rules

- Conflicts of interest should be avoided
 - Please report any potential judging conflicts to TD
- Judging will be consensus and ballot based
 - Rankings (1-4) are consensus, written on ballots
 - If no consensus can be reached, chair steps in
 - Chair shouldn't bully non-chair judges
 - Speaker scores (36-44) are done on each ballot
 - No low point wins
- Description of speaker score range on ballot

Oral Adjudication

- Rankings will be read by head judge (unless dissenting)
 - Submit ballots before adjudication
 - Give a reason for the decision
 - Limit total adjudication time to 10 minutes
- Feedback will also be given (by all judges)
 - It should be constructive and positive
 - Don't continue the debate
- If you have any concerns about judging, talk to your coach, who will talk to the CA or TD

Parting Words for Judges

- Do your best to be impartial
 - Students, do not engage in the debate yourself
 - Parents, do not be offended by arguments
 - Remember the students are here to learn
- Some arguments are harder to make
 - Recognize when a tight case is presented
 - Recognize that not all arguments are equally valid
- Start by deciding on your ranking
- From there, assign speaker scores accordingly
- Then discuss rankings with other judges
- If you can't agree after 5 minutes, go to a vote
- You will make mistakes

Thank you for your time

Are there any questions?