

**Video #3 of Easy Entry to the World of Speech and Debate**

**“Step 3: Your Competitive Options”**

[Watch Video 3](https://club.monumentmembers.com/easy-entry-video3/)

EASY ENTRY TO THE WORLD OF SPEECH AND DEBATE is a compact video course designed to welcome new participants into the world of speech and debate competition…and make it “easy” to succeed at it.

# Previous Video

The step shared yesterday: “Your Individual Options.” If you haven’t seen that video, it is foundational. [Watch Video 2 here](https://club.monumentmembers.com/easy-entry-video2/).

# Today’s Step (and especially my added bonus)

Today I will explain “Your Competitive Options,” but be sure to stick around to the end of this video. I will share with you one of my most valuable “keys to success” that I have used for years to help build champions — in my own kids as well as countless numbers of champion students. It is the most effective “secret sauce” that you won’t want to miss!

# Step #3 to Easy Entry “Your Competitive Options”

Tournaments offer a number of events, and they can appear unorganized when you first see them. Furthermore, leagues and organizations often change things up from year to year. *Easy Entry* does its best to organize the events to help you quickly assess an event by understanding the structure of three specific categories. Let’s explore the three categories of competitive speech.

WARNING: I will be going through this content FAST. So, get your pencils ready, and you can re-watch this later in case you miss anything.

# Speech Events

There are dozens of them, and every league has various rules. I find it much “easier” to break them up into three categories. Once you understand these categories, the rules from your leagues and organizations become much “easier” to understand. Allow me to explain each of the three speech categories.

**Limited-Prep**

Limited-prep events are impromptu speeches that are given from a “prompt” (a Latin root meaning “to bring forth”). Competitors receive these prompts at the tournament.

The name “limited-prep” does not mean “no prep.” There is a fair amount of preparation required as students get ready for a limited-prep event. The point of a “limited-prep” is that the speeches are not memorized ahead of the tournament. Instead, speakers are given a prompt during their round and are allowed a certain amount of time to prepare their speech. Impromptu and Extemporaneous are examples of “limited-prep” speaking events.

All students are given the equivalent topics for their speaking time. For example, students in an extemp round may be given questions on current economic issues in the news. The point is for the judges to rate the students fairly in how they present the material. Here is a summary of the criteria judges use in ranking a limited-prep event:

1. **Content.** Sure, students are given the topic or question, but how they stick to the topic is just as important. Basic development of thesis, examples and illustrations reflect on how mature a rhetorical speaker they are.
2. **Organization.** Basic understanding of the structure of a speech (introduction, body, conclusion) is ranked by the judge.
3. **Rhetoric.** How succinct are the words of the speech? Does the speech have a fair balance of ethos, pathos and logos?
4. **Delivery.** How good of a speaker is the student? Impromptu ballots will ask judges to be attentive to such things as apparent energy, vocal clarity, and eye contact.
5. **Overall Impression.** All the limited-prep ballots ask for the judge’s bottom line impression of the speaker’s speech.

Each league has their own layout for limited-preparation events, but the idea is the same: *train students to be great impromptu speakers.* These events vary from league to league, and you will want to study the literature your league provides for the various limited-prep events they offer. For now, realize that limited-preparation is an awesome event for impromptu speakers who want to hone their impromptu skills.

**Platform**

Platformevents are oratory speeches written by the students and prepared (usually memorized) for presentation at tournaments.

Young people naturally desire to express themselves, and a major focus of education should include the opportunity for self-expression within clearly defined guidelines. When a student writes an original speech and delivers it, he or she is taking a *platform*, hence the name of this type of event. There are several platform categories. Each league has its unique rules and guidelines for proper platform speaking.

Judges rank students on the same criterion as a limited-prep speaker: content, organization, rhetoric, delivery and overall impression. A typical platform speech will have many of the same characteristics as a limited-prep speech, but all platforms are prepared speeches ahead of the tournament. In other words, students will write and practice their speech ahead of time. Some of the events may allow some sort of script to be used — and they may even require a script — but for the most part, platforms are expected to be memorized and delivered at the tournament. Platform speeches are usually 10 minutes long and students are ranked among a room full of other platform speakers.

**Interp**

Interpretive (or “interp”)events are literary pieces cut into a specific timeframe to give a cohesive presentation of the literature.

Students naturally fall in love with stories (fiction, biographies, plays) and will desire to share those stories with others. They have the opportunity to do so with *interp*. And while they’re at it, students will develop their own understanding of literature and, more significantly, develop skills to communicate the worth of the literature they choose to interpret.

There are several types of interpretative speeches, and all the leagues have created their unique presentation formats. Students are tasked with creating scripts or manuscripts from published literature (the only exception being Open or Original Interp where students can use original or unpublished works of literature). Students are not allowed to use one script for more than one year, and a script can only be entered in one event per tournament. Scripts have original word limitations and editing standards, and students need to keep a close eye on the event rules to make sure they are within the guidelines.

Here are some more specifics on interps:

* Students are usually required to submit their scripts to the tournament. The leagues have individual guidelines for “Script Submission” or “Manuscript Verification.” As mentioned, competitors are usually expected to have their scripts memorized, but sometimes they are allowed to use scripts.
* Most literary interpretation speeches are capped at 10 minutes long, no minimum. Judges are sometimes given flexibility to that maximum time in case audience participation (like laughter) drags the speech past the limit. Sometimes penalties are given for going over the time limit, something for judges to consider on their ballots. The best competitors aim for the 10-minute mark as best they can.
* Students are tasked with “cutting” pieces of literature. Cutting requires reading through, then utilizing the cut-and-paste tool in a word-processing program to extract parts of the literature to make it suitable for presentation. This should be done without disrespecting the content of the original piece, and the script submission rules often require interpers to show what was and wasn’t cut.
* Students are also tasked with “blocking” their piece. Blocking is the interper’s attempt to act out the piece. The interper often jumps between narration and character, and perhaps among several characters, too. Pay close attention to the individual event rules. Most forbid competitors from using props, and sometimes only the speaker’s feet are allowed to touch the floor, so the physical challenge of interpers are great (and impressive!). The best interpers are masters of the space in the competitive room.

Literary interp is an incredibly impressive speech category. If you’ve never seen one of these events, visit YouTube and do a search for literary interpretations. Some of the recordings will certainly entertain you, and you’ll simultaneously get ideas of how to do literary interpretation for competition.

# Debate Events

In my book EASY ENTRY TO THE WORLD OF SPEECH AND DEBATE, I categorize four debate formats. However, there are many more formats of debate that I did not go into in my book. Debate does not fit nicely into categories like speech does, and if I tried, some league out there would probably come up with something different that blows my nice-and-neat categorizations.

So, in the book you can find my breakdown of these four formats:

* Lincoln-Douglas
* Parli
* Policy
* Public Forum

For this course, however, I want to make debate easy to understand. There are only five elements that make up a true debate, and these five elements are what I’m going to cover in this course.

1. A Resolution. Every round must have a resolution to deal with, and all debaters will wrestle with being FOR or AGAINST the resolution.
2. Speaker Responsibilities. Every round has a structured set of timed speeches. Competitors should study what is required of them for each time slot, and judges should expect these of the students they judge.
3. Arguments. Argumentation is arguably the “art” of debate. There are a myriad of ways to persuade a judge, and the school of argumentation is vast and wide. I find argumentation the most rewarding part of teaching debate.
4. Strategies. There are “plays” that can be implemented in the game of debate. Students should practice strategies that help them secure a judge’s ballot.
5. Flowing. This is the process of note-taking through a debate round. Everyone should do this — students, judges, even observers. This may sound like a technique or perhaps a strategy, but I insist on making this an “element” that must not be overlooked. We say at our camps, “If you don’t flow it, you don’t know it.” And that’s true! Most importantly, once you understand how the other elements work, flowing then makes a tremendous amount of sense.

Witnessing a debate round can be overwhelming. But if you understand these five elements — a resolutions, speaker responsibilities, arguments, strategies, and flowing — you will be able to follow any debate.

# Freebie (time-sensitive)! FREE Season 20 Membership ($99 value)

As of Video #3’s release, I’ve turned on Season 20 to all visitors. You will notice the sidebar has an entire menu of source material. If you were already a Season 20 member, note that this is the new website!

Idea: Take the time to consider how helpful this material could have been to you working through the school year. As you study the resolutions and get to know event rules by various leagues, this source material guides you through the year. I hire the champions and their coaches to help guide members, all the way to champion-levels. It’s awesome.

**This is time sensitive: Access will expire on June 5 when this course goes away.** Thereafter,access will only be allowed for Monument.

# Proof of Completion

*(For students required to take this class for school or club.)*

Assignment: Find a download in the Season 20 membership that correlates to an event that you anticipate competing in Season 21. Download the file, review it, and forward it to your teacher or coach as “proof of completion.”