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Introduction

Welcome to the official Junior State of America Moderator Handbook! In the next few pages, you’ll find all the resources you need to be a successful JSA Moderator, and will be ready to put your newfound skills into action as a moderator at your next JSA convention or conference! For state events (Fall State, Spring State, One-Day Conferences, etc.), you can sign up to moderate using DebateWare. For chapter events (Chapter Conferences), you will usually be able to sign up through a Google Form on the event’s Facebook page.

Moderators are integral to maintaining the quality of discourse within JSA. Ultimately, your job is to keep order and maintain yourself as the ultimate authority in the room. You are awarded the opportunity to create an inclusive environment for all JSA delegates.

Good luck, and happy moderating!

Traditional Debate Structure

Starting the Debate

Once you arrive to your debate, ensure that you have a gavel, ballots, and an organizational sheet. If any of the above is absent, alert a Cabinet member in your room and they will get you the materials you need. Once your materials are assembled, you are ready to begin the debate!

1. **Call the Debate to Order**: Bang the gavel to get the room’s attention. To begin, say, “I now call this debate to order: Resolved, [state the resolution].” If necessary, you should also use this time to explain any applicable rules that would apply to the debate if it is a non-traditional style.

2. **Introduce the Main Speakers**: Say, “[name] from [school] will speaking main pro and [name] from [school] will be speaking main con.”

3. **Appoint a Timekeeper**: Ask someone sitting near the front of the room to keep time. The timekeeper must be aware of the time to allot
to each speaker and must know the JSA hand signals. The signals are as follows:

*Time Allotted:*
Main Speeches – 6 minutes
Subsequent Speeches – 3 minutes
Closing Speeches – 3 minutes

*JSA Hand Signals:*
5, 4, 3, 2, or 1 finger(s) up – 5, 4, 3, 2, or 1 minute(s) remaining
Form a “C” with one hand – 30 seconds remaining
10...9...8...7... fingers up – last 10 seconds

**Speeches and Questions**
Once the speeches commence, it is your job to ensure that the audience remains respectful, that speeches are given in the correct order, and that proper questioning procedure is followed.

4. **Main Pro Speech:** The main pro speaker has up to 6 minutes to speak. To give him or her the floor, say, “We will begin with the main pro argument. You have 6 minutes; you may begin whenever you’re ready.” Oftentimes, the speaker will conclude their speech before time has elapsed, but if not, lightly bang the gavel and announce that the speaker’s time has elapsed when the timekeeper finishes counting down from 10 seconds.

   If the speaker has concluded before their 6 minutes has elapsed, he or she can choose either to yield their time to the chair, or yield the rest of his or her time to questions. If the speaker yields their time to the chair, they have elected not to answer questions from the audience. State, “Thank you, the chair will absorb the remaining time,” and you can proceed to step 6.

5. **Main Pro Questions:** If the main pro speaker elected to yield their time to questions, ask the audience if there are any questions. You call on audience members to ask questions. Remind the timekeeper that time should not be running when the question is being asked.
   a. Follow-up questions are not permitted unless the audience member asks, “Does the speaker submit to a 2-part question?” If the speaker says yes, allow the audience member two
questions. If not, they are allowed one question.
b. Once the speaker’s time has elapsed, lightly tap the gavel and say, “The speaker’s time has elapsed.”

6. **Main Con Speech and Questions:** Repeat step 5 (and 6 if necessary) for the Main Con speaker.

7. **Subsequent Speeches:** Now move on to subsequent speeches. Say “We will now hear a 3 minute subsequent pro speech, do I have any volunteers?” Call on a volunteer and say, “You have three minutes; you may begin when you are ready.” For questions following the speech, the procedure is the same as that for the main speeches.
   a. Repeat step 7 for the next subsequent Con speaker. Continue to alternate pro and con speakers until there are approximately 10 minutes left in the block.

8. **Closing Speeches:** When there are approximately 10 minutes remaining, ask if there is a motion on the floor. (How to properly handle Parliamentary Procedure can be found in the next section) The main con speaker will present their closing speech first. Then the pro speaker will present their closing speech. For both speeches, they have three minutes, and there are **no questions**.

**Voting Procedure**

9. **Move to a Vote:** Say, “We will now vote on the resolution: ‘Resolved, [state the resolution].’” Then, say “All of those in favor of the resolution, please raise your hand.” Count the number of hands and record the number on the moderator organizational sheet. Repeat this step for “all against” (Con) and “all abstaining”.

   Once the votes have been tallied, announce, “With a vote of [# of Pro] to [# of Con] to [# of Abstentions], this resolution [passes/fails]”

10. **Break the Tie:** If the number of pro and con votes are tied, then the abstentions will count in favor of the con side. However, in the situation in which there are no abstentions and the number of pros and cons are tied, your vote will break the tie. **This is the only time in which a moderator can vote on a resolution.**
11. **Best Speakers:** Pass out the best speaker ballots and ask all speakers to come to the front and state their name and school. Collect the ballots, count them, and record the results in the moderator organizational sheet. **Moderators cannot vote for best speaker.**

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**Parliamentary Procedure**

When a motion is made by a delegate, ask if someone else seconds the motion. Once someone has seconded, ask, “all in favor?” and then “all opposed?” Whichever side sounds to have more people determines whether the motion passes or fails. Then state, “The motion [passes/fails].” Refer to the table below for different kinds of motions and their procedures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Point/Motion</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>When it can be proposed</th>
<th>How to Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motion to Extend Speaker’s Time</td>
<td>To extend the amount of time a speaker can use for their speech/questions</td>
<td>After a subsequent speaker’s time has elapsed</td>
<td>Simple Majority of Aye vs. Nay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motion to Suspend the Rules and move to Pro/Con</td>
<td>To suspend normal proceedings and select a Pro/Con speaker directly after a speaker who spoke on the same side.</td>
<td>When there are no volunteers for a certain side during subsequent speeches</td>
<td>Simple Majority of Aye vs. Nay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motion to Move to Previous Question</td>
<td>To move on to main closing speeches</td>
<td>When roughly 10-15 minutes remain in the block</td>
<td>Simple Majority of Aye vs. Nay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motion to Caucus</td>
<td>To allow the audience members a span of time ranging from 2-5 minutes to discuss the debate</td>
<td>When there are no volunteers to speak on either side.</td>
<td>Simple Majority of Aye vs. Nay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motion to Convert the Debate into a Thought Talk.</td>
<td>To improve the engagement of the audience on the topic</td>
<td>If there are no volunteers for either side, or if all speeches have minimal effort and engagement.</td>
<td>Simple Majority of Aye vs. Nay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Troubleshooting Scenarios

It is imperative to remember that as a moderator, you have a responsibility to maintain the flow and engagement of the debate. You must be assertive, but fair. You are the authority of the room; don’t be afraid to follow the necessary procedures. You must be able to adapt to your surroundings and make the appropriate judgements.

If the speaker is still speaking even though their time is up:

Tap your gavel at the end of the time to inform them of the elapsed time. Allow them to finish their final thought. If their final remark is running too long, firmly tap the gavel and state, “The speaker’s time has elapsed.” If they persist, ask them to please sit down.

If the room is becoming rowdy due to excessive talking:

In some cases, especially in bigger rooms, audience members can succumb to chatter and overwhelm the room. Small chatter should be silenced with discreet shushing and making eye contact with those talking. If there are larger disruptions, lightly tap the gavel and firmly state “Respect the speaker.”

If the room is becoming rowdy due to offensive speakers:

Make sure you differentiate between offensive/rowdy and satirical speeches. The latter is allowed, however, if the speaker uses foul language or expresses any form of hate speech, don’t be afraid to bang your gavel and give a warning to a speaker. If they continue, stop them and absorb the rest of their time. If the situation escalates, you may ask them to leave the room or contact a TA. Use your best discretion to keep control of the room. For more specific guidelines regarding hate speech, refer to the moderator organization sheet.

If there are no volunteers to speak:

Keep asking the chamber and looking around the room, encouraging audience members to speak. If after a minute or so nobody volunteers, offer a motion to suspend the rules and move to the other side’s subsequent speech. In the event that there are no volunteers for either side, a motion to convert the debate to a thought talk is allowed.
If you are running out of time:

You should *always* reserve 10-15 minutes at the end of the block for closing main speeches and voting. If you lose track of time, offer to either shorten closing speeches (provide a set amount of time) or forgo another round of subsequent speeches for moving to the closing speeches. These two options should not be used often; as a moderator, you must manage your time.

Moderator Organizational Sheet

An organizational sheet that should be on the table for the block at the convention. This sheet helps you keep track of speeches and provides your Director of Debate with pertinent information regarding the results of the debate. This sheet can be found on the next page.
Moderator's Organization Sheet

Resolved, _____________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Moderator's Name: ___________________________ School: ______________________

For Use At Junior State Conventions
This debate was held:
Block # ______
Room Name ______

Main Speakers:
Pro: ____________________________________________  (name)
______________________________________________  (school)
Con: ____________________________________________  (name)
______________________________________________  (school)

Voting Results: Pro ________ Con ________ Abstentions ________ PASS  FAIL (circle one)
Best Speaker: ___________________________ School: ______________________

The Standard JSA Debate Procedure

1. Call the Debate to Order
2. Read the resolution
3. Introduce the Main Speakers
4. Appoint a timekeeper
5. Affirmative Opening Speech
6. Negative Opening Speech
7. Select Subsequent Speakers (Alternating pro and con)
8. Motion to call the previous question
9. Negative closing speech
10. Affirmative Closing Speech
11. Read the resolution again
12. Take a vote on the resolution
13. Announce the result of the vote
14. Pass out Best Speaker ballots
15. Announce the names of all of the main and subsequent speakers
16. Collect and tally best speaker ballots

Subsequent Speakers:
(Please list name and school)

Pro:
1. ___________________________
2. ___________________________
3. ___________________________
4. ___________________________
5. ___________________________
6. ___________________________

Con:
1. ___________________________
2. ___________________________
3. ___________________________
4. ___________________________
5. ___________________________
6. ___________________________
Additional Resources

Visit jsa.org/downloads or your state’s website to access the following resources:

→ Debate Handbook
  o This handbook will provide you with what you need to successfully present a speech for a debate.

→ Thought Talk Handbook
  o If you’d rather discuss an issue than debate it, consider participating in a Thought Talk as opposed to a traditional JSA debate.

→ Debate Species Guide
  o In addition to the traditional JSA debate described in this handbook, most JSA conventions and conference incorporate different styles of debate that allow speakers to engage in crossfire, speak in teams, etc. The Debate Species Guide provides a description of the many different styles of debate that can be found at a JSA event, as well as how they differ from the traditional JSA debate.

For past agendas or suggestion for improving your moderating skills, don’t hesitate to contact your state’s Elected Officials or email jsacog@jsa.org.