

CONGRESS

You compete in a simulation of the US legislature session, delivering speeches for and against pre-written bills. You are assessed on your research, argumentation, and delivery skills, as well as your knowledge of parliamentary procedure.

BASICS OF CONGRESS

Before the tournament, you'll be given a "docket", which is just a list of bills you'll be preparing speeches on. You can do simple outlines of your points or write out full speeches, depending on how much prep you want to do or your speaking style. Either way, you should do enough research to fully understand the bills on the docket. At the beginning of the tournament, you're divided into groups called "chambers" or "houses", which is filled with your competitors for the tournament. From there, Congress follows Robert's Rules of Order, a popular type of parliamentary procedure. At the beginning of a round, each chamber elects a chair, who calls on people to speak, ask questions, and accepts motions.

After choosing a chair, the house begins going through the docket (The pieces that you'll be debating on). For each bill, a 3 minute pro and a con speech are given, with the first pro speech reading the bill out loud before they begin. This pattern continues with alternating pro and con speakers, who are called on by the chair.

When selecting who to speak, the debaters who have given the least speeches over the course of the round are picked first, which is called having priority.

Each speech is followed by a question or a cross-examination period, which is used to ask questions on the speech itself or the stance on the bill.

Once at least two people have spoken on the bill, representatives may motion to vote on the bill or table it. The sessions are set to end at certain times, so within five minutes of the end of the round, a representative can motion to close the house. In one tournament, you can have 2-5 sessions, depending on if you make it to finals rounds.

LEGISLATION

Legislation comes in two types—a bill and a resolution. A bill is a plan of action, detailing how a particular policy proposal will be implemented. A resolution, meanwhile, is a statement expressing the opinion of the chamber. Passing the resolution does not change anything about the world around us, it merely states the preference of the chamber. For example, let's say a school had a dress code. The student body may pass a piece of legislation expressing their displeasure with the dress code (a resolution) or legislation modifying the colors and styles of the school uniform (a bill).

A Bill to Establish a Specific Policy	
BE IT ENACTED BY THIS CONGRESS THAT:	
1.	SECTION 1. State the new policy in a brief declarative sentence, or in as few sentences as possible.
2.	
3.	
4.	SECTION 2. Define any ambiguous terms inherent in the first section.
5.	
6.	SECTION 3. Name the government agency that will oversee the enforcement of the bill along with the specific enforcement mechanism.
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	SECTION 4. Indicate the implementation date/timeframe.
11.	
12.	SECTION 5. State that all other laws that are in conflict with this new policy shall hereby be declared null and void.
13.	
14.	
Introduced by Name of School	

A Resolution to Urge Further Action on a Specific Issue	
1.	WHEREAS, State the current problem (this needs to be accomplished in one brief sentence); and
2.	
3.	
4.	WHEREAS, Describe the scope of the problem cited in the first whereas clause (this clause needs to flow logically from the first); and
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	WHEREAS, Explain the impact and harms allowed by the current problem (once again, the clause needs to flow in a logical sequence); now, therefore, be it
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	RESOLVED, By this Congress that: state your recommendation for dealing with the problem (the resolution should be a clear call for action); and, be it
13.	
14.	
15.	
16.	FURTHER RESOLVED, That (an <u>optional</u> additional recommendation; if not used, end the previous clause with a period).
17.	
18.	
Introduced by Name of School	

CONGRESS

SPEECH LAYOUT

*All speeches are three minutes

I. Introduction (15 to 30 seconds)

A. Relate the speech to ideas that are, or might be, brought to the floor for debate.

1. Use a quotation; and/or
2. Use an analogy; and/or
3. Use statistics to raise awareness of a problem

B. State purpose/thesis (about 10 seconds)

II. Body (approximately 2 minutes)

Each claim you make (whether constructive or refuting the opposition) should be supported with analytical reasoning and/or evidence with a good combination of quantitative statistics or facts, and qualitative case studies and quotations from experts. Be sure to state the importance, or impact that claim has for the overall topic of debate and why it supports or opposes those views. Example structure:

1. Claim: issue of debate; point or points that are in conflict.
2. Proof: evidence and reasoning to support the argument; explain how the proof relates to the claim (link).
3. Impact: why the argument is important/significant, especially to the particular side debated. Challenge the opposition to respond to an issue.

Give two to three meaningful arguments.

III. Conclusion (about 30 seconds)

- A. State primary points and issues
- B. Summarize key arguments

PRIORITY

Congress follows priority, meaning that the chair should pick people who have spoken the least to present a speech before picking those who have already spoken

	1	2	3
1	Smith (PO)	Smith (PO)	Wilson (20N)
2	Lincoln (1S)	Jones (7A)	Clinton (22A)
3	Jones (2N)	Clinton (12A)	
4	Washington (3A)	Wilson (14A)	
5	Roosevelt (4N)	Nixon (17N)	
6	Jackson (5A)	Carter (18A)	
7	Reagan (6N)	Lincoln (19N)	
8	Clinton (8N)		
9	Bush (9N)		
10	Wilson (10S)		
11	Harding (11N)		
12	Kennedy (13N)		
13	Carter (15N)		
14	Nixon (16A)		
15	Ford (21N)		