

10 Reasons why Everyone Should Join Speech and Debate



Greta Thunberg

1. **You get to advocate about issues that matter to you.** It is quite common for debaters to present cases on structural oppression, racism, and patriarchal norms. There are a wide variety of events that you can tailor to fit your interests.
2. **Your team becomes your family.** I met some of my closest friends on the speech and debate team. We travel all over the country together for tournaments and share plenty of laughs every day in class. Not to mention, very intelligent people tend to do debate, so you'll receive plenty of help with your homework!
3. **You learn how to deal with failure and embarrassment.** Debate tournaments provide a safe environment for learning how to brush off your mistakes, learn from them, and ultimately move forward. People won't judge you, either, because everyone's been there at one point or another.

4. **Writing essays becomes a breeze.** Have to write an argumentative persuasive essay in English? Just think up a rebuttal in your head and you'll have three pages written down! Have to write a paper that analyzes a current event? You'll have hundreds of articles already filed for you to choose from. Doing speech and debate drastically improves your linguistic and logical skills, along with your ability to construct strong arguments in a short amount of time.
5. **You become more adaptable.** One of the most challenging yet exciting aspects of debate is that you can't foresee exactly how the round will play out. Eventually, you'll know how to think of responses to multifaceted arguments on the spot and appeal to judges who would normally disagree with your position. In public speaking events, you learn how to quickly adapt to your judge, audience, and room layout. If you forget your speech in the middle of performing it, you learn how to improvise. Adaptability is a necessary skill for success in life, and speech and debate develops it.
6. **Colleges LOVE students who are in speech and debate.** According to Professor Minh A. Luong of Yale University, students who participate in extracurricular activities that develop "oral and written communication and the ability to organize ideas and present them effectively perform better in college." Also, speech and debate is an extremely competitive and time-intensive activity, with tournaments almost every other weekend. Winning awards and having leadership positions demonstrates to colleges that the student has invested a large quantity of effort and time into their events.
7. **Your public speaking skills improve.** This one is obvious but nonetheless very important. I used to shake with nerves whenever I had to present a short PowerPoint to my class. Now, I'm not only no longer scared to speak in front of my peers, but I actually look forward to it! Public speaking is very self-empowering once you become comfortable with it, and it's also a very admired skill that you can take with you for the rest of your life.
8. **You meet cool people at tournaments.** As much as I dislike waking up at 5:30 in the morning on Saturday, getting to see my friends from other schools makes this small sacrifice totally worth it. Since tournaments host such a diverse group of people, they are great for networking and making new friends. Yes, even online.
9. **You become woke.** Whether it's doing research on a debate topic about gun legislation or delivering an extemporaneous speech about whether Donald Trump should repeal the Trans-Pacific Partnership, speech and debate truly opens your eyes to what's happening in the world. You'll also become informed enough to form your own critical stance on these issues.
10. **It's fun!** I'm not going to lie; being in speech and debate is hard work. However, nothing is more rewarding than the feeling of making my audience bust out laughing or having someone come up to me after the round and tell me that my speech really spoke to them. Plus, you get to travel a lot, which is always exciting (and the school pays for most tournaments).



The Politician

Coronado/Odyssey ECCO Speech and Debate (the *other* forensics)



I am Daisy Weeks, and along with Mr. Ken Cain, we are the Speech and Debate coach and assistant coach for Coronado and Odyssey ECCO. We each specialize and coach in different areas: me in speech, and Cain in debate. We are also regional tournament judges. Please contact me if interested!!! My email: Weekscd@d11.org



Our season starts with novice or freshmen in **October**, and joined by varsity from **September to February**, depending on how well students compete.

In the beforetimes, we all got into our cars and headed to whatever high school was hosting the Tournament that week. We went all over our regional area, from Canon City to Widefield, to Lewis Palmer. Now everything is virtual! Once you become a member and attend practices, you get to compete by submitting a video.

In the beforetimes, students hung out ALL DAY, which was kind-of fun, but still—it was a lonnnng day. The events were all live, in front of judges and other competitors, and students had three to four rounds a day, plus awards in the evening. Now, instead of performing three times, you will just submit your one video per tournament (and it doesn't matter how many tries or "takes" you do. You submit your best one). It should be a new one every tournament, to show growth. Debates might still be live on WebEx or Zoom

Debates

Lincoln-Douglas: these are one-on-one, affirmative and negative, on a given topic that students research. There are timed segments for introduction, responses, cross-examinations, and concluding remarks.

Public Forum: a two-on-two event where teams argue against each other on a specified resolution. Resolutions come out for research and preparation monthly. There is some back and forth, so these are also live.

Speeches or Events: these are from memory and are usually 7-10 minutes.

Extemporary: Students have 30 minutes to come up with a 7-minute speech on any of three choices. This means students in extemp come with tons of pre-researched material on current events. A student's understanding of important political, economic, and cultural issues is assessed along with critical thinking and analytical skills.

Original Oratory: Students use evidence, logic, and emotional appeals to persuade the audience to do or think. The student writes and delivers it. No props.

Duo Interpretation: This is usually a portion of a script, or cutting, and can be dramatic or funny. The introduction can be written by students. Partners don't look or touch each other, but do interact verbally and with gestures. Competitors can dress alike, but no costumes.

Dramatic Interpretation: Usually a cutting or an entire short script, student uses emotions and changes of voice to indicate different characters. Dramatic interpretation is passionate.

POI (Program Oral Interpretation): student selects cuttings from lyrics, poems, and dramatic pieces and puts them all together. POI focuses on a student's ability to combine multiple genres of literature centered around a single theme and highlights students' performance range.

Informative: This is like a TED Talk. The competitor performs research and incorporates many sources into a speech meant to inform and educate the audience. Students are allowed some props and/or posters on easels. Informative requires students to balance that content with delivery and style.