

**Introduction to British Parliamentary Debate**

The British Parliamentary Debate (BPD) format is the most common style of debating and as its name suggests it is based on the procedure of deliberation in British House of Parliament.

The BPD has four teams, two for the government and two for the opposition. The teams on the side of the government propose and argue **for** the motion, while the teams on the opposition side argue **against** the motion. The motions are usually topical and are generally expressed in two ways: 1)This House would… 2)This House believes… .The first framing suggests the debated motion will be about a particular ‘government’ policy, while the second points to a debate about principles or beliefs.

**Your team should aim at:**

* Convincing the judges that the motion should be supported/opposed.
* Convincing the judges that your team (as opposed to the other team on your side) presented the best arguments in support of your position.

**Structure:**

2nd Government

2nd Opposition

3rd Opposition

4th Opposition

3rd Government

4th Government

1st Opposition

1st Government

**Roles:[[1]](#footnote-1)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Proposition (Government) | Opposition |
| Team Position: **First Proposition**  **First Speaker**  *Defines* the debate, translating the motion into a concrete policy or idea.  *Argues* two or three contentions supporting why the policy ought to be enacted. | Team Position: **First Opposition**  **Second Speaker**  *Refutes* the proposition arguments, pointing out their flaws.  *Argues Independently*, introducing new concepts that may not have been brought up in the first speaker’s speech. |
| Team Position: **First Proposition**  **Third Speaker:**    *Refutes* the opposition arguments, pointing out their flaws.  *Argues Independently*, introducing new concepts that may not have been brought up in the first speaker’s speech. | Team Position: **First Opposition**  **Fourth Speaker:**  *Refutes* the proposition arguments, pointing out their flaws.  *Argues Independently*, introducing new concepts that may not have been brought up in the second speaker’s speech. |
| Team Position: **Second Proposition**  **Fifth Speaker:**  *Extends* the debate, offering new arguments and analysis for supporting their side.  *Refutes* any outstanding opposition points. | Team Position: **Second Opposition**  **Sixth Speaker:**  *Extends* the debate, offering new arguments and analysis for supporting their side.  *Refutes* the proposition extension. |
| Team Position: **Second Proposition**  **Seventh Speaker:**  *Summates* the debate, offering a biased summary of the issues involved and showing why the proposition deserve to win.  *-no now arguments shall be presented at this point-* | Team Position: **Second Opposition**  **Eighth Speaker:**  *Summates* the debate, offering a biased summary of the issues involved and showing why the opposition deserve to win.  *-no now arguments shall be presented at this point-* |

**Time:**

* 5-7 min for each speaker (will also depend on a number of participants)

**Points of Information (POIs):**

POIs is question or a factual remark from opposite side to the speaker. This is generally allowed except for a first and last minute of the speaker’s deliberation, every speaker should accept at least one POIs.

1. From ´The Cambrige Union Society Introductory Guide to Debating’ 2011-12 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)