

2014–2015 Piloted Debate Evidence Rules

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The National Speech & Debate Association is piloting, for the second year, updated evidence rules for Policy, Lincoln-Douglas, and Public Forum Debate. District Committees may choose to use these at their district debate tournament, provided 60 days' advance notice is given to the community. Coaches are encouraged to check with local tournament officials to see which set of rules will be used in their area.

7.1. Responsibilities of Contestants Reading Evidence

A. **Evidence defined.** Debaters are responsible for the validity of all evidence they introduce in the debate. Evidence includes, but is not limited to: facts, statistics, or examples attributable to a specific, identifiable, authoritative source used to support a claim. Unattributed ideas are the opinion of the student competitor and are not evidence.

B. **Oral source citation.** In all debate events, contestants are expected to, at a minimum, orally deliver the following when introducing evidence in a debate round: primary author(s)' name (last) and year of publication. **Any other information such as source, author's qualifications, etc., may be given, but is not required.** Should two or more quotations be used from the same source, the author and year must be given orally only for the first piece of evidence from that source. Subsequently, only the author's name is required.

C. **Written source citation.** To the extent provided by the original source, a written source citation must include:

1. Full name of primary author and/or editor
2. Publication date
3. Source
4. Title of article
5. Date accessed for digital evidence
6. Full URL, if applicable
7. Author qualifications
8. Page number(s)

D. **Paraphrasing, authoritative source versus general understanding.** If paraphrasing is used in a debate, the debater will be held to the same standard of citation and accuracy as if the entire text of the evidence were read. If a debater references a specific theory by a specific author, s/he must also be able to provide an original source. For example, if a debater were to reference social contract theory in

general, it would not be an authoritative source that would require citation. However, if s/he references "John Locke's Social Contract," evidence would need to be available.

E. **Ellipses prohibited.** In all debate events, the use of internal ellipsis (...) is prohibited **unless it is a replication of the original document.** Debaters may omit the reading of certain words; however, the text that is verbally omitted must be present in the text of what was read for opposing debaters and/or judges to examine. The portions of the evidence read including where the debater begins and ends must be clearly marked as outlined in 7.1(G)(2).

F. **Availability of original source.**

1. When challenged, the original source or copy of the relevant (as outlined in 7.2) pages of evidence read in round must be available to the opponent and/or judge during and/or at the conclusion of the round. In all debate events, for reference, any evidence that is presented during the round must be made available to the opponent during the round if requested.

2. **Original source(s) defined.** Understanding that teams/individuals obtain their evidence in multiple ways, the original source for evidence may include, but is not limited solely to, one of the following:

- a. Accessing the live or displaying a copy of a web page (teams/individuals may access the Internet to provide this information if requested).
- b. A copy of the pages preceding, including, and following or the actual printed (book, periodical, pamphlet, etc.) source.
- c. Copies or electronic versions of published handbooks (i.e., Baylor Briefs, Planet Debate, etc.).

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- d. Electronic or printed versions of the webpage for a debate institute or the NDCA sponsored Open Evidence Project or similar sites.
 3. Debaters, even if they have acquired the evidence other than by original research, are still responsible for the content and accuracy of the evidence they present and/or read.
- G. Distinguishing between which parts of each piece of evidence are and are not read in a particular round.** In all debate events, debaters must mark their evidence in two ways:
1. Oral delivery of each piece of evidence must be identified by a clear oral pause or by saying phrases such as “quote/unquote” or “mark the card.” The use of a phrase is definitive and may be preferable to debaters. Clear, oral pauses are left solely to the discretion of the judge.
 2. The written text must be marked to clearly indicate the portions read in the debate. In the written text the standard practices of underlining what is read, or highlighting what is read, and/or minimizing what is unread, is definitive and may be preferable to debaters. The clarity of other means of marking evidence is left to the discretion of the judge.
- H. Private communication prohibited.** Private, personal correspondence or communication between an author and the debater is inadmissible as evidence.

7.2. Definitions of Evidence Violations

- A. “Distortion” exists when the textual evidence itself contains added and/or deleted word(s), which significantly alters the conclusion of the author (e.g., **deleting ‘not’; adding the word ‘not’**). Additionally, failure to bracket added words would be considered distortion of evidence.
 - B. “Non-existent evidence” means one or more of the following:
 1. The debater citing the evidence is unable to provide the original source or copy of the relevant pages when requested by his/her opponent, judge, or tournament official.
 2. The original source provided does not contain the evidence cited.
 3. The evidence is paraphrased but lacks an original source to verify the accuracy of the paraphrasing.
4. The debater is in possession of the original source, but declines to provide it to his/her opponent upon request.
- C. “Clipping”** occurs when the debater claims to have read the complete text of highlighted and/or underlined evidence when, in fact, the contestant skips or omits portions of evidence.
- D. “Straw argument”**
A “straw argument” is a position or argumentative claim introduced by an author for the purpose of refuting, discrediting or characterizing it. Reliance on a straw argument occurs in a debate round when a debater asserts incorrectly that the author supports or endorses the straw argument as his or her own position.
Note: A debater who acknowledges using a “straw argument” when verbally first read in the round, would **not** be misrepresenting evidence. However, if the debater fails to acknowledge the use of a “straw argument” and his/her opponent questions the use of such an argument, then that debater has committed an evidence violation.

7.3. Procedures for Resolving Evidence Violations

- A. Judges are responsible for resolving disputes between debaters regarding oral citations (7.1(B)); written source citations (7.1(C)); distinguishing between what parts of each piece of evidence are and are not read in a particular round (7.1(G)). When the judge(s) have such a dispute in the round, they must make a written note on the ballot or inform the tabulation committee of the dispute. They must do so particularly if it impacts the decision in the debate. **These decisions may not be appealed.**
- B. An appeal can only be made if the issue has been raised in the round with the exception of the issues listed in 7.3(C). Appeals may only be made if judge(s) have misapplied, misinterpreted, or ignored a rule.
- C. A formal allegation of violation of the evidence rules is permitted during the round only if the debater(s) allege a violation of 7.2(A) (distortion); 7.2(B) (nonexistent evidence); 7.2(C) (clipping). If a formal allegation of violation of these rules is made during a round, the following procedures must be followed (see Section 7.3(D) for procedures for making a formal allegation after the conclusion of the round):

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1. The team/individual alleging a violation must make a definitive indication that they are formally alleging a violation of an evidence rule.
2. The team/individual alleging the violation of the evidence must articulate the specific violation as defined in 7.2(A), 7.2(B), and/or 7.2(C).
3. The judge should stop the round at that time to examine the evidence from both teams/individuals and render a decision about the credibility of the evidence.
 - a. If the judge determines that the allegation is legitimate and an evidence violation has occurred, the team/individual committing the violation will be given the loss in the round. Other sanctions may also apply as articulated in 7.3(E).
 - b. If the judge determines that the allegation is not legitimate and that there is no violation, the team/individual making the challenge will receive the loss in the round.

Note: Teams/individuals may question the credibility and/or efficacy of the evidence without a formal allegation that requires the round to end. Teams/debaters may make in-round arguments regarding the credibility of evidence without making a formal allegation of violation of these rules. Such informal arguments about the evidence will not automatically end the round, and will be treated by the judge in the same fashion as any other argument.
- D. The tabulation committee is authorized to hear:
 - (1) appeals, pursuant to 7.3(B), claiming that a judge ignored, misinterpreted or misapplied rules other than those from which no appeal is permitted pursuant to 7.3(A); (2) appeals from a judge's decision, pursuant to 7.3(C), on a formal in-round allegation of distortion or non-existent evidence (note: **judge decisions regarding clipping may not be appealed**); and (3) a formal allegation of distortion or nonexistent evidence that is made for the first time after conclusion of the debate.
- E. The procedures for making an appeal or post-round formal allegation are as follows:
 1. A coach or school-affiliated adult representative must notify the tabulation committee of intent to submit an appeal or formal post-round allegation within 20 minutes of the end of the debate round. The 20-minute time period begins once the last ballot from all rounds (if flighted, both flights) has been collected by the tabulation committee.
 2. The coach must submit the post-round formal allegation to the tabulation committee within ten minutes of the formal notification of the intent to appeal. The allegation must be in writing and articulate the specific evidence violation that is being challenged. The challenged contestant and coach will then be notified.
 3. If the tabulation committee determines the original protest has merit, the coach or school-affiliated adult and contestant(s) being challenged will be given 20 minutes to provide evidence denying, or to the contrary of the claim. If such evidence cannot be offered, the challenged debater(s) will be given the loss in the round and may be subject to additional penalties (see Section 7.4.D). If the tabulation committee determines the allegation is not legitimate and there is no violation, the team/individual making the challenge will receive the loss in the round.
 4. The tabulation committee has the discretion of extending the time limits for these actions if circumstances do not allow a coach or school-affiliated adult to be available within the prescribed time limits.
- F. The tabulation committee's decision to disqualify a student can be appealed by the coach or school-affiliated adult. The procedures below should be followed:
 1. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the tabulation committee within ten minutes of the notification to disqualify.
 2. The tabulation committee will then submit the appeal to the national office referee(s). The committee will contact the national office referee once the written appeal has been received. Both sides will be able to provide written explanations and supporting evidence to defend their individual side.
 3. A decision will be rendered in a timely manner. The decision of the national office shall be final and cannot be appealed.

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4. No more than one round may occur between the round being protested and the decision of the national office referee.
5. If the appeal is successful and the contestant(s) may now continue in the tournament, they will be put into the appropriate bracket for pairing the debates.
- G. If appeals are made in rounds in which multiple judges are being used, normal procedures should be followed to ensure each judge reaches his/her decision as independently as possible. Judges will be instructed not to confer or discuss the charge and/or answer to the potential violation. It will be possible for one judge to determine an evidence violation has occurred and the other judge(s) to determine no violation has occurred. The tabulation committee will record the panel's decision in the same fashion as a normal win or loss; the outcome is thus tabulated in the same fashion as a round in which an evidence violation has not occurred. If the majority of the panel finds an evidence violation did not occur, no sanction may be applied to the team/individual charged with the violation. If the majority finds a violation has occurred, the appropriate penalties will be administered.

7.4. Penalties for Evidence Violations

- A. If the judge determines that an entry has violated one of the rules listed in 7.3(A) and 7.1(H) (oral citation, written citation, indication of parts of card read or not read, use of private communication), the judge may at his or her discretion disregard the evidence, diminish the credibility given to the evidence, take the violation into account (solely or partially) in deciding the winner of the debate, or take no action.
 - B. If a debater(s) commits an evidence violation for “clipping” (7.2(C)), the use of a “straw argument” (7.2(D)) or the use of “ellipses” (7.1(E)) such action will result in a loss for the debater(s) committing the evidence violation. The judge should award zero speaker points (if applicable) and indicate the reason for decision on the ballot.
 - C. If a debater(s) commits an evidence violation of “distortion” (7.2(A)) or uses “nonexistent evidence” (as defined by 7.2(B)) the offending debater(s) will lose the debate and be disqualified from the tournament. However, if a debater(s) loses a round due to a “non-existent evidence” (7.2(B)) violation during an in-round formal allegation, but can produce it after the round within 20 minutes to the tabulation committee, the committee may decide not to disqualify the entry. The loss that was recorded by the judge may not be changed.
- D. Evidence infractions violate the Code of Honor. Depending on the severity, an offense may result in the notification of said offense to the contestant's high school administration and chapter sponsor, loss of all District and/or National Tournament merit points, including trophy and sweepstakes points for the offending student(s), and/or revocation of Association membership. These decisions would be left to the national office and not the individual tabulation committee.

7.5. Tournament Adjustments

- A. Under no circumstance will a tournament or part of a tournament be re-run because of a violation of these rules.
- B. In the case of a disqualification of a debater(s), all ranks and decisions of other debater(s) made prior to the start of the round being protested stand and no revision of past round ranks will take place. Penalties listed in 7.4 will be applied.
- C. When a round has been held between the round being protested and a final decision regarding the protest, the result of that round will be recorded as follows:
 1. If the protest is upheld, and a debater is disqualified, the opponent of the disqualified debater will receive a forfeit win.
 2. If the protest is overruled, and the protesting debater won the protested round, no revision of the result on the ballot will take place.
 3. If the protest is overruled, the protesting debater lost the protested round, and had no previous losses, no revision of the result on the ballot will take place.
 4. If the protest is overruled, the protesting debater lost the protested round, and had a previous loss, the opponent will receive a forfeit win regardless of the result on the ballot.