

YEAR 7 & 8 National Competition



British Parliamentary

A British Parliamentary How to Debate Guide

What has changed

Everything you already know still counts. Three things are new.

NEW • ONE

Four teams

Two teams on each side, two speakers each. You share a side with a team you have never met.

NEW • TWO

Ranked 1–4

Nobody simply "wins". All four teams are put in order, first to fourth.

NEW • THREE

New Strategies

Teams need to bring an 'extension'.

Example motion

THIS HOUSE WOULD

Ban mobile phones in all secondary schools

THW **This House Would.** Asks whether we should change something.

THBT **This House Believes That.** Asks whether something is true or good.

THS **This House Supports.** Asks whose side you are on.

The four teams

GOVERNMENT • AGREES

OPENING GOVERNMENT • OG

1. Prime Minister 3. Deputy Prime Minister

Says what the motion means, then argues for it.

CLOSING GOVERNMENT • CG

5. Member of Government 7. Government Whip

Adds a new angle for its side — the extension.

OPPOSITION • DISAGREES

OPENING OPPOSITION • OO

2. Leader of the Opposition 4. Deputy Leader

Attacks the Government case and gives its own.

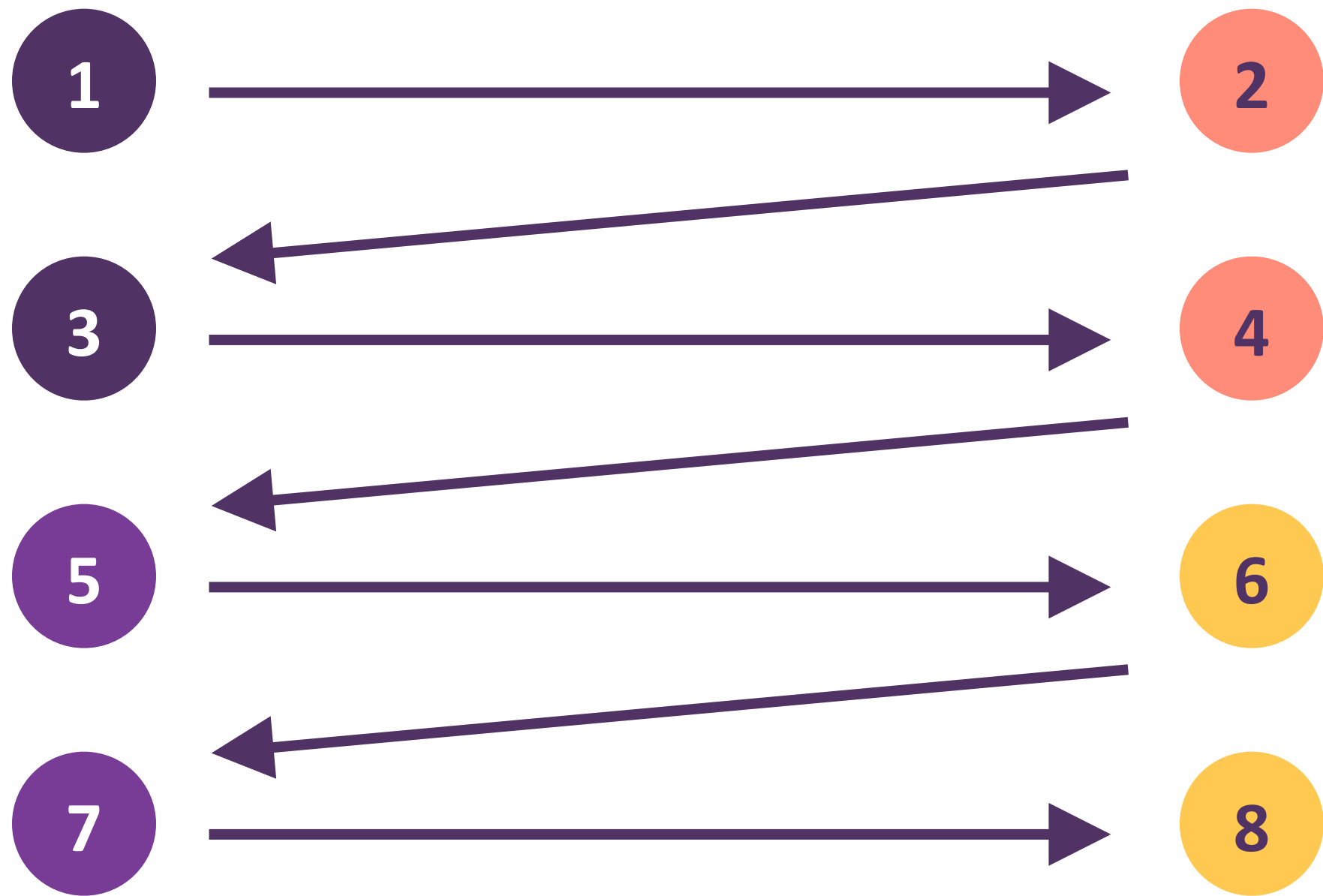
CLOSING OPPOSITION • CO

6. Member of the Opposition 8. Opposition Whip

Adds its own new angle, then closes the debate.

Your team is you and your partner — nobody else. The other team on your side of the room is an ally you still have to finish above.

Speaking order



- 1 Prime Minister
- 2 Leader of the Opposition
- 3 Deputy Prime Minister
- 4 Deputy Leader of the Opposition
- 5 Member of Government
- 6 Member of the Opposition
- 7 Government Whip
- 8 Opposition Whip

EACH SPEECH	PREP TIME
5 minutes	15 minutes

Opening Government

Prime Minister

SPEAKER 1

- Define the motion — say exactly what your side is arguing for
- Set out your team's two or three main arguments
- Argue the first one properly, with an example

Deputy Prime Minister

SPEAKER 3

- Rebuild anything the Opposition knocked down
- Attack the Opposition's own arguments
- Add the rest of your team's case

Define it fairly. A definition that twists the motion into something easy will lose you the debate before it starts.

Opening Opposition

Leader of the Opposition

SPEAKER 2

- Accept the definition, or explain why it is unfair
- Attack the Prime Minister's best argument first
- Set out your own side's case and argue your first point

Deputy Leader

SPEAKER 4

- Answer everything the Deputy Prime Minister just said
- Rebuild your Leader's arguments
- Add the rest of your team's case

Say it like this: "We accept the definition, but the Prime Minister has assumed that... and that simply is not true."

The extension



Your one new idea. It has to belong to your side — and it has to be yours.

A GOOD EXTENSION

A new group of people affected. A new reason nobody has given. A deeper answer to the same question.

NOT AN EXTENSION

Saying the opening half's argument again, louder. Adding an example to their point and calling it new.

NEVER DO THIS

Contradict the team in front of you. You are on their side — you must agree with them and beat them.

Listen hard in the first four speeches. Your extension is decided by what they left out.

Extension: worked example

Motion: This House Would ban mobile phones in all secondary schools

OPENING GOVERNMENT SAID

Phones distract pupils in lessons, so grades fall.

A sensible argument — and now it is used up. You cannot win by repeating it.

CLOSING GOVERNMENT ADDS

Break times. Bullying moves online where no teacher can see it.

Same side, new ground: different people, different harm, nobody has touched it.

Say it like this: "We agree with the Prime Minister about lessons. But this debate is not only about lessons — and here is what nobody has told you yet."

Members and Whips

Member of Government

SPEAKER 5

- Answer the Opposition so far
- Deliver your extension — most of your speech
- Make clear it is new

Member of the Opposition

SPEAKER 6

- Attack the Government extension at once
- Deliver your own extension
- Keep it consistent with your side

Government Whip

SPEAKER 7

- No new arguments allowed
- Pick the two or three big clashes
- Explain why your side won each one

Opposition Whip

SPEAKER 8

- No new arguments allowed
- Same clashes, your side's answer
- You speak last — finish strongly

A whip speech is a story, not a list. "This debate came down to two questions" beats "my first point, my second point".

Points of information

Offering one

- Raise your hand and say "Point of information"
- Put your hand down straight away if they wave you down
- Keep it short — fifteen seconds
- Ask something that damages their case

Taking one

- Take one or two in your speech — judges expect it
- Finish your sentence first, then accept
- Answer it, then get back to your point
- "No thank you" is always allowed

PROTECTED TIME

First and last minute

No points may be offered in the first or last minute of any speech. In between, offer them — only the other side may.

Rebuttal and clash

STEP 1

They said

Name the argument you are answering.

STEP 2

But

Say what is wrong with it — or why it does not matter.

STEP 3

Because

Give the reason, with evidence or an example.

STEP 4

Therefore

Say what it means for who should win.

CLASH

A clash is a question both sides are arguing over — "do phones actually harm learning?" Judges decide the round by working out who won each clash, so name them out loud.

Useful phrases

DEFINING

"By this motion we mean..."

"Our side will show two things."

"The question for this House is..."

REBUTTING

"The Prime Minister claimed... but..."

"Even if that were true, it would not matter, because..."

"That argument rests on an assumption they never proved."

EXTENDING

"We agree with our side, and we go further."

"Nobody has yet told you about..."

"Our contribution to this debate is..."

WHIPPING UP

"This debate came down to two questions."

"On the first, we won because..."

"Proud to propose. Proud to oppose."

WINNING

How judges rank you



1st

3 team points

2nd

2 team points

3rd

1 team point

4th

0 team points

CONTENT

What you say

Are your arguments true, important, and properly explained?

STYLE

How you say it

Clear, unhurried, and easy for a stranger to follow.

STRATEGY

How you use your slot

Did you do your role's job — and fight the clash that mattered?

All four teams are ranked, and there are no ties. A closing team can come first on the strength of its extension alone.

Chamber manners

Do

- Take notes through every speech — you cannot rebut what you did not hear
- Address the judge, and refer to opponents by their role
- Sit down promptly when your time is up
- Thank all three other teams at the end

Do not

- Heckle, barrack, or talk while someone is speaking
- Make it personal — ever
- Invent statistics to win a point
- Argue with the judge after the result

THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER



Over to you

Know your slot

Each speaker has a different job.

Bring something new

If you are a closing team, your extension is how you win.

Name the clash

Tell the judge which question you won, and why.