

GUYER WILDCATS



SPEECH & DEBATE

TEAM HANDBOOK

2016-2017

Welcome

Welcome to the Guyer Speech & Debate Program!

We look forward to working with you as we continue on our path to greatness! Guyer's speech and debate program has a long history of outstanding success and tradition, and we want to continue that success as we become even more competitive on every level. We hold high expectations for all of our students and staff.

We want to ensure you all that we are deeply committed to your success, and you will quickly learn that we do everything possible to prioritize your well-being in all decisions. Your coaches bring decades of experience working in very competitive programs, and there remains one constant to our success: Commitment.

You will find that your experience is not defined by ranks or wins and losses. We want to help students find a voice, and we believe competitive speaking helps a lot of students do just that. We are more interested in student development than awards. Forty years from now, it's the experience that will be remembered - not the hardware. The wins, however, will come, and there will be a lot of them.

Speech and Debate is more than a class or even an extracurricular activity. Through forensic competition, lifelong bonds are formed with friends from your own team and from around the world. It's an activity that involves the whole family, and it forces you to give your very best to something greater than yourself.

You will find that this handbook provides valuable information about squad expectations, behavior, procedures, and more. Please read it thoroughly as it is important we start off on the same page. The most important rule to note is to show respect. Respect yourself, your team, and your communities. We look forward to working with each of you and sharing in your success over the school year and beyond.

Please read this document carefully and return the following by Sept. 1:

- Contact Form/Handbook Acknowledgement + \$40 Activity Fee (Required)
- Booster Membership Form (Optional)
- Travel Form (Required)
- Field Trip Waiver Form (Required)

Please make note of our **parent meeting to be held August 31 at 6:30pm** in the Guyer High School Lecture Hall. Please attend this very important meeting. Feel free to contact us at any time with any questions or concerns you might have.

Best Regards,

Dr. Jason Sykes
Director of Speech & Debate

Walter Willis
Assistant Director of Speech & Debate

Contact Information

Jason Sykes

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About Dr. Sykes

Dr. Sykes has coached debate since 1997, and his students are highly decorated across several events in both high school and collegiate debate. Their accomplishments include championships and participation in late elimination rounds in both debate and speaking events at major tournaments in Texas and across the country. His former students have attended college at Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Northwestern, University of Chicago, Berkeley, Dartmouth, Emory, Michigan, UPenn, and many more.

Prior to his appointment at Guyer HS, Dr. Sykes served eight years as Associate Director of Debate at Grapevine High School, three years as Assistant Director of Debate and Forensic Activities at The Hockaday School in Dallas, and one year as Director of Forensics at Southlake Carroll. He served on the TFA Executive Council from 2005 to 2009 and the Lone Star NFL District Committee from 2007 to 2009. At the St. Mark's tournament in 2006, he was presented with the 19th annual Acolyte Award, which is awarded to the most outstanding assistant debate coach in the nation.

Dr. Sykes competed in policy debate at the University of North Texas. He won several tournaments and speaker awards while advancing to the elimination rounds of more than two-dozen college policy debate tournaments, including the National Debate Tournament in 2002 and four CEDA National Championship tournaments, where he was honored as an All-American in 2002 and 15th speaker in 2000.

As a high school debater, Dr. Sykes and his partner were the first team from Nacogdoches High School to qualify to the TFA State tournament in policy debate. In addition to his policy debate ventures, Dr. Sykes won 2nd place in the TFA State Senate as a junior and 5th place in the NFL Nationals House of Representatives as a senior. Outside of tournament competition, Dr. Sykes won 2nd place at the state level in both the VFW Voice of Democracy contest and the Optimist Club Oratorical contest, won the Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership Award, met President Clinton as a delegate to the 49th American Legion Boys Nation, and earned an appointment to the US Naval Academy before choosing to debate on scholarship at UNT.

Dr. Sykes holds a Ph.D. in Information Science from UNT. He lives in Denton with his wife, Dr. Naomi Meier, and their two children Addy & Corbin.

About Mr. Willis

Mr. Willis was a successful high school and college competitor who found that teaching was almost as gratifying an outlet for his passion for debate as debating itself. In High School, at Deer Park near Galveston Bay, he qualified for state in Policy Debate, Extemporaneous Speaking and Oratory. In College, Mr. Willis debated at Houston Baptist University and The University of Arkansas.

In 1995, Mr. Willis began his career as a debate educator at Cypress Falls High School in the Houston area. After leaving Cypress Falls, Mr. Willis spent some time at Kingwood High School before taking a six year hiatus in the private sector. He returned to education in 2014 at The Woodlands High School just north of Houston.

As a debate educator, Mr. Willis has hosted the TFA state tournament (1999,) and coached students to TFA Championships in Oratory (2000,) and Student Congress (2003.) His students have also placed second at TFA state in LD, and Oratory. His students have reached finals in Extemp, OO twice and Congress twice. In addition, his students have reached TFA semifinals in all public speaking events numerous times, and in LD his students reached the final 8 three times.

Of his 16 years in debate coaching, his students have either qualified for NSDA nationals or been first alternate 12 times. In most of those years these students advanced out of preliminary rounds. Four times his students have reached semifinals in Public Speaking or Congress and twice his students reached NSDA national finals in Student Congress. In 2000, his student placed third at NSDA nationals in Congress.

Twice, Mr. Willis' students have attained both legs of the TOC qualification, most recently in 2014-2015, Although none of the school systems where he worked actively supported a TOC travel schedule.

In 2007, when the Urban Debate League was expanding into Houston, Mr. Willis was one of the original advisory board members and they launched programs in 18 Houston ISD schools. His role was to assist in curriculum development, mentoring new coaches and helping conduct workshops for both students and new faculty.

Why Speech & Debate?

Analytic Ability

The ability to investigate complex problems and propose workable solutions is a vital skill. Speech and debate competition requires students to think about multiple perspectives in preparation for some of today's most demanding academic and business environments.

Written Skills

When assessing a wide range of information and thoughtfully consolidating work for advanced papers and research projects, experienced debaters routinely proceed with ease over their academic counterparts. Competitive speakers learn to prepare eloquent, concise, and rigorously tested presentations.

Academic Performance

In addition to laying the groundwork for success at tournaments, forensic competition provides students a platform for the most rigorous academic success attainable. Winning performers apply their skills in their academic courses and go on to achieve at the highest levels of their chosen professions. Whether learning to finish difficult projects or simply completing assigned tasks with greater ease, speakers & debaters tend to rise to the top.

Research Experience

Few high school students gain a grasp on academic conversations at the level of competitive debaters. The work performed during a single year of nationally-competitive high school debate can exceed the research required for a master's thesis. From reading law reviews and current events to surveying some of the brightest minds in philosophy, politics, and economics, the research experience one gains in high school debate is simply unparalleled by other activities. Interpretation students investigate countless forms of literature and explore the complexities of performance theory at its finest, doing so well before many of their peers.

Public Speaking

Forensics provides a safe environment for students to test a myriad of viewpoints. Through improved organization, logical analysis, and formal argument, competitive speakers learn to present ideas in ways their inexperienced peers find difficulty. Students in forensics adopt an approach to life-long learning and advocacy that translates across all academic disciplines and business environments.

College Admissions

Colleges increasingly require students to show commitment to academic activities outside the classroom. Admissions officers and college administrators routinely suggest that activities like debate greatly strengthen the applications they see.

Social Skills

Forensic competition gives students the opportunity to travel across the country representing their schools. Through tournament participation, summer workshops, and working with teammates, we build life-long friendships. While studies demonstrate the measurable improvement in academic skills, one cannot underestimate the growth students experience in confidence, maturity, and community engagement.

Above all – forensic competition is **FUN!**

Why Speech & Debate?

Don't Just Take Our Word For It

"I think debating in high school and college a most valuable training whether for politics, the law, business, or for service on community committees such as the PTA and the League of Women Voters. A good debater must not only study material in support of his own case, but he must also, of course, thoroughly analyze the expected arguments of his opponent. ... The give and take of debating, the testing of ideas, is essential to democracy. I wish we had a good deal more debating in our institutions than we do now. "

—*John F. Kennedy, fmr. President of the United States*

"As I look back upon my own experiences, when I try to single out from among the long line of college students some one group which shall stand forth as intellectually the best - best in college work and best in promise of future intellectual achievement - I cannot draw the line around my own favorite students of philosophy, nor the leaders in mathematics, nor those successful in biology; nor could I fairly award the palm to the Phi Beta Kappa men who have excelled in all their subjects. It seems to me that stronger than any other group, tougher in intellectual fiber, keener in intellectual interests, better equipped to battle the coming problems are the college debaters - the students who apart from their regular studies, band together for intellectual controversy with each other and with their friends from other colleges. "

—*Alexander Meiklejohn, fmr. President of Amherst College and Dean of Brown University*

"Those four years in debate were the educational foundation of everything I did. And I don't mean that in some simple form... I'm saying the finest education I got from any of the institutions that I attended, the foundation of my mind that I got during those four years of competitive debate: that is, 90% of the intellectual capacity that I operate with today; Fordham [University] for college, Fordham for the Ph.D., Harvard for Law School – all of that is the other 10%."

—*John Sexton, President of New York University*

"No college freshman can project 25 years to decide what he needs to learn – subject matter is easily forgotten in today's world, the knowledge explosion makes constant learning an inevitability. But all adults today need to be able to communicate with clarity, to articulate ideas, to reason, to separate key facts from the barrage of ideas we all are exposed to every day. No single activity can prepare one better than debating – the ability to think on one's feet, to form conclusions rapidly, to answer questions logically and with clarity, to summarize ideas are all processes which forensics activity develop and develop."

—*Helen Wise, fmr. President of National Education Association*

"A Wall Street Journal report did specifically highlight a 'consistent trend' that dedicated participation in debate has significantly increased the success rate of college applicants at all schools that track such data. State and national award winners have a 22% to 30% higher acceptance rate at top tier colleges, and being captain of the debate team 'improved an applicant's chances by more than 60% compared with the rest of the pool,' according to the report. This is significantly better than other extracurricular activities that tend to recruit from the same pool of students. Colleges and universities today are looking for critical thinkers and articulate communicators who will become active citizens and leaders of tomorrow."

—*Minh Luong, Assistant Professor at Yale University*

Why Speech & Debate?

For Further Reading

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Team Expectations

Team Rules

1. Don't give up. Tenacity wins.
2. Be respectful of yourself and others. The speech/debate classrooms are safe spaces for all students.
3. Fulfill agreements and promises made to coaches and the team.
4. Follow team expectations, and be aware that they evolve over time.

Classroom Expectations

1. Be punctual and follow deadlines.
2. Remain focused on your craft during class.
3. Have all assignments and materials ready for the beginning of each class.
4. Class ends when you are dismissed.

Online Behavior

1. Respond to all emails from a coach within 24 hours. Communicate appropriately via text.
2. Do not participate in online public debate forums, including nsupdate, cross-x, etc.
3. Do not share or reveal Guyer Forensics material with any other member of the community without coach permission.
4. Follow coach direction which will attempt to align with community norms regarding electronics in competition, disclosure, etc.
5. Follow Denton ISD's Acceptable Use Policy at all times.

Class Syllabi

Description

Forensic competition helps develop public speaking experience, serves as an argumentation course, and prepares students for competition across multiple competitive speaking and debate events. The course is designed with the use of consistent practice sessions to complement theoretical concepts learned in class based on the instructors' pedagogical belief that theoretical concepts become reinforced only through application. Tournament participation is a requirement of all Guyer Debate courses. Students will learn basic communication theory, delivery skills, and research strategies in line with the Texas Education Agency's curricular expectations for these courses.

Course Overview – Introduction to Debate

Students will concentrate on learning new events through the year. All students will also participate in Extemporaneous Speaking. As students learn new events, some may choose to adopt it as their primary focus, in which case they may complete beginning assignments when new events are introduced and will continue to develop their primary event for tournament competitions.

First Six Weeks: Introduction to Logic/Argument, Extemporaneous Speaking, and Policy Debate

Second Six Weeks: Policy Debate, Introduction to Basic Research & Value Debate

Third Six Weeks: Value Debate & Introduction to Public Forum Debate

Fourth Six Weeks: Introduction to Congressional Debate, Advanced Research

Fifth Six Weeks: Students Select Primary Event, Tournament Preparation

Sixth Six Weeks: Introduction to Oratory & Interp, End of Year Projects

Course Overview – Advanced Debate/Public Speaking/Interp

Students will focus on their primary competitive events. All students selecting one primary debate event (LD, Congress, or PF) will also participate in Extemporaneous Speaking when possible. Students choosing interp events must prepare and compete in at least three events. In addition to preparing for competition in these events, students will maintain a secondary focus during each quarter, selecting one from among the following options, which may evolve:

Presentation Skills, Oratory, Basic Research, Academic Journals, Basic/Advanced Philosophy, Basic/Advanced Global Studies, Legal Research, Piece Selection, Piece Preparation, Character Analysis, Other (discuss w/ Dr. Sykes)

Weekly Required Practices

Wednesday will be the practice day for all students. On Tuesdays and Thursdays you may schedule additional time with a coach.

All team meetings will be scheduled regularly (no more than once per month), usually on a Wednesday.

Committee meetings will be scheduled as necessary.

Class Syllabi

Varsity Debate Syllabus

Course Objective: To prepare the student for debate competition consistent with their own goals for achievement and success.

Events we can develop in this course: Congress, LD, PF, CX, WSD, Extemp, Impromptu, Oratory, along with reading and interpretation events.

Supplies Necessary:

- 1) All students will need a class journal. There will be work daily in this journal and it will be periodically graded. This should be a lined composition book. Students with laptops can maintain their journal as a google document.
- 2) Students should have a laptop for competition. For competition, they are virtually essential. If you have no laptop, we can work around this. And there are classroom laptops available for work in class. But laptops are highly recommended.
- 3) Flow paper and pens. Depending on the event, you may need multiple colors.

About the class: This class will be an organic project of student productivity. All activities will either be geared toward skill development or team-building. Each student will have unique, individual expectations depending on their personal goals. But, the expectations of the instructor are:

- 1) There will be speaking almost every day. Students will either be performing their competition events, or performing skill development drills in class nearly every day.
- 2) When not speaking or debating, the other debaters will either be flowing and writing ballots or making comments on the speeches and debates in their journals.
- 3) All debaters and public speakers will be expected to thoroughly know the rules of their events.
- 4) Debaters will have regular case-writing expectations along with Defensive block writing. In addition, all debaters will be expected to turn in evidence from original research.
- 5) All debaters will be expected to compete at tournaments. At tournaments you will be expected to save your flows and your extemp speech notes. These will be due in the next subsequent class, along with a tournament reflection document.

Your responsibility to the class will be to perform your duties consistent with your goals conference. (These will be held immediately). Moreover, each debater will be expected to work on their debate obligations during class and conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the goals of the team.

Just in Case: If you signed up for the class with the expectation that you would use this time period to do homework for other classes, or play on your phone or otherwise deviate from the goals of the course, you should immediately request a pass to the counselor to get your schedule changed.

The Good News: Everyone should make a 100. The objective of the goal conference with the instructor will be to devise a productivity plan that addresses your individual goals and needs. All you have to do for your 100 is address these assignments appropriately and in a timely fashion.

Class Syllabi

Course Objectives, continued.

(1) Role in society. The student examines the historical and contemporary contributions of debate in decision-making and democratic processes. The student is expected to:

- (A) identify the historical and contemporary use of debate in social, political, and religious arenas;
- (B) examine the role of the forensic progression of discussion, persuasion, and debate in dealing with controversial issues; and
- (C) recognize the role of argumentation and debate as an effective means of analyzing issues, discovering truth, finding solutions to problems, and understanding opposing viewpoints.

(2) Delivery. The student uses effective communication skills in debating. The student is expected to:

- (A) use precise language and effective verbal skills in argumentation and debate;
- (B) use effective nonverbal communication in argumentation and debate;
- (C) use effective critical-listening strategies in argumentation and debate;
- (D) demonstrate ethical behavior and courtesy during debate; and
- (E) develop extemporaneous speaking skills.

(3) Logic. The student applies critical thinking, logic, and reasoning in debate.

The student is expected to:

- (A) analyze and create arguments using various forms of logic such as inductive and deductive reasoning, syllogisms, traditional models of logic, and cause-effect;
- (B) identify fallacies in reasoning and apply standards of validity and relevancy in analyzing and constructing argument; and
- (C) analyze the role of value assumptions in personal, social, and political conflicts.

(4) Proof. The student utilizes research and proof in debate. The student is expected to:

- (A) locate and use a variety of reliable technological and print sources;
- (B) identify and apply standard tests of evidence for choosing appropriate logical proofs;
- (C) demonstrate skill in recording and organizing information; and
- (D) observe ethical guidelines for debate research and use of evidence.

(5) Analysis of issues. The student analyzes controversial issues. The student is expected to:

- (A) use appropriate standards to analyze and interpret propositions of fact, value, problem, and policy;
- (B) accurately phrase and define debatable propositions;
- (C) analyze and evaluate propositions and related issues presented in academic and public settings; and
- (D) recognize, analyze, and use various debate formats to support propositions.

Class Syllabus

(6) Propositions of value. The student develops and demonstrates skills for debating propositions of value. The student is expected to:

- (A) explain the concept of a value as it applies to a debate;
- (B) analyze the role of value assumptions in formulating and evaluating argument;
- (C) analyze the works of classical and contemporary philosophers;
- (D) apply various standards for evaluating propositions of value;
- (E) apply value assumptions and/or classical and contemporary philosophies appropriately in formulating arguments;
- (F) develop and use valid approaches to construct affirmative and negative cases;
- (G) use valid proofs appropriately to support claims in propositions of value;
- (H) construct briefs for value propositions; and
- (I) apply voting criteria to value propositions.

(7) Case construction. The student identifies and applies the basic concepts of debate case construction. The student is expected to:

- (A) identify the roles and responsibilities of the affirmative and negative positions;
- (B) explain and apply the distinctive approaches to prima facie case construction; and
- (C) use a variety of approaches to construct logical affirmative and negative cases.

(8) Refutation. The student identifies and applies the basic concepts of argumentation and refutation. The student is expected to:

- (A) listen critically to formulate responses;
- (B) take accurate notes during argumentation (flow a debate);
- (C) analyze and apply a variety of approaches for refuting and defending arguments;
- (D) recognize and use effective cross-examination strategies; and
- (E) extend cross-examination responses into refutation.

(9) Evaluation. The student evaluates and critiques debates. The student is expected to:

- (A) use a knowledge of debate principles to develop and apply evaluation standards for various debate formats; and
- (B) provide valid and constructive written and/or oral critiques of debates.

Grading

Forensic competition and academic excellence go hand-in-hand. Many become better students through their speech and debate experiences. Speech and debate competitors represent their schools and communities, and their efforts often go beyond typical classroom work. It is an expectation that you will be considered by other teachers to be among their brightest, most engaged, responsible, and hard-working students. Grades are not always accurate indicators of student progress or learning; however, they are an important motivational element to academic work. Grades in debate class will often be quite high, and they will remain a valuable tool to reward those maintaining the highest level of effort.

Your grade is comprised of three components: the classroom, practice, and tournaments.

Minor Infractions which may result in minor grade deduction

- Absent or tardy to a practice (unexcused)
- Drop a tournament within one week of a competition
- Fail to complete an assignment promised to instructor
- Tournament dress code violation
- Fail to respond to coach email within 24 hours

Major Infractions resulting in significant grade deduction

- Repeated minor infractions
- Late to a tournament/departure
- Repeated absence from practice (excused or unexcused)
- Drop a tournament on the day of competition (excused or unexcused)
- Fail to complete an assignment promised to the team
- Failure to complete tournament participation requirement

Opportunities to recover

- Coach novices during scheduled extra session(s)
- Work extra concession stand session(s)
- Attend tournament(s) beyond requirement

*Some violations of behavioral expectations may extend beyond the classroom and require additional disciplinary action, including potential removal from the team.

While students may not receive lower than an 80 as a semester grade, those receiving a grade below 90 may require additional consultation with Dr. Sykes in order to continue participating in the program. Students who become academically ineligible a second time at any point will be asked to change their schedule at the earliest opportunity.

Financial Responsibilities

Supplies Needed

- Laptop (highly recommended) – Google Chrome, Microsoft Office 2010 or later
- USB Drive (8GB or larger)
- Fine point pens, 2+ colors (e.g., G2 or Papermate Profile)
- 12 legal pads or 1 ream of legal-sized paper (8.5" x 14", white, yellow, or pastel)
- Table Tote (<http://bit.ly/TableTote>)
- 2 boxes of tissue
- 1 digital timer (with count-up, count-down, and number keypad)



Financial Obligations

At the beginning of the school year, each student will be responsible for a **\$40 activity fee due Sept. 1** and made payable by check to “Guyer HS Forensics.” This fee covers many of the early costs associated with program management including hiring assistant coaches and purchasing supplies.

While we will exhaust all of the funds allocated by the school in order to offset expenses, students will incur charges for each tournament attended. Tournament fees are payable by check before each tournament or through quarterly invoicing. Students will be charged **\$30 for local tournaments** to offset entry fees, judge costs, transportation fees (when applicable), etc. When traveling out of the DFW area or attending a tournament with unusually high fees, students will pay for their flight as well as their portion of hotel, ground transportation, food, and coach travel. The team will pay for entry and judge fees.

All students are required to participate in all fundraisers including all tournaments, special events, and concession sales. Sales fundraisers will be kept to a minimum.

Booster Organization

During this school year, we will establish a parent booster club. To help, contact Dr. Sykes.

Tournament Procedures

Participation Requirements

1. Tournament participation is a requirement of the forensics program at Guyer. Students entered in Debate I must attend no fewer than 2 tournaments each semester. Students in any other class must attend 8 tournaments per year and no fewer than 4 per semester.
2. Participation for the duration of our own tournament is mandatory but **does** count toward participation requirements. Conflicts during this time should be avoided and must be reported to Dr. Sykes by email as soon as possible.

Tournament Registration

1. Tournament entry limitations imposed by tournament hosts are very strict and difficult to navigate. It is important for students to sign up as quickly as possible. Students may be given entry preference based on experience and preparedness.
2. Students commit to a tournament when placing their names on entry sheets posted in the debate classroom. It is imperative that, if a drop must occur, an email be sent to Dr. Sykes ASAP.
3. Students should only commit to tournaments after considering potential conflicts and securing parental permission to attend. Students and their families may incur fees associated with tournament entry, and it will be assumed that students act with parental permission.

Tournament Schedules

1. Most local tournaments last two days (Friday-Saturday). Some local tournaments will be Saturday only.
2. It is not uncommon for students to compete very late into the night (10-11pm). Students should not enter a tournament unless prepared to stay for the duration of the event.
3. Tournament schedules released by their hosts are based on smooth operation and minimal disruption. Human error and unanticipated events may cause tournament schedules to become unreliable.
4. Students may not leave a tournament without being dismissed by a coach and signing out. If a student fails to secure permission, leaves before the designated time, or fails to sign out, future tournament participation and quarterly grades may be affected.
5. Conceding at any point is unacceptable and may result in removal from the team.

Drop Fees

1. Fees for dropping from a tournament typically increase as the tournament approaches, sometimes up to triple the original entry fee for dropping on the day of the tournament.
2. Usually, local tournaments will not charge fees for dropping outside of one week prior to a tournament.
3. Students are responsible for the full amount of drop fees imposed by the tournament, in addition to any fees owed to the team, for dropping a tournament at any time for any reason.
4. Fees for dropping a travel tournament may include the costs of travel.
5. Please be considerate to the team, your partner (if applicable), coaches, parents, and volunteers when dropping a tournament.

Tournament Calendar



Denton Guyer Speech & Debate Tournament Calendar 2016-2017

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Tournament</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Coach(es)</u>
9/9-10	Grapevine	Grapevine, TX	Select Varsity	Sykes/Gossett/Smith
9/23-24	Newman Smith	Carrollton, TX	Varsity/Novice	Sykes/Willis/Gossett
10/14-16	St. Mark's	Dallas, TX	Select Varsity	Sykes/Gossett
10/21-22	Plano West	Plano, TX	Varsity/Novice	Sykes/Smith
10/27-28	UNT	Denton, TX	Varsity/Novice	Sykes/Willis
11/11-12	Hockaday	Dallas, TX	Varsity/Novice	Sykes/Smith
12/3	Creekview	Carrollton, TX	Varsity/Novice	Sykes
12/16-17	Hebron	Lewisville, TX	Varsity/Novice	Sykes
1/13-14	Guyer	Denton, TX	ALL (Required)	Sykes/Willis/Smith
TBD	UIL State Congress	Austin, TX	Qualifiers	Willis
TBD	UIL CX District	TBD	Select Varsity	Sykes
1/27-28	Flower Mound	Flower Mound, TX	Varsity/Novice	Willis/Smith
2/3-4	Colleyville Heritage	Colleyville, TX	Varsity/Novice	Willis/Smith
TBD	NSDA District	TBD	Select Varsity	Willis/Smith
TBD	NSDA District Congress	TBD	Select Varsity	Sykes
3/9-11	TFA State	Plano, TX	Qualifiers	Sykes/Willis/Smith
3/17-18	UIL CX State	Austin, TX	Qualifiers	Willis
TBD	UIL District Academic	TBD	Select Varsity	Willis
TBD	UIL Regionals	UT Arlington	Qualifiers	Willis
4/21-22	Earth Day Debates	Fair Park, Dallas	Select Varsity	Sykes
5/12-14	NIETOC	Kansas City, MO	Qualifiers	Willis
TBD	UIL State	UT Austin	Qualifiers	Willis
6/18-23	NSDA Nationals	Birmingham, AL	Qualifiers	Willis/Smith

Tournament Expectations

Missed Classes

1. Students are responsible for communicating with teachers at least a week in advance of missing a tournament.
2. Students are responsible for completing all assignments, tests, and projects due during tournament absence in a timely manner and in advance when possible.
3. Students must attend school the day after returning from a tournament, when applicable.
4. Students who are absent for any class on the day of a tournament (other than those excused by Dr. Sykes) will not be allowed to compete at that tournament and will owe any applicable drop fees.

Transportation

1. For tournaments considered a long distance to drive and/or which include a substantial portion of the team, a bus will be offered. When a bus is offered, students may not transport themselves to the event.
2. For all other tournaments, parents will be responsible for student transportation. In these cases, parents assume sole responsibility for the arrangements for and manner in which students arrive to tournaments.
3. No student may be dismissed from a tournament by anyone other than a coach or adult in charge.

Tournament Dress Code

1. Tournament competition begins when you exit your arrival vehicle.
2. The standard for competition attire will be business formal. A good guide is to consider what an attorney might wear in the court room. Professionalism, not fashion, should be the primary consideration when choosing outfits. Dress conservatively.
3. Choose dark colors when possible. Dark navy or black work well. Others will work in some cases.
4. Students may not change into casual attire before departing the tournament.
5. Wear your hair out of your face; no hats. Avoid excessive jewelry or distracting items. Your performance, not your attire, should be the focus.
6. Men
 - a. Typically dress pants, jacket, dress shoes, dark socks, and a long-sleeved dress shirt.
 - b. Jeans are not allowed, but a belt is required.
 - c. A tie with a proper knot is required at all times.
7. Women
 - a. Typically business pants/skirt with accompanying jacket.
 - b. Courtroom appropriate (professional) blouse. No tight clothing.
 - c. Skirts should fall to no more than 2 inches above the knee when standing.
 - d. High heels are strongly discouraged.
8. Exceptions may be made. Please speak with Dr. Sykes with any questions or concerns.

Tournament Expectations

Food

Typically, food offered at tournament concession stands is unhealthy for a number of reasons. Students are encouraged to bring their own food, and parents are asked to volunteer healthy meals for the whole team whenever possible. Students are encouraged to stay well hydrated as tournaments usually include very long days that will test mental and physical endurance. Eating greasy foods, chocolate, soda, or large amounts of caffeine are counterproductive to public speaking.

Ballots & Flows

1. Do not ask to see your ballots until the first school day following a tournament.
2. Save all flows from debates, and catalog them along with judge comments in safe place. You will often need flows from a previous tournament to perform speeches and collect information.
3. Save your ballots in an organized fashion at home.

Tournament Behavior

1. Tournaments are school activities, and all school and district rules are in effect at all times.
2. The “Ten Mile Rule:” you may not speak negatively about another tournament participant (competitor, judge, coach, teacher, parent, audience member, volunteer, bus driver, etc.) or the tournament itself (scheduling, judging, awards, food, etc.) within ten miles/minutes of the tournament location.
3. Be punctual. This is extremely important when working with large numbers of students.
4. Respect school and hotel property. Clean up after yourselves. Secure your valuables.
5. Do not ever raise your voice or argue with a judge. You may politely ask questions, but you may not whine, yell, or otherwise poorly represent Guyer Forensics. Direct all concerns to a coach, and allow it to be handled from there.
6. If you ever encounter an uncomfortable or unsafe situation at a tournament, you should find a coach or adult representative of Guyer Forensics as soon as possible, regardless of the circumstances.
7. Watch the required number of rounds following your elimination from the tournament.
8. When possible, we will attend award ceremonies as a squad.
 - a. When a student from Guyer wins an award, we will all stand and clap, when possible.
 - b. When a first place recipient is announced, we will all stand and clap, when possible.
 - c. Be graceful. Whistling, yelling, screaming, booing, pouting, etc. will not be tolerated.
9. Respect coach decisions on close-outs, which will generally be prioritized based on:
 - a. Maintaining tournament seed
 - b. Rewarding seniority or experience
 - c. Maximizing tournament qualifications (TOC, TFA, etc.)

Tournament Expectations

Travel Tournaments

1. Hotel rooms will be assigned and may not be altered without coach permission.
2. Strict curfews will be enforced and must be followed. All students must be in their designated rooms at room check and may not leave the room after this time.
3. “Lights out” will be designated on each evening. Sleep is critical to your performance.
4. Only current Guyer Forensics students are allowed in any Guyer Forensics hotel room.
5. You may not ever visit another school’s hotel room for any reason.
6. No student may travel alone for any reason. Students must receive permission from a coach or chaperone to travel away from the primary tournament site(s), and coaches or chaperones should be made aware of your whereabouts at all times.
7. Students must receive written parental permission and coach permission to visit any friends or relatives while attending a travel tournament.
8. Avoid using hotel phones. You will be responsible for any charges incurred to your room.
9. If an adult or student not assigned to your room is present in your hotel room, the door will be propped open.

Speech & Debate Events

Guyer Forensics offers several competition events:

Policy Debate/Cross-Examination Debate: CX debate is considered by many to be the most rigorous of speech and debate events. Debaters are paired in teams, spend significant time researching and preparing files, and debate one proposition of policy for the entire school year. Debates are usually rapid-fire, last roughly 1 ½ hours, and are judged by CX coaches, former policy debaters or current college policy debaters. Varsity CX debaters should begin CX debate in the 8th or 9th grade and are required to attend at least three weeks of debate camp prior to the each subsequent year.

Lincoln Douglas Debate: LD debate has advanced significantly in recent years from an argument perspective. Originally fashioned after the Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas debates in the 1800s, LD debaters compete individually on topics lasting 2-3 months, usually on propositions of value. Debates last about 45 minutes and are traditionally slower than CX debates, although that has changed significantly as the event transitions into more of an information activity than a speaking event. Varsity LD debaters should begin LD debate in the 9th or 10th grade and are required to attend at least two weeks of debate camp prior to each subsequent year.

Public Forum Debate: Originally called “Ted Turner Public Forum Debate,” this event was designed in the late 1990s as a team event meant for public consumption. Teams of two debaters focus on monthly resolutions crafted around current events in debates lasting about 45 minutes. While speed of delivery has increased on the national circuit, most local events are still judged by community volunteers.

Congressional Debate: This event allows students to model a lawmaking body such as the US Congress or Texas Legislature. Debaters prepare research and speeches on a set of legislation designed for each tournament or series of tournaments. Students write/research legislation and practice speaking and parliamentary procedure as part of their preparation for this event.

Extemporaneous Speaking: This event has been called the most useful of all speech and debate events, and all Guyer Debate students will also compete in extemporaneous speaking whenever possible. Extemp requires consistent commitment to following and offering critique on current events from the US and abroad. Students draw topics and have 30 minutes to prepare a 7-minute speech.

Original Oratory: Oratory allows students to prepare an original written work on any topic. Each memorized speech is limited to 10 minutes and 150 quoted words. This event tends to combine public speaking and oral interpretation, and it is a valuable avenue for many students to find a voice on an important issue.

Interpretation/Competitive Acting: These events allow students to explore, express, and share literature with an audience. Events range from humorous to dramatic and involve one person or a partner. Interp students are strongly encouraged to prepare an original oratory and may be required to represent the school in as many as three UIL prose/poetry competitions in the spring.

Organizations & Affiliations

Guyer Forensics participates in a number of organizational bodies governing speech and debate:

Texas Forensic Association (TFA): This is the state governing body for speech and debate competition. Students qualify to attend the TFA State Tournament (early March) by accumulating points earned in elimination rounds at area tournaments.

University Interscholastic League (UIL): This is the state governing body for athletics and academic competition. UIL offers district through state level competition in several events. This organization restricts participation to students who do not travel regularly.

National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA): Formerly known as the National Forensic League, this organization is the national governing body for speech and debate and hosts the nation's largest national tournament (mid-June). The National Forensic League still exists in name as the league's honor society, the second honor society to be recognized by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Alumni of the NFL include a long list of politicians, celebrities, authors, and more.

Tournament of Champions (TOC): Hosted by the University of Kentucky, this organization is the equivalent to "select" sports teams for debate. Students who wish to qualify for the TOC (early May) often endure many additional hours of work/practice, cost to travel and attend camps, and greater opportunities for scholarships and college debate opportunities.

National Debate Coaches Association (NDCA): This relatively new organization was created and is maintained by high school debate programs and their coaches. The organization hosts a national tournament (mid-April) and maintains as part of its egalitarian mission a qualification system based on students' best performances through the year.

Round Robins: These tournaments are special invitation-only events held around the country. Often, round robins accompany other larger tournaments. Invitations to round robins are very prestigious and should be considered an honor and an opportunity to compete against some of the best students in the nation.

Team Organization

Officers

Elections will be held at the end of each competitive season for the following positions:

- President (Student Tournament Director, presides at team meetings, other responsibilities)
- Vice President (Presides in the absence of the President, other duties as assigned)
- Secretary (Records minutes of all meetings, communicates to team members)
- Historian (Maintains photo albums, archives photos & records, prepares slide show for banquet)
- Event Captains (as appropriate)

Committees

Committees will be designated as necessary and will include a representative from each grade:

- Tournament committee (co-chaired by student tournament directors)
- Social committee (holiday party, etc., chaired by VP)
- Archival committee (collects photos, etc., chaired by Historian)

Lettering

The UIL Academic team awards letter jackets for advanced participation. Students will receive additional details when relevant.

Awards

1. All trophies belong to the team unless released to you by Dr. Sykes. Once taken home to be viewed by family, trophies must be returned to the squad room.
2. End-of-year awards will be selected by ballot before the closing banquet.

Community Service

Various community service opportunities will be offered through the year. Students are encouraged to participate.

Parent Volunteer & Booster Information

Parent participation in a program of this size and quality is critical to our success. Parents are strongly encouraged to offer help with any of the following items, and beyond:

- **Donate Funds.** National-level debate programs of 50-80 students require operation funds in excess of \$75,000 per year in order to shift tournament costs from parents, stop collecting tournament fees, hire assistant coaches, etc.
- **Volunteer at our tournaments.** Tournaments we host are the primary fundraisers for the team, and the funds are used to support the whole program. We will operate one of the largest and most successful tournaments in the DFW area. Parent support as volunteer judges, hospitality lounge assistants, etc. is vital. We will also collect donations of food, drinks, catering, and financial support for trophies and other costs.
- **Judge at local tournaments.** By participating in judge training, you become involved in what our students do, help provide additional adult presence, and help build community. Plus, your help judging at a local tournament could save the team money.
- **Buy a meal at a tournament.** Meals at tournaments are often not very healthy. Volunteer to purchase and deliver a meal for the squad during a tournament.
- **Chaperone a tournament.** Or just drop by for a visit. Students may say it makes them uncomfortable, but none of us want to miss seeing our kids do what they love.
- **Carpool to/from a tournament.**

Frequent Questions

General

What skills will I learn through speech and debate?

Guyer Forensics has a history of success in speech and debate competition, and you will learn a great deal by being a part of our program. This course helps develop skills in research, problem solving, writing, critical thinking, political awareness, and more. Students who participate in debate learn to confront the challenges associated with speaking on difficult globally significant issues. More than anything, former students treasure the lifelong relationships they build through participation.

How much time outside of school does participation require?

Every Guyer Forensics student has a place in our program. While being in the program requires some work outside of school, your success will correlate to your event choices and your commitment to speech and debate. Some students will choose to work 5-7 hours a week outside of class, while some will choose to work 20, 30, or even more. If you have difficulty balancing your course load, see Dr. Sykes to discuss possible solutions.

Can I participate in speech and debate along with other extracurricular activities?

Yes, and you are encouraged to do so. Today's college admissions officers target students who are well balanced. Debaters have been known to participate in every other extracurricular offering. If you are having difficulty coordinating your extracurricular schedule, please see Dr. Sykes. He may be able to help you navigate your commitments more easily.

Can I participate in speech and debate without being enrolled in a debate class?

Generally, no. Due to the rigorous expectations of our program, you must be enrolled in the class. It helps maintain accountability and regular commitment to the work required to achieve your goals.

Can I take a forensics class without participating in tournaments?

No. Participation at tournaments is a part of your grade. If your attendance at the minimum number of tournaments presents a problem, please see Dr. Sykes for assistance.

What if I can't afford to pay for tournament attendance?

Money should not be a financial barrier to your success in this program. Dr. Sykes has years of experience ensuring that students who work hard and remain committed receive the competitive opportunities they need to achieve their goals.

What are my fees spent on?

Fees paid to the team pay for tournament participation (entry fees, judge fees, team fees), local ground transportation (when provided), transportation/housing/coach travel (only when you are traveling out of town), and part-time assistant coaching.

Frequent Questions

Local Tournaments

How do we get to local tournaments?

For some tournaments, we will take a bus and will meet at a predetermined location for departure. For most local tournaments, parents will be responsible for transportation, and the district will not assume responsibility for students arriving to tournaments. You may wish to coordinate a carpool. Each itinerary will include the address and arrival instructions for the tournament. Many times, dropping off students at a tournament coincides with the release of school, so it is important to note the entry locations for each tournament and to plan for high traffic.

Where will competition rounds be held?

Each tournament will offer a centralized gathering point for students from all schools. Typically a cafeteria or auditorium serves this purpose. Ideally, all competition rounds will be held in one classroom building or buildings very close together.

How are students supervised at tournaments?

A coach or parent chaperone will be present for all tournaments. Different tournaments present different demands of our coaching staff. Sometimes we are required to serve as judges, and we are frequently asked to serve as tournament administrators. When we are not present with students in a central gathering place, we can be found judging a round or serving in the tabulation room – the central administrative location for the tournament. At all times, we are available and will respond in a timely manner to text messages or phone calls. Coaches will do everything possible to respond as quickly as possible. Students are expected to walk in groups or with an adult escort throughout the duration of the tournament. Students are not permitted to leave the tournament site without coach permission, an adult escort, or in extreme emergencies.

What can parents do when chaperoning a tournament?

Parents help us ensure the comfort and safety of our students while at tournaments. Parents will accompany students in the cafeteria or other central gathering place. In the event a situation arises requiring an urgent errand or other need, parents may be asked to help. We also welcome prearranged snacks, meals, or other provisions for our students as what parents provide is typically far better for our students than tournament food.

Are parents allowed to visit and view local tournaments?

Parents are encouraged to attend any tournaments the squad attends and to watch rounds when possible. Students are encouraged to invite parents to support them during competition rounds.

What is the schedule for each tournament?

Dr. Sykes will communicate a competition schedule for each day in the itinerary for the tournament. Arrival time will be designated in the tournament itinerary. Tournament efficiency varies with each host, and the schedule we provide is therefore tentative. Unforeseen circumstances, tabulation errors, and other delays may cause tournaments to become off-schedule.

Frequent Questions

When will my child be finished each day?

Students must participate in rounds in which they are scheduled to compete. An individual student's progress varies greatly. Some students may be able to check out at the completion of preliminary (seeding) rounds, and some may compete through the final round in her event. We will remain together as a squad and attend awards ceremonies whenever possible. Parents may check out a student should an emergency situation arise requiring a student to depart the tournament. Otherwise, Dr. Sykes will try to predict when students will be finished, and this information will be published in each tournament itinerary.

How do I know when to retrieve my child from a tournament?

When a day ends with a preliminary (seeding) round (usually Friday of local tournaments), students will make contact with a parent immediately prior to the beginning of the last round. Students will be available an hour to an hour and a half after the start of their last debate on these days. When in elimination rounds (usually late Saturday at local tournaments), students will make contact after elimination from the tournament. Coaches or chaperones will never leave a student alone at a tournament and will wait as long as necessary for a ride to arrive.

What are the checkout procedures from local tournaments?

Students are required to sign out with a coach or adult chaperone. Students may be picked up at their drop-off location, the main entrance, or other designated area. It is critical that students follow proper checkout procedure as we must know when students have left the tournament.

What arrangements are made for food at local tournaments?

Food is available for purchase at every tournament we attend. Students should bring cash for tournament concessions or restaurant orders. Students will not be permitted to leave campus for food except with a parent or coach escort. In the rare case when a restaurant is immediately adjacent to campus, students may be allowed to travel in groups with coach permission. Students are encouraged to make healthy choices, to avoid greasy/fatty foods, chocolate, and dairy, and to drink plenty of water.

Frequent Questions

Travel Tournaments

How is transportation arranged?

When departing from campus by bus, students will assemble in a designated location prior to timely departure. When departing by plane, parents are asked to arrange for transportation of their student to the airport where we will assemble at a designated check-in location. Coaches will arrange for ground transportation in our destination city and will provide details with each travel itinerary.

What are the dates for travel tournaments?

Dates can be found on the tournament calendar distributed to parents and students at the beginning of the year and at the top of the itinerary for each tournament. Travel dates may differ from competition dates as we may have to arrive the day before and/or leave the morning after a tournament's conclusion, depending on the tournament schedule.

Where can I find details about the tournament?

Dr. Sykes will include in the itinerary a complete competition schedule for each day. If you are interested in following tournament pairings and other event-specific information, you may often find tournament information at the Joy of Tournaments website, www.joyoftournaments.com or the alternate www.tabroom.com in some cases. Some tournaments offer the opportunity to see tournament pairings live using the Joy of Tournaments "Warm Room" tab on tournament webpages, Twitter, or other outlets specific to each tournament. While we will record round-by-round progress and ask students to keep you updated, some parents may wish to see who their child is debating each round and sometimes ballots or other results, when available.

Will my child be wandering across a college campus alone at night?

No. All students are required to walk in pairs, in larger groups, or with a coach. All students are required to be in contact with designated coaches and chaperones before and after rounds. Students may only go to designated locations with coach permission, in pairs or groups, and that permission will only be given when appropriate (for example, to go to a debate round or to get food).

Are meals provided?

Students can purchase snacks and meals at the tournament concession stand or at approved eateries that are located on or directly adjacent to campus (rules for traveling around campus and communication with coaches apply here as well). Students will have to pay for meals that the team eats together after the conclusion of the tournament for the day. There are times where some meals may be provided. Examples include a complimentary breakfast at the hotel or the occasional complimentary meal at a tournament (these are rare). Students are encouraged to bring healthy snacks with them to tournaments.

Is the hotel safe?

Dr. Sykes will go to great lengths to ensure students are safe and comfortable at tournaments. We will typically stay in nicer hotels such as a Marriott, Hilton, Wyndham, Hyatt, or their equivalent.