



# OXFORD UNION DEBATE FORMAT

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## 1. Opening Words by the Chair

- The Chair opens with a few words on how to debate and vote and states the motion by saying "This house believes...". They then invite the first speaker to begin.

## 2. The First Speaker for the Proposition

- Introduce the guest speakers.  
"Mr/Madam Chairman, as the first speaker this [morning/afternoon/evening] it is my honour to introduce the speakers [from both sides] this [morning/afternoon/evening]". Each speaker is introduced by name plus 1-2 line intro, (with humour if desired). "Mr/Madam Chairman, these are your guests and they are most welcome" [applause].
- The first speaker then starts the debate.
- The Chair thanks the speaker and calls the next speaker.

## 3. The First Speaker for the Opposition

- Repeat the process listed in no.2 - as well as stating their side of the case they may also rebut.
- The Chair thanks the speaker and opens the date up to the floor (the audience).

## 4. Debate from the floor

- The audience can now join in the debate. A set amount of time is be allocated for this and each person who speaks has an agreed maximum time.
- The Chair will ends the floor debate and invites the next speaker.

## 5. The Second Speakers speak as above.

## 6. Rebuttal

- The rebuttal speech is usually made by the first speaker for each side.
- The Chair calls the debate to an end and starts the voting.

## 7. Voting

Traditionally everyone moves through the 2 doors - the Ayes and the Noes.

The winner is either the majority or the team has changed more audience members minds between the two votes.

