

Student Congress

Student Congress is a mock legislative session modeled after the procedure for floor debate in a legislature. It is designed to test a student's ability to speak to an issue in both an extemporaneous and impromptu manner and to reveal the individual's knowledge of parliamentary procedure. Students are assigned to "houses" of approximately fifteen to twenty-five members where they debate pre-assigned "bills" or "resolutions." Bills and resolutions to be debated have been determined in advance and students have had time to research and to prepare to speak on these issues.

Each session of Congress is usually at least 90 minutes long, but times may vary from competition to competition. As a general rule, 5 minutes of speaking time should be allotted for each member in the chamber. Session time should begin when the first speaker starts. A Presiding Officer will run each session. To speak or ask a question, a member will be recognized by the Presiding Officer. Many congresses use priority cards. All speeches must be delivered from the front of the room. Each speech is limited to three minutes. In addition, each speaker is subject to one minute of cross-examination from the members.