

The changes to Speech and Debate Rules for 2027 continue our effort to simplify and clarify the rules, while also considering how those rules are presented and navigated on the website. Minor word changes for clarification are not denoted on the chart.

We invite our affiliates to write the committees if any rules seem unclear.

(SpeechCommittee@NCFCA.org; DebateCommittee@NCFCA.org).

Speech Rule and Ballot Changes*

New or returning events	Biblical Thematic and After Dinner Speaking
All descriptions of events	Amplified all descriptions of events (located at the top of the list of rules)
Speech Times	7-minute speech times for ADS, Open, and Persuasive
Time Slots	10-minute time slots for Open, Persuasive, Impromptu, Extemporaneous, and After Dinner Speaking
All scripted events	Added "Only minor changes are permitted." to the "Championship" rule with a link to the tournament policies page for the description of the permitted changes
All interpretation events	Changed the term "Narrative Section" to "Commentary Section"
All interpretation events	Narrowed what tunes must be cited
All interpretation events	Added a definition for "cutting"
Apologetics	Clarified that the file box should be at the tournament
Biblical Thematic	Changed the use of visual aids from required to optional. (All requirements when using visual aids are the same as last season.)
Biblical Thematic	Teasers are prohibited
Biblical Thematic	Published, nonfictional orations are an option to include
Digital Presentation	Simplified "Sound/Motion" rule

Debate Rule and Ballot Changes*

General Rules section	Added, “Debaters may not request verbal or physical participation from audience members during the round.” to the “General, Interaction with other individuals” rule
Academic Integrity section	Rearranged and reworded these rules for clarity, including changing the “Formatting” section to “Present in the Round” for the rules describing what aspects of evidence should be present in the round. Please read carefully
Timekeeping rules section	Clarified that debaters arriving 15 minutes late to a round risk forfeiture of that round
Definition of “cut and formatted evidence” and “evidence”	Reworded for clarity
Definition of “via public means”	Added information generated by an AI tool to the list of what is not considered available by public means
Definition of “presented in the round”	Removed
Definition of “team policy plan”	Simplified
Ballots	Some rewording in the speaker point rubric to address fairly characterizing the opponent’s arguments and rebuttal speech content

*The summary charts are summaries and not exhaustive. They do not replace a careful reading of the rules for each event.