

The background image shows the interior of a grand, historic hall. The walls are a deep red, and the floor is made of light-colored wood. There are several large, arched windows with stained glass. A wooden balcony with a railing runs along the upper level. In the foreground, there are several long, wooden benches with dark leather upholstery. To the left, there is a wooden table with a decorative front and a small bust on a pedestal.

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SCHOOLS  
16/17**

# **DEBATING AND ACCESS WORKSHOP**

**CONVENOR NAME**  
**DATE**

# Firstly...



- Who here has taken part in a BP debate before?
- Who has never taken part in a BP debate before?
- Who has taken part in Oxford Schools before?

# What we're going to cover



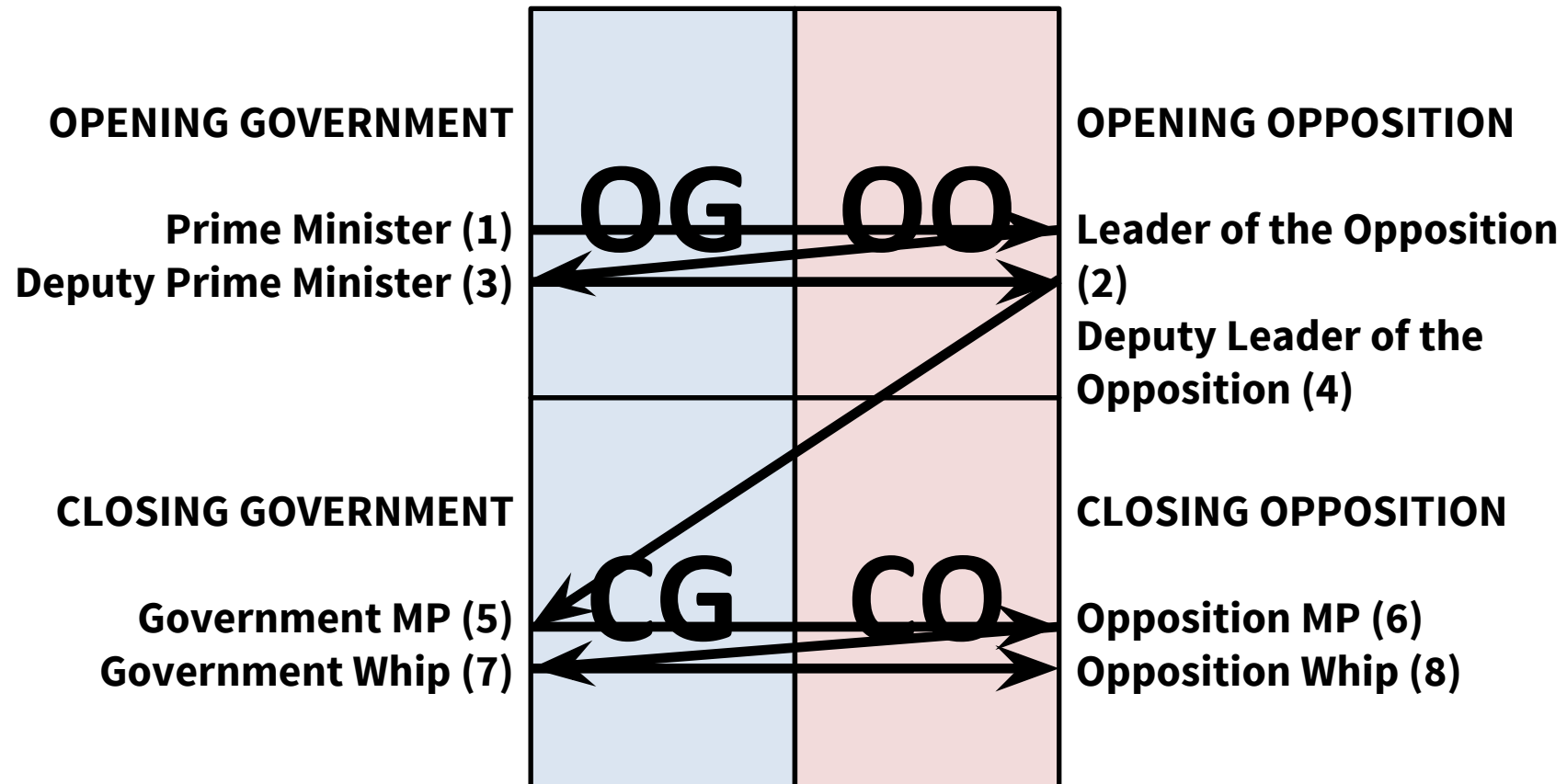
- Basic rules of the British Parliamentary format
- Each speaker's roles and responsibilities
- Style
- Tips for building a convincing case
- Rebuttal and Points of Information (Pols)
- Winning the debate
- Sample motions
- Working through a motion
- Questions on BP debating
- Oxford Admissions Talk
- Oxford Admissions Q&A



# The basic rules of the format

- The motion (i.e. the topic of the debate) is announced **fifteen minutes** before the start of the debate
- The motion is always expressed in the format ‘This House...’, referring **typically to the UK at regional level unless otherwise specified**
- There will be at least one Judge, known as the ‘Chair’
- **Teams must prepare on their own.** You may not be helped by your teacher/coach, parent, another team from your or any other school, another team in your room – only the two of you!
- **You may not use any of the following:** the Internet, mobile phones, computers, *printed* materials (only handwritten materials allowed) – just the two of you!
- **All of these count as cheating and it is within the convenor’s powers to disqualify teams which do not follow these rules.**
- Speeches are five minutes in length with two minutes of protected time (more on this later)

# Roles on the table



Whilst the opening and closing teams are on the same side of the motion and **cannot contradict each other**, each team is competing against all three of the other teams – **including the other team on their side of the motion**.

# The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition

## Aim to:

- Outline the material which will be presented by the two speakers in the team
- Present material for their side of the case which they believe will still be standing at the end of the debate
- Make 2 to 3 clear points

## In addition the PM aims to:

- Provide a good, clear definition of the motion
- Demonstrate a problem with the status quo and illustrate why the motion is necessary

## In addition the Leader of the Opposition aims to:

- If necessary, point out flaws in the definition, but be wary about re-defining it
- Point out flaws in the Government case (rebuttal)

**THW INTRODUCE A  
MAXIMUM SALARY CAP**



# The Deputy Prime Minister and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition



## Aim to:

- Briefly reiterate the party line
- Respond to the case put forward by the opposing team (rebuttal)
- Bring in their own arguments to reinforce their team's case (2 or 3 clear points) – should be different but complementary to those made by the Prime Minister / Leader of the Opposition

## Note that:

- The Deputy Leader of the Opposition should aim to rebut both the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister

THW BUILD PUBLIC  
HOUSING FOR THE POOR IN  
WEALTHY AREAS



# The Government MP and the Opposition MP

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## Aim to:

- Rebut material put forward by the opposing side on the top half of the table
- Extend their team's case in a new direction, presenting material which is entirely new and brings a different perspective on the debate
- Demonstrate that they are different from the top half of the table without directly contradicting them

## In addition the Opposition MP aims to:

- Rebut the extension put forward by the Government MP

**THW MANDATE TELEVISION  
COMPANIES TO GIVE EQUAL  
SCREENTIME TO MEN'S AND  
WOMEN'S SPORT**



# The Government Whip and the Opposition Whip



## Aim to:

- Briefly rebut all preceding material from the other side
- Summarise the debate – no new arguments may be presented
- Point out the points of clash between the Government and the Opposition (2 or 3) and demonstrate why their side of the motion is stronger and thus their side wins the debate
- In doing so they aim to consistently flag up the extension speaker and demonstrate that it is the extension speaker's points which won the debate

**THW NOT TREAT  
INJURIES ACQUIRED  
FROM EXTREME  
SPORTS (EG  
SKYDIVING) ON THE  
NHS**

# Argumentation

- The argumentation in your points is essential to building a convincing speech
- **Avoid assertions:** to make a point convincing, you need to show the steps involved in getting there.
- Remember to explain both why your point is **true**, but also why it is **important**.
- Similarly, make sure to **compare** the benefits that you are bringing to whatever the other side is suggesting. It is not good enough to show that bad things will happen in the world you oppose, if your opponents can show that worse versions of those bad things happen in the world you support.
- Use of **examples** is often an effective way to make points more convincing. However, always provide the analysis to accompany the example, and make sure to explain the example fully.

# Structure

- **Good structure is a key component of a convincing speech:**
- It helps the judges work out exactly what was said, and allows them to give maximum credit for all the points raised, and
- It also helps speakers to include all the points and lines of analysis that they want without forgetting any.
- **Flag up** the points you're going to make at the start of your speech, and number them clearly.
- Make sure you reference which point you're moving onto during your speech.
- Don't attempt to write out speeches in full – you don't have enough time, and it would be unlikely to work even if you did. Instead, try to write out the **key details** of your speech, and expand on them as you go through.



# Style



- At Oxford Schools', style is not explicitly rewarded. However, judges are judging the debate based on how **persuasive** the speakers are, and more stylish speakers are likely to be more persuasive.
- This means that while a team would not be able to win a debate with nonsensical arguments but excellent style, in a close debate where teams have raised arguments of similar calibre, a more stylish team might well be **marginally more persuasive** than the other and thus win
- Good style can take many forms – while being authoritative might be effective in some circumstances, being empathetic or even humorous might be in others, or for other people.
- Style should be **appropriate** to the point being given, and should vary throughout speeches.

# Rebuttal

- Every speaker should **rebut**. You have to engage with the opposing side's arguments – that's what makes this a debate!
- Focus on your opposition's **strongest material**, in order to demonstrate that another team is less convincing than you.
- Highlight the point of contention, explain what is wrong with the opponent's argument, and explain why your argument is **superior** (don't just pick holes – tell the judge why your side is different)
- **State the obvious**. If your opponent issues a poorly-made argument which could obviously be taken down easily, that point will still stand unless someone actually states what is wrong with the argument. It is not the Judge's job to fill in the gaps, so even if you think the counter-argument is so obvious that it does not need making, MAKE IT ANYWAY
- Don't get carried away with rebuttal – make enough to support your own case and demonstrate that you are actively participating in the debate, but don't forget your own **substantive arguments**

# Points of Information (POIs)

- **Three minutes** of 'unprotected time' - speaker may decline POIs offered
- This is an opportunity to briefly interject in your opponent's speech and ask for clarification on an issue
- POIs are not an opportunity for a speech within a speech. They should last no longer than **fifteen seconds** and should be an attempt to put opponents on the spot, as it is a rare chance to ask a question that has to be answered, or evaded, immediately. Examples of effective POI strategies are to **expose inconsistencies, to raise tricky examples, and to reference a point** which has not received a response.
- Speakers should accept **at least one POI** and no more than two, as a general rule. If you are offered POIs but do not take any you may be penalised. If you do not offer any POIs during the debate, you may be penalised.
- Do not panic when answering POIs. Take your time, and attempt to win the point, not just answer it.



# Sample regional motions

- THW decide winners of all entertainment awards (e.g. Grammys, Oscars, Emmies) by a public vote
- THW ban private schools
- THW not give aid to countries that abuse LGBT rights
- THBT, in states with a history of racial segregation, national sports teams should have racial quotas
- THW fund the identity change of prisoners who have served long sentences upon their release
- THW not give aid to countries that abuse women's rights
- THBT the English subject curriculum should prioritise works of literature that reflect national modern life (in the country where students are at school) over classical literature
- THW legalise vigilante justice in areas of persistent high crime

Work through this motion:

**This House would offer immunity to dictators in exchange for them ceding power peacefully**

**Any questions?**



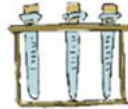
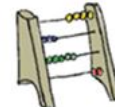
# Oxford Explained



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What do you already know about Oxford University?

# Oxford...

“The oldest university in the English-speaking world...  
a leader in learning, teaching and research”

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2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> in  
the world

1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> in  
the UK

26 Prime  
ministers

120  
Olympic  
medal  
winners

50 Nobel  
Laureates

30+  
International  
leaders



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# Could Oxford be for you?



Do we offer a **course** you would enjoy?



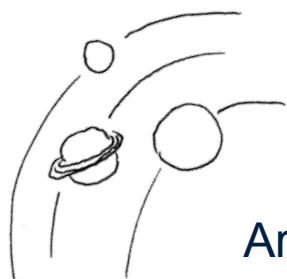
Would you find our **teaching style** engaging?



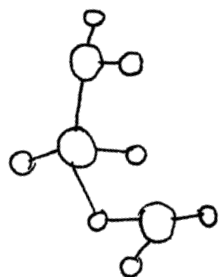
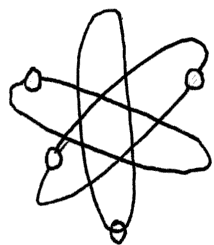
Are you predicted the right **grades**?



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# Courses at Oxford

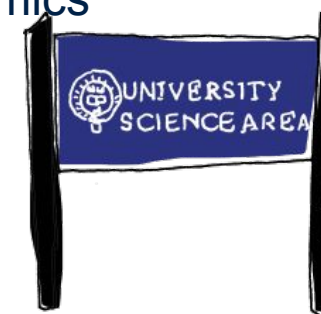


Archaeology and Anthropology  
Biochemistry  
Biological Sciences  
Biomedical Sciences  
Chemistry  
Classics  
Computer Science  
Earth Sciences  
Economics and Management  
Engineering Science  
English Language and Literature  
Experimental Psychology  
Fine Art  
Geography

History  
History of Art  
Human Sciences  
Law  
Materials Science  
Mathematics  
Medicine  
Modern Languages  
Music  
Oriental Studies  
Philosophy Politics & Economics  
Physics  
Theology & Religion  
and more...



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We also offer some specific joint honours degrees

You might realise you want to do a course you've never studied before!





# Tutorials



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As a student you are a member of the University,  
a department and a college...

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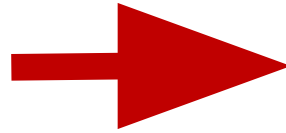
# Colleges



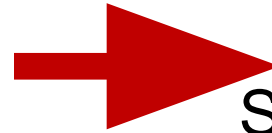
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Choose  
course and  
college



UCAS  
application



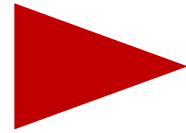
Submit by  
**15**  
October



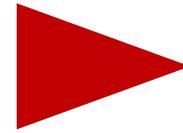
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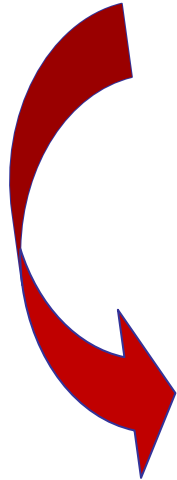
Result of  
application



Interviews



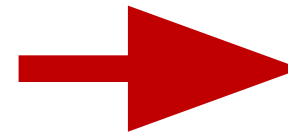
Written work /  
tests



Choose 'firm' and  
'insurance' choices



Exam results/  
confirmation

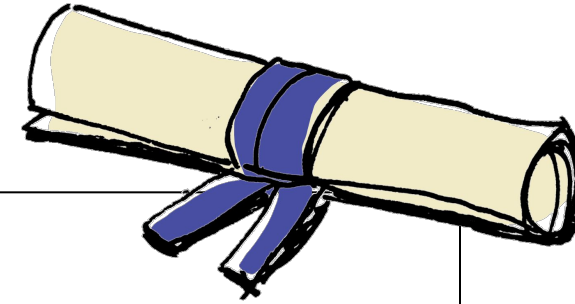


Start  
university!



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# What do you need?



A level	AAA (most courses)/ A*AA / A*A*A
International Bacc.	38 / 39 / 40 with 6/7 in higher level subjects
Pre-U	D3, D3, D3 / D2, D3, D3 / D2, D2, D3
Scottish Highers	AAAAB / AAAAA Highers supplemented by AA / AAB Advanced Highers
Welsh Bacc.	Level 3 Core Certificate + AA (A level)



# What can I do now...?

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- ✓ Work hard in school/college - GRADES
- ✓ Research your chosen subject thoroughly - COURSE
- ✓ Read widely - BUILD YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT
- ✓ Practise - ENTRANCE EXAMS; INTERVIEWS OVER PERSONAL STATEMENT
- ✓ Revise - MAKE THE MOST OF WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT IN SCHOOL!





University of Oxford



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[youtube.com/oxford](https://youtube.com/oxford)



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CAMBRIDGE**  
STUDENT CONFERENCES



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# Oxford Myths

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**COLLEGE SYSTEM** - ignore the 'stereotypes' about easier/harder colleges to get into, apply to the one you like!

**INTERVIEWS** - ignore the 'stories', they're about discovering your potential



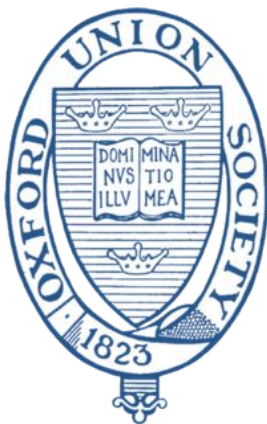
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# Access information

- 2015: 55.6% places went to applicants from the **state sector**, 44.4% to applicants from the independent sector
- Each college is allocated a **particular region for access work** e.g. Worcester College works with schools from Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, Northamptonshire and Wakefield
- UNIQ: **free summer school** at Oxford for high-performing students from low socio-economic backgrounds, living in postcode areas where fewer young people go on to higher education
- **Means-tested** tuition charge waivers and maintenance bursaries





# Any questions on admissions?

Thank you, on all your behalf,  
to {School Name} for facilitating tonight's workshop.

Feel free to get in touch with us at:  
[schools@oxford-union.org](mailto:schools@oxford-union.org)  
**Tweet us at @oxschools2017**