Tips for Judging Congress

Congress is kind of a mashup of both speech and debate. Unlike other debate events, the room is set up with up to 30 “senators” and a presiding officer. The presiding officer runs the event – you as the judge do not need to worry about time signals, who speaks, or when to call a break.

* There are usually 3 judges in each Congress. Do not confer with the other two judges at all during the round. Any conversation can be construed to be conferring – even when you are not talking about the debate at all.
* Your job will be to rank the top nine “senators” and determine which of the presiding officers was the best. A presiding officer may become a “senator” later in the event.

Ranking Senators

DOT METHOD

1. Materials Needed: The seating chart (provided with the ballot), pencil
2. Whenever someone speaks, put a dot in their square.
3. Whenever someone asks a question, put a question mark in their square
4. Whenever someone gives a good answer, put an exclamation mark in their square
5. Whenever someone cites a source or stat, put a star in their square.
6. If someone makes a good point, put a tally in their square.
7. The one who has the most tallies, questions, dots, and stars gets the highest rank. Find the nine “senators” who have these items and rank them accordingly. In the case of ties, tally marks count as bonus.

STICKY NOTE METHOD

1. Materials Needed: Square Sticky notes, small tab sticky notes, pencil
2. Before the round, lay out the sticky notes according to the seating chart
3. The first speaker gets a small tab sticky note with number “1” on it
4. Whenever someone speaks, asks a question, answers a question, cites a source or stat, or makes a good point, notate it on the square sticky note
5. It is also helpful to notate whether the speaker is Aff or Neg.
6. If you run out of room on your square sticky note for any “senator”, simply put another square sticky note on top, put the code on that one, and continue writing.
7. Add numbered small tab sticky notes to the square sticky notes as you rank them until you have nine small tabs (the rest will receive a rank of 10th place)

EXAMPLE OF STICKY NOTE METHOD

Notate speeches, questions, answers citations, stats, and good arguments here. Run out of room? Put another square sticky note with senator’s code and aff or neg on top.

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Small sticky note tabs numbered 1-9 showing 1st thru 9th place

Aff or Neg (expressed by speaker)

Code from seating chart

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| N208Aff | G312 | R567 | N589 | H432 | K508 |
|  |
| G233 | H568 | N589 | K452 | K509 | R256 |
|  |
| H589 | K779 | N514 | M6691 | L214 Neg | N569 |
|  |
| K321 | L5071 |  M559Aff | H433 | K608 | L226 |
|  |
| H223Neg | G541 | K574 | L3361 | O689Neg | M889 |