

POINTS OF INFORMATION

1. Introduction

A point of information (**POI**) is a conditional interjection. POIs give members of the opposition an opportunity to ask a question of, or address a point of rebuttal to, the speaker. The speaker has the option to accept or decline the POI. POIs make debating more engaging and responsive as they force speakers to respond directly to impromptu questions and allow debaters to influence the debate outside of their own speeches. This guide is intended to give debaters a brief overview of how to debate with POIs. More detailed information, including information on how POIs are scored, can be found in the *SADA Guide to Adjudicating* and the *Australia-Asia Debating Guide*.

2. Offering POIs

2.1 *How to offer a POI*

There is only one way to offer a POI: the offeror should stand in their place and say: '[p]oint of information.' If the speaker refuses the POI the offeror must sit down. If the speaker accepts the POI the offeror has a maximum of 15 seconds to state the POI and must then sit down.

POIs should be short and deal with one point. The best POIs are usually one sentence and well under 15 seconds in length. POIs can take the form of a question or a point of rebuttal. They may relate to anything about the debate; POIs do not have to address what the speaker is talking about at that moment. POIs should be delivered clearly as neither the speaker or offeror has the opportunity to seek or provide clarification.

Each debater must offer a minimum of three POIs to each opposition speaker (i.e. nine over the course of the debate). Ideally, debaters would offer around six per speaker. Debaters should leave around 15 seconds between POIs; if one or more speakers offers too many POIs in quick succession they may be penalised for 'badgering'.

2.2 *When to offer a POI*

POIs cannot be offered in the first or last minute of a speech. A bell will be rung at the one minute mark of a speech and when the speaker has one minute remaining. POIs may only be offered between these bells. For example, in a debate with five minute speeches, a bell will be rung at the one and four minute marks of the speech. Debaters could only offer POIs after the one minute bell and before the four minute bell.

2.3 *Being called to order*

If the offeror offers a POI outside of the bells, offers a POI that is too long, engages in badgering, continues to interject after offering the POI or in some other way offers an illegitimate POI, the Chairperson or Adjudicator may call the offeror to order. The speaker is also able to ask the offeror to sit down part way through delivering a POI. If called to order by the adjudicator or chairperson or asked to sit down by the speaker the offeror must resume his or her seat immediately.

3. **Responding to POIs**

3.1 *Accepting a POI*

The speaker may finish his or her sentence before either accepting or declining the POI. To accept a POI the speaker must say: '[y]es, please'.

A speaker should take two POIs per speech. These should not be taken too close together. First and second speakers should not take POIs during rebuttal. Ideally, POIs would be taken at natural breaks in the speech, such as between substantive points. POIs should be dealt with succinctly and not be allowed to disrupt a speaker's rhythm.

The speaker may not ask for clarification on the POI and must make a genuine attempt to respond to the POI as he or she understands it. The speaker and the offeror must not engage in a running discussion of the POI.

3.2 *Declining a POI*

To decline a POI, the speaker should say: 'no, thank you.' The speaker can ask the offeror to sit down part way through a lengthy, repetitive POI by saying: 'thank you, sit down.' However, the offeror should be given the opportunity to make his or her point.