

Current Evidence Standards:

210.10 Evidence Standards

(1) Standards for Evidence Citations:

- A. Whenever a debater cites a source in a debate round, that debater must cite the author and date. The Wisconsin Debate Coaches Association formally requires all evidence citations to conform to the Modern Language Association's (MLA) standards for citing evidence from both printed and online sources. MLA standards are those used by the National Forensic League.
- B. The WDCA requires complete Universal Resource Locators (URLs) to be available for any online information. The URL need not be read as the citation, but rather it needs to be present on the evidence card or sheet. The most efficient way to identify and locate a source online is by the URL.
- C. All evidence used in a sanctioned WDCA tournament requires a full citation to be available in the round if requested. Evidence without full citation information will be given no consideration in the round.
- D. Whenever a student cites a source in a debate round, a debate must cite the author and date.

(2) Challenging the Validity of Evidence at a Sanctioned Tournament:

- A. Challenges regarding the validity or potential falsification of evidence must be made by the opposing debate team or debater.
- B. If the validity of the evidence is questioned within the round by the opposing team, the judge shall follow these guidelines to determine the most appropriate action:
 1. The judge should first determine if the evidence in question can be proven invalid or fraudulent immediately following the round. If proven invalid or fraudulent within the context of the round, the judge should give a loss to the team using the invalid or fraudulent evidence. The judge should then immediately notify the Tournament Director. Following notification, the Tournament Director will convene a coaches committee of no fewer than three other coaches. This committee will then determine whether or not the team using the invalid or falsified evidence shall be disqualified from the tournament.
 2. If the evidence cannot be proven invalid or fraudulent immediately following the round, the judge should first consider whether or not it is important to the decision. If the evidence is not important to the decision, then the judge should disregard the situation. If it is important to the decision, the judge should evaluate the evidence on its own merits considering the following:
 - Is it believable?
 - Is it taken from a known and reliable source?
 - Is the evidence consistent with other evidence?
 - Is the evidence consistent with itself?
 - Other considerations...The judge is then to decide whether or not they will give credibility to the evidence based on the preponderance of the evidence at hand. The judge will then render their decision for the round.
- C. If a coach or judge would like to challenge the validity or potential falsification of evidence on that day following the round, the procedure is as follows:
 1. The coach or judge shall notify the Tournament Director immediately.
 2. The Tournament Director shall obtain a photocopy of the evidence in question and provide a copy to the coach or judge that has brought the challenge.

3. The Tournament Director shall forward a copy of both the evidence and the ballot to the Chairperson of the WDCA Judging Standards & Ethics Committee.
4. The coach or judge raising the challenge should send a written statement of complaint to the Chairperson of the WDCA Judging Standards & Ethics Committee outlining the nature of the evidence and the question surrounding its validity or potential falsification.
5. An investigation will be conducted immediately, and any action by the WDCA Judging Standards & Ethics Committee shall follow the current Ethics and Grievance Procedures. Possible sanctions that may be issued by the committee include: loss of the round, disqualification of a team and a letter to the school's principal; suspension from one or more WDCA sanctioned tournaments; suspension from the WSDT; and suspension from all debate in WDCA sanctioned events.

(3) Challenging the Validity of Evidence outside of a Sanctioned Tournament:

- A. Any challenge regarding the validity or potential falsification of evidence made outside of a WDCA sanctioned tournament shall be forwarded directly to the Chairperson of the WDCA Judging Standards & Ethics Committee.
- B. An investigation will be conducted immediately, and any action by the WDCA Judging Standards and Ethics Committee shall follow the current Ethics and Grievance Procedures.
- C. Possible sanctions that may be issued by the committee include: loss of the round; disqualification of a team and letter to the school's principal; suspension from one or more WDCA sanctioned tournaments; suspension from the WSDT; and suspension from all debate in WDCA sanctioned events.

New Evidence Standards Proposed Fall 2016

Replacing rule 210.10

(1) Definitions:

A. Evidence is any statistic, idea, example, conclusion, etc., that is attributable to another person or persons.

B. Source Citation. Debaters must, at a minimum, orally provide the author's last name and date when introducing evidence in a round. After introducing the evidence, students may reference the evidence by using the author's name and year, or argument position within the contention (or a combination thereof) to specifically indicate which arguments are attributed to which author. Full written citations must be available and presented if requested by the opponent and/or judge.

C. Written source citation. A written source citation must contain all information provided in the original source material, including but not limited to:

Full name of the primary author(s) and qualifications

Publication Date

Source

Title

Date accessed (if digital evidence)

Full URL if applicable

Page number(s)

D. Paraphrasing. If a debater chooses a parenthetical reference for evidence, the same evidence standards apply to quoted evidence.

(2) Types of Violations

A. Distortion occurs when the evidence contains added and/or deleted words that substantially alters the original conclusions of the author(s).

B. Non-existent evidence is one or more of the following:

a. The debater citing the evidence is unable to produce it when requested by the opposing team, judge or tournament official.

b. The source provided does not contain the evidence cited.

c. The evidence is referenced parenthetically but lacks an original source to verify the information.

d. The debater has the original source but refuses to provide it to their opponent, the judge or a tournament official, in a timely fashion as outlined in these rules.

e. The debater fails to present a full citation when requested.

C. Clipping. When a debater claims to have read more of a piece of evidence than was actually read in the round.

D. Straw Argument. Intentionally reading evidence that argues a position that the primary author(s) presents for the purpose of refuting it, while, in fact, advocating for a different position.

(3). Penalties

- A. The penalty for an evidence violation is loss of the round. In the case of a violation of rule (2), B (non-existent evidence), the violating team has 10 minutes to produce the evidence for the WSDT Director or their designee upon notification of the violation. If the team does not produce the evidence in that time period, that team will be disqualified from the tournament.
 - a. In the case of an inadvertent violation of (D) (Straw Argument) above, the judge must disregard the evidence presented, however the offending team does not forfeit the round.
- B. Results from previous rounds will not be reversed if an evidence violation results in a loss/disqualification to a team.
- C. A second evidence violation in a subsequent round during the WSDT will result in an automatic disqualification for that team.

(4). PROCEDURES

A. If a team believes its opponent has committed an evidence violation, it must raise the issue to the judge during the round, during a speech, by stating it is making a formal allegation. The judge MAY NOT end the round prematurely. If the judge finds that a violation has occurred, he/she must indicate that on their ballot and report the violation to the WSDT Director before submitting their ballot on paper or electronically. The judge must complete an RFD as if no violation occurred.

1. A team may make an allegation following the final speech only if that speech was given by the opposing team. In that case, the judge must evaluate the allegation.

B. Any and all evidence that is presented during the round must be made available to the opponent(s) and/or judge. When requested, the original source must be made available to the opponent before the requesting team's next speech. If time is required to locate the evidence, it will be deducted from the requested team's allotment of prep time. If no prep time remains, time is to be deducted from that team's next speech. If no speech time remains, the team is guilty of a violation of (2) B as stated above. When requested by the judge, at the conclusion of the round, the original source must be made available to the judge within 5 minutes.

- (1) If the issue is raised following rule 4 (A) (1) above, the evidence should be made available within 5 minutes of the request.

C. Rounds with panels of multiple judges

In a round heard by multiple judges, the same rules apply. Each judge should evaluate the violation independently and render a decision. Judges may not consult each other during this process. If a majority of the panel decides that a violation has occurred, the penalties for the violation will be enforced. If a majority of the panel decides a violation has not occurred, then the majority decision of the panel will stand.

D. The WSDT Director will notify coaches of both teams when an allegation has been made in a round as soon as possible.

(4). Appeals

A. Coaches may only appeal a decision on the grounds that the judge has ignored, misapplied and/or misinterpreted a rule in deciding an evidence violation raised in the round.

B. Coaches may not make an allegation of a violation that was not made by the debaters in the round.

C. Upon notification of a violation from the WSDT Director, coaches have 10 minutes to submit an appeal in writing.

D. An appeals committee comprised of the WSDT Director, Judging Standards and Ethics Committee Chair and the WDCA President will read the appeal and interview all related parties (coaches, judge(s) and teams) as soon as possible and render a decision before the conclusion of the next round. The appeals committee's sole responsibility is to decide if the judge ignored, misapplied and/or misinterpreted the evidence violation rules.

a. When a judge's decision is overturned:

i. An original decision of no violation becomes a forfeit loss for the offending team and bye win for their opponent

ii. An original decision of a violation uses the decision on the ballot as outlined in rule 4(A) above.

E. If the evidence violation and appeal happen during elimination rounds, a final decision must be made before the next elimination round may begin.

F. If the evidence violation occurs in the final round, all debaters, coaches and judges are asked to remain for 10 minutes following the announcement of the decision in case an appeal is filed.

G. The decision of the appeal committee is final and binding.

H. If any member of the appeals committee has a conflict of interest (coach of one of the teams, hiring coach of the judge, etc.), members of the Executive Committee will be substituted in this order: President-Elect, Past-President, Secretary, Treasurer, New Coaches Committee Chair, Novice Packet Committee Chair, Media and Communications Committee Chair, WSDT Operations Director.