Rules of Parliamentary Debate

1) The debate will be presided over by Mr. or Madam Speaker.

2) The Government team (the side in favour) shall sit on the right hand side of the Speaker. The Opposition (the side against) shall sit on the left.

3) The speaking order will be as follows: the Prime Minister, followed by the first Opposition Member then the Minister of the Crown (second Government speaker) and followed by the Leader of the Opposition (second Opposition speaker). Finally the Prime Minister will deliver the Government rebuttal.

4) Maximum speaking times are 5 minutes for the Prime Minister’s first speech, 5 minutes for the other speeches, 8 minutes for the Leader of the Opposition’s speech, and 3 minutes for the Prime Minister’s rebuttal. There are no minimum times.

5) During the rebuttal, Members (debaters) may not bring up any new arguments or new evidence except in direct refutation of material which has already been presented.

6) All remarks must be addressed to the Speaker of the House and not to anyone else, e.g. say “Mr. Speaker” not “Mr. Speaker, honourable judges”. The Member must address Mr. Speaker in his/her first sentence.

7) Other Members (debaters and members of the audience) should be referred to by their constituency (e.g. the Member for their last name or their city), office (e.g. the Prime Minister) or as “The Honourable Member” or “The Honourable Gentlemen” or “The Honourable Lady”. They may be referred to as “he” or “she” but never as “you”.

8) Members will speak only when called upon by the Speaker. There is to be no heckling. There will be no Points of Order or Points of Personal Privilege raised.

9) Points of Information are raised while another Member has the floor (i.e. is speaking). If a Member wishes to raise a Point of Information, he/she should stand and with one hand on their head and another pointing forward (in teapot-style) and say: “On that point”. The person who is speaking may refuse to take the point saying: “Not at this time.” Alternatively, they may to choose to take the point. If the speaker refuses the point, the Member raising the POI must sit down. Otherwise, they should deliver their point as succinctly as possible (in less than 15 seconds) Often the point is phrased as a question. All speakers should attempt to both deliver at least one POI and to accept one POI during the course of the debate.

10) The first and last minute of each constructive speech is considered protected time during which no POIs can be made. In addition, no POIs may be made during the Prime Minister’s final rebuttal or during the last three minutes of the Leader of the Opposition’s speech (also considered rebuttal time.)
11) The Government must define the resolution. Their definition must be accepted unless it is undebatable or unreasonable. If the Opposition wishes to challenge the definition they must do so prior to the start of the debate by appealing to the tournament organizer. The Opposition must show that the Government’s definition is unacceptable and then substitute their own. Definitions may not be challenged during the debate.

12) The Government may introduce a plan for implementing the resolution if they wish to, but they are not required to do so. If they do propose a plan, they must fully explain it during the Prime Minister’s speech.

13) If, and only if, the Government introduces a plan, the Opposition may introduce a counterplan, but it is not required to do so. A counterplan is an alternative method of implementing the resolution which is significantly different from the Government plan and is demonstrably better than the Government plan. If the Opposition wants to introduce a counterplan, they must fully explain it during the address of their first speaker.

14) Props (e.g. drawings, models) may not be used.

15) Courtesy must be shown to all other Members at all times.
Fulford League
Rules of Cross-Examination Debate

1) The debate will be presided over by Mr./Madam Moderator.

2) The Affirmative team (the side in favour) shall sit on the right hand side of the Speaker. The Negative (the side against) shall sit on the left.

3) The standard speaking times will be as outlined on the enclosed resolution sheet.

4) All remarks must be addressed to the Moderator and the member should address the Moderator in his/her first sentence.

5) During their summaries at the end of the debate, neither the 2nd Negative, nor the 1st Affirmative may introduce new arguments.

6) No heckling is allowed in cross-examination debating.

7) There are no Points of Order or Points of Personal Privilege in this style of debate.

8) The Affirmative must define the resolution. Their definition must be accepted unless it is undebatable or unreasonable.

9) Debaters should treat each other with respect and judges will penalize debaters guilty of flippancy, discourtesy, or any attempt to belittle another debater.

10) The examiner shall control a cross-examination, though a witness has a right to reasonably qualify his/her answers. The examiner should allow the witness a reasonable opportunity to answer a question, but may ask the Speaker to cut the witness short if the latter stalls or answers at unnecessary length.

11) The only question that a witness may ask during cross-examination is for a confusing issue to be clarified. He/she may not answer a question by asking a question.

12) The examiner should ask fair questions on relevant subjects, but questions need not relate to the speech just delivered by the witness, although they should relate to the question at hand.

13) Witnesses must try to answer all questions directly and honestly. They will be penalized for evading questions or giving untruthful answers. Witnesses may not object to answering questions on the grounds that they are irrelevant or unfair.

14) During a cross-examination, examiners may only ask questions; they will be penalized accordingly for making speeches or refuting at this time.