

Mars Hill Rules

Description: *The competitor is given four (4) minutes to prepare a speech to identify theme(s) from books, movies, and other genres, discuss their appeal and impact to the culture, and then compare and contrast them with a biblical truth(s).*

Goals: *The competitor learns to relate cultural references to themes common in humanity to find common ground and draw the listener to Christian truths. The competitor will share Biblical principles on a conversational, personal level to inspire reflection, understanding that God's truth is not divorced from culture. **Content is key:** greater weight should be given to the speech content, rather than the presentation style.*

- The competitor should demonstrate their understanding of the selected topic by summarizing the topic and its context and addressing its impact and relevance to the culture.
- The content and delivery of the speech should foster a positive rapport with those who may not share the same faith, leaving the listener wanting to hear more. The competitor should not assume that the audience is familiar with biblical concepts; therefore, any biblically referenced stories, illustrations, terminology, etc., should be explained in a manner that can be understood by someone without prior knowledge of the Bible.

Disclaimer: *The views expressed in the MH topics do not necessarily reflect the beliefs of Stoa, the Board, or the Speech Committee. Mars Hill is intended for competitors 14 and older due to some mature themes and elements included in the content.*

Mars Hill Preparation Rules:

1. A list of possible topics and topic categories will be posted on the Stoa website. Tournament Directors may use the posted list of topics or create a list of their own that complies with the event rules. If using alternative topics for competition, all proposed topics must be available to the competitors at the time of tournament registration. (see **Mars Hill Overview**)
2. Topics for each individual round must be entirely from the list on the Stoa website or entirely from a list created by the tournament staff, not a combination of the two, ensuring all competitors have equal preparation advantage.
3. Competitors prepare for Mars Hill through research, analysis, and organization. The **Mars Hill Overview** document provides additional information for the student to consider while preparing material.
4. Each competitor may create a binder with summaries of the topics and any other helpful material but not pre-written cards, pre-written outlines, or pre-written speeches.
5. Competitors may not share binders during competition. Each competitor must have their own binder.

Mars Hill Administration Rules:

1. One judge in each room will be given the topics to distribute to each competitor along with instructions regarding room administration.
2. A list of possible topics will be given to each of the judges in the competition room.
3. All topics in the same round must be of the same category (i.e., "Current Media Topics," "Literature," etc.).
4. In the room, a competitor will draw three (3) single topics, select one (1), and return the other two (2) topics before leaving the room. The selected topic should not be returned.
5. Preparation time begins as soon as the competitor draws the first topic.
6. During preparation time, the competitor may only use his/her binder to prepare a single note card for presentation. No electronic media is allowed.
7. During preparation time, the timepiece must be **facing toward the competitor and counting down**.
8. Unused preparation time may not be added to the speaking time.

Mars Hill Presentation Rules:

1. The competitor must summarize the selected topic and its context. They will identify themes on that topic and their impact and appeal to the culture and compare and contrast them with biblical truth.
2. The competitor may only use a single note card, 4"x6" or smaller (prepared during prep time), and the selected topic paper.
3. Competitors may not receive or access any verbal, non-verbal, electronic, and/or written communication, nor any form of visual assistance during preparation time and/or delivery of the speech, other than specifically allowed preparation materials.
4. No audio, visual aids, or props may be used.
5. Gratuitous vulgarity is strictly prohibited.
6. If quoting information from an outside source, the source must be verbally cited during the speech. Use of another person's words or ideas without crediting them is plagiarism and is strictly forbidden. See the **Stoa Plagiarism Policy**.
7. Competitors must not listen to other Mars Hill competitors speaking before them in the round.
8. During the presentation, the timepiece **must be facing toward the competitor** with the timepiece **counting up**.
9. Maximum speaking time is six (6) minutes. There is no minimum time requirement.
10. Competitors will receive a one (1) rank penalty for going over time by fifteen (15) seconds or more.

Preparation time – four (4) minutes. Speaking time – six (6) minutes.