

# Mars Hill Rules

**Description:** *The competitor uses books, movies, and other genres to discuss the appeal and impact of the theme(s) within the topic, holding them up in light of Christian truth found in the Bible.*

**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.*

**Recommendation:** *For competitors 14 and older or with parental consent due to some mature themes*

## 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 is posted on the tournament registration website.
2. Competitors prepare for Mars Hill through research, analysis, and organization. Each competitor may create a binder with summaries of the topics and any other helpful material but not prewritten cards or speeches.
3. Competitors may not share binders during competition. Each competitor must have their own binder.
4. 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.
5. All proposed topics must be available to the competitors at the time of tournament registration.
6. For more information see the *Mars Hill Overview* document.

## 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. All topics in the same round must be of the same category (i.e., "Current Visual Media," "Literature," etc.).
3. 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.
4. Preparation time begins as soon as the competitor draws the first topic.
5. During preparation time, the timepiece must be **facing toward the competitor and counting down**. Local tournaments may choose to give verbal countdown signals every thirty (30) seconds until four (4) minutes have elapsed.
7. Unused preparation time may not be added to the speaking time.

## Mars Hill Presentation Rules:

1. The competitor should demonstrate their understanding of the selected topic and address its impact and relevance to the culture. Additionally, the competitor should identify common human experiences within the topic and connect them to 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. 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.
5. 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.
6. No computers, tablets, cell phones, or other electronic media devices may be used for Mars Hill preparation or presentation during the round.
7. No audio, visual aids, or props may be used.
8. Gratuitous vulgarity is strictly prohibited.
9. 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**.
10. Competitors must not listen to other Mars Hill competitors speaking before them in the round.
11. During the presentation, the timepiece **must be facing toward the competitor** with the timepiece **counting up**. Local tournaments may choose to give hand signals every minute until six (6) minutes have elapsed.
12. Maximum speaking time is six (6) minutes. There is no minimum time requirement.
13. 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.**