

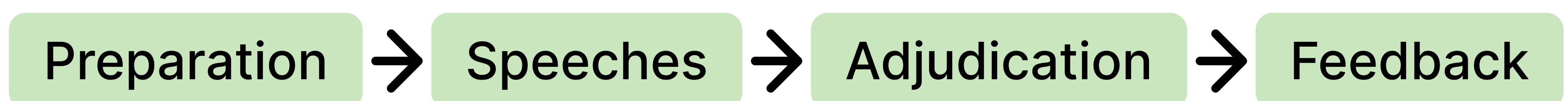


# Debating: The manual

# Debating: What is that?

Debating is a team sport that centers around the discussion of a set topic. This guide is meant to be your helper to understand everything about the hows and whys in order to help you join your very first debate!

## The basic idea



- The debate discusses a set topic (the “motion”)
- You are randomly assigned a position (for or against)
- You prepare together with your team for 15 minutes
- In the debate, teams alternate in holding speeches
- Adjudicators listen to and adjudicate the debate to find a winning team

## Debate Club Aachen

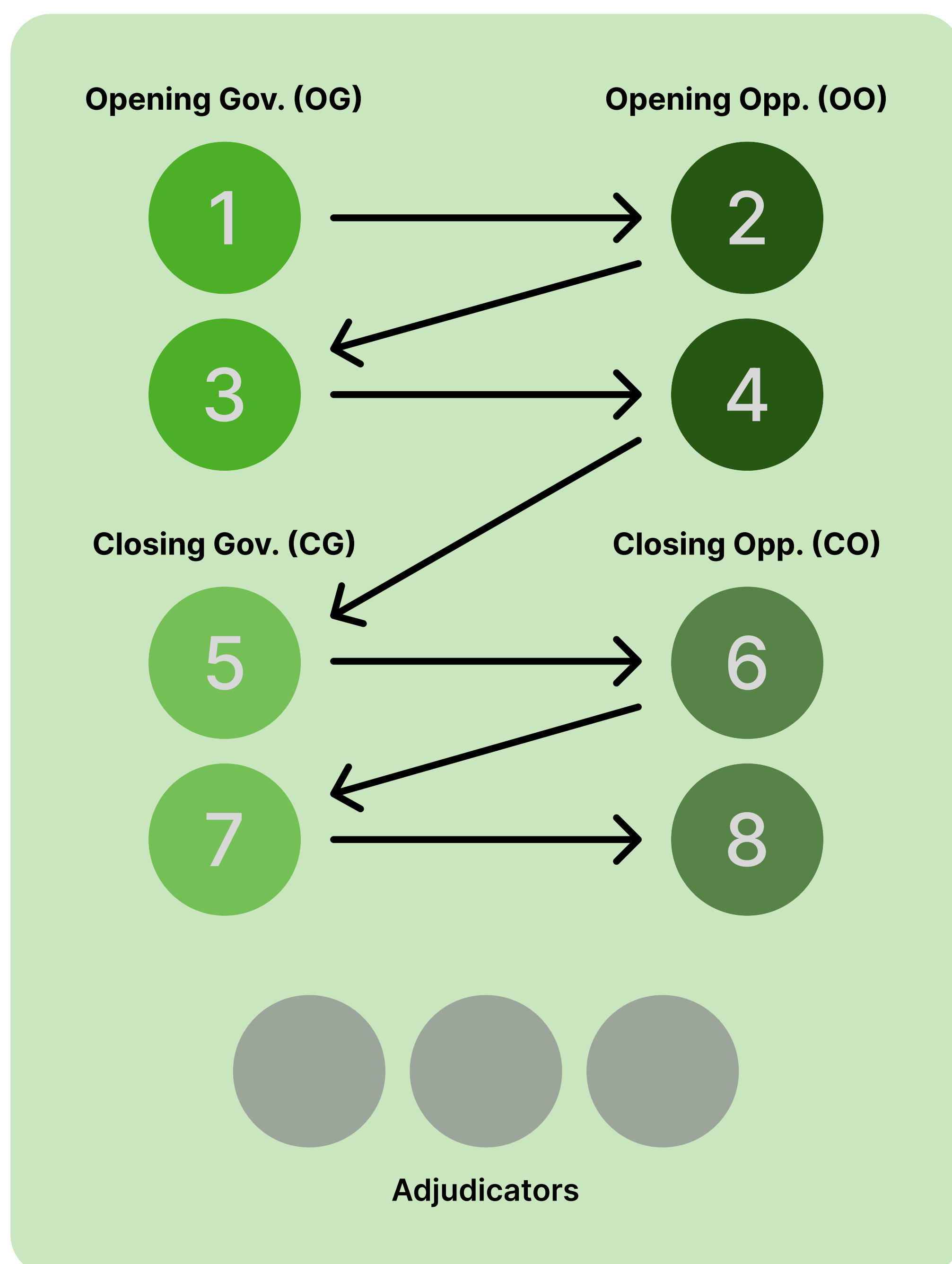
We debate every week in both English (Thursdays) and German (Mondays). The format of our debates alternates between the international BPS (British Parliamentary) and the German OPD (Open Parliamentary) debating styles.

In addition to our weekly debate evenings, we also participate in and host both national and international debating tournaments, host social events like game nights and participate in university functions.

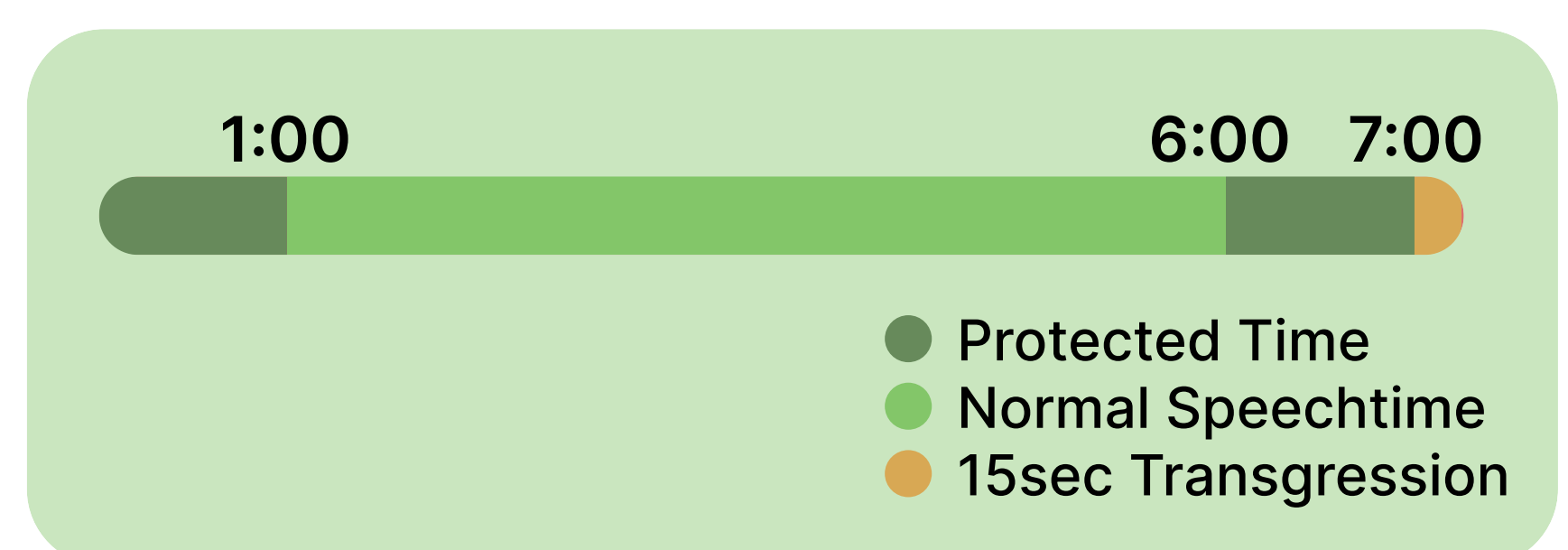
# BPS: British Parliamentary Style

British Parliamentary Style (BPS) is the biggest international debating format and is loosely based on debates in the British House of Commons.

## Structure of the debate



## Speaking times



## Teams

In BPS debates, there are four teams. You prepare together with the other person on your team and try to be the most convincing team of the debate.

Government teams are in favor of the motion, opposition teams are opposed.

## During the speeches

While a speaker of the opposing side is holding their speech, you can ask questions or make short interjections. A question can be offered by standing up and can be either accepted or rejected by the speaker. Interjections are at most 7 words and Questions may not be longer than 15 seconds.



# BPS: British Parliamentary Style

## Adjudication

BPS Debates are adjudicated by ranking the teams from 1st to 4th based on how convincing their arguments were.

Determining which team was more convincing than another is based on looking at how well the arguments were explained, how well the importance of the argument was highlighted and how well the argument was compared to the material provided by other teams.

## Motions

### Policy motions

**"This house would..."**

Topics beginning like this are policy motions, in which we imagine us as a parliament that decides whether a given law should be passed.

### Believe motions

**"This house believes..."**

Topics beginning like this are believe motions in which two hypothetical worlds are presented and teams argue which of these would be a better world to live in.

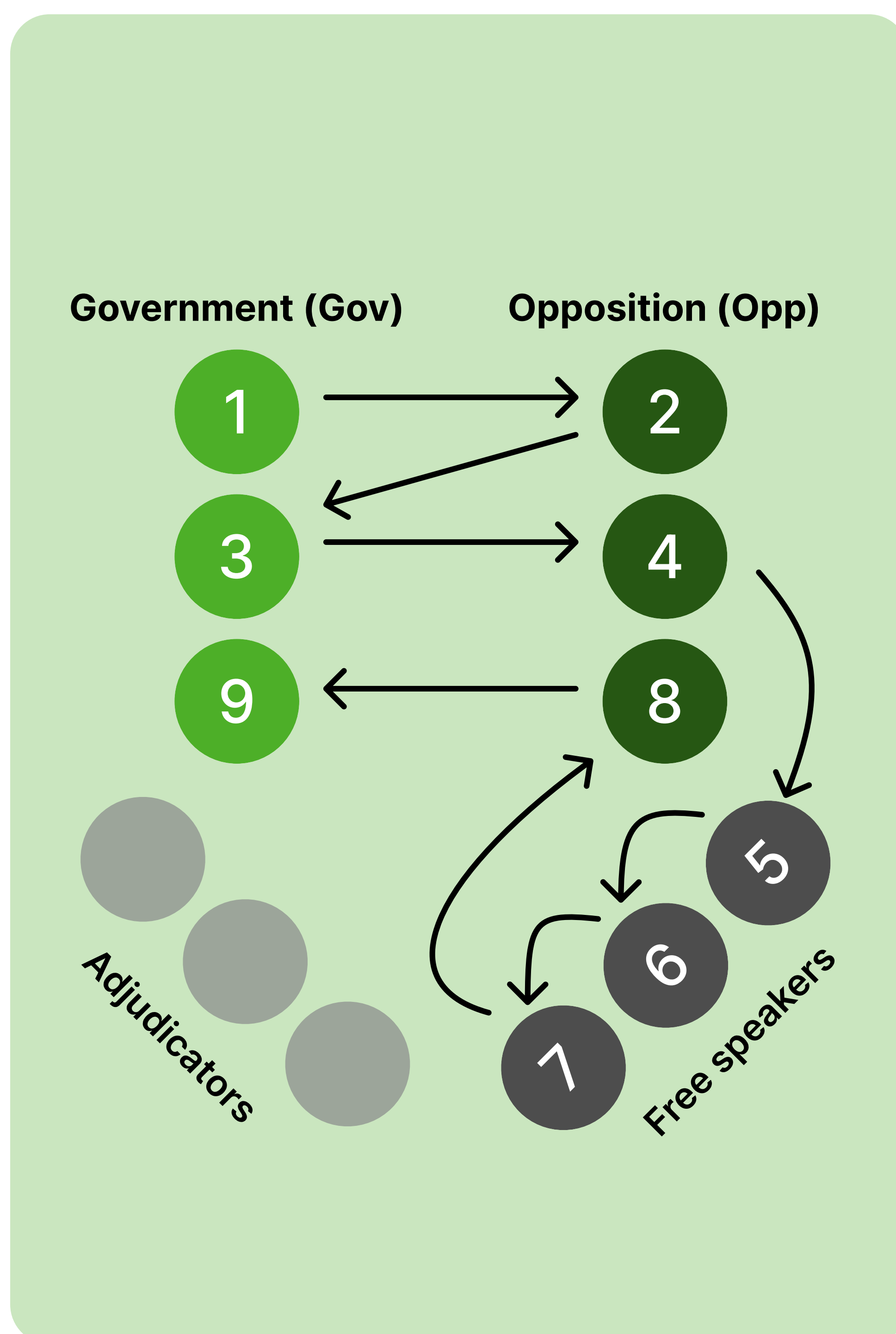
## Tips for your speech

BPS debates are solely focussed on the content of what you are saying: Try to explain your argument as clearly and as detailed as possible and to highlight why your argument should be more convincing than the arguments brought forth by the other teams.

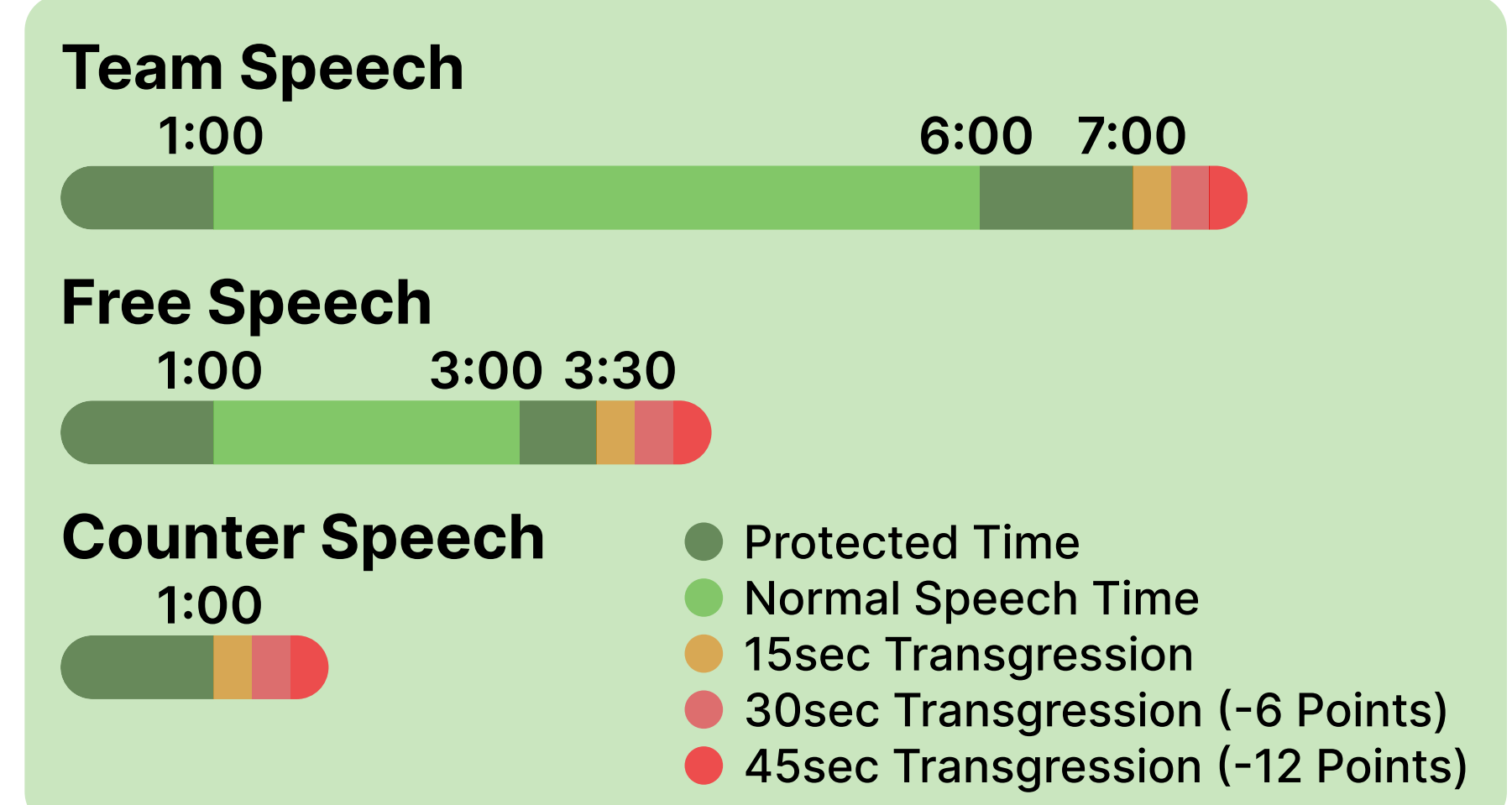
# OPD: Open parliamentary debate

The Open Parliamentary Debate (OPD) format is a debate format from Germany aimed at rewarding speeches that would convince the average listener.

## Structure of the debate



## Speaking times



## Roles in the debate

OPD debates are held concerning a question. Government answers the question with 'yes', Opposition answers 'no'.

Free speeches decide on a position for themselves and should bring new arguments into the debate. They are answered by a 1-minute reply speech.

## During the speeches

While a speaker of the opposing side is holding their speech, you can ask questions or make short interjections. A question can be offered by standing up and can be either accepted or rejected by the speaker. Interjections are at most 7 words and Questions may not be longer than 15 seconds.



# OPD: Open parliamentary debate

## Adjudication

OPD debates are scored using a points system. All speeches and both teams accumulate points throughout the debate. At the end of the debate, the team with the higher score, calculated from the individual speeches and the team's points, wins.

### Individual speeches (max. 100 Points)

Aesthetic (“left”) categories			Content (“right”) categories	
Linguistics	Appearance	Contact	Expertise	Judgement
Choice of words, emphasis, linguistic images that support the content	Gestures, facial expressions and movements that support the content	Contact with arguments of the opposing side and the audience	The content of the arguments is correct and logically sound	Clear explanation of why the arguments mentioned are important

### Teams (max. 200 Points)

Strategy	Interaction	Persuasiveness
For each individual speech: Does the speech fulfill its role in the debate? Do the team speeches work well together? Are all three speeches relevant to the debate?	Each team's questions, interjections, and rebuttals. How appropriate was the interaction? Did it contribute to the debate?	The “overall performance” of a team: If I had not had a clear opinion on the issue before the debate, how much would I believe in that position now?

## Guidelines for Scores

Individual speeches usually receive between 30 and 60 points, and teams between 70 and 110. For a first speech, 30 points is a good score.

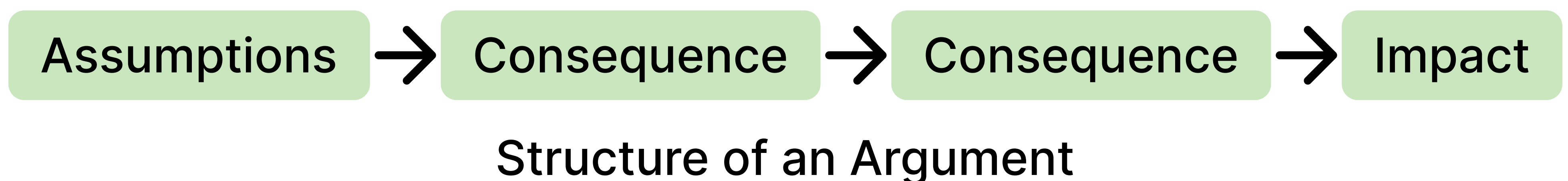
## Tips for your speech

In OPD debates, compelling speeches and arguments are rewarded. Try to make your position as tangible as possible for the judges with interesting examples, appropriate gestures, and clear explanations.

# Glossary

Here, we describe terms that are frequently used in debating.

## Making and Describing Arguments



### Weighing:

Comparing the arguments of two teams. The evaluation should be based on the opposing side's best-case scenario and clearly identify the metrics by which one argument is better or worse.

### Characterization:

The description of the characteristics or interests of actors (so-called stakeholders) in the debate (e.g., "a majority of students do not want to take tests"). Usually part of the assumptions.

### Mechanism:

The derivation of the effect from the assumptions. A good mechanism describes the consequence of assumptions and explains why this consequence occurs.

### Impact:

The effect achieved by an argument. This should be quantified using a metric and assigned to an actor or group of actors.

### Metric:

The level at which an argument has an effect (e.g. happiness of people, economic growth of a country, freedom of citizens)

# Glossary

## Positions and Abbreviations

**Chair:** Head of the adjudicators

**Wing:** Adjudicators that aren't the chair

**Panel:** All Adjudicators

**Whip:** Last Team-Speech (BPS: only for closing Teams)

**Gov:** Government

**Opp:** Opposition

**OG:** Opening Government

**OO:** Opening Opposition

**CG:** Closing Government

**CO:** Closing Opposition

**PM:** First Speech of the Debate (Abbreviation of Prime Minister)

## Frequently used Terms

**Symmetric:** An effect that occurs on both sides of the debate.

**Steel-Man:** The opposite of a straw man argument. It assumes the opposing side's arguments are correct and demonstrates that one's own are nevertheless superior.

**Rebuttal:** A refutation of the opposing side's arguments by pointing out contradictions or weakening the impacts.

**Burden:** The need to show why an assumption is true.

**Comparative:** The difference between two hypothetical worlds.

**Proposal:** Implementation proposal by the Government

**Counter-Proposal:** Counter-Proposal from the Opposition that solves the same problem.

**Backstab:** A contradiction between the Opening and Closing team in a BPS debate.

**Clash:** A conflict between two teams on a metric.

**Split:** A non-unanimous assessment of the debate by the adjudicators.