



Debate vs MUN



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Two of the most common forms of co-curricular competitions at school and university alike – debate and MUN – might seem more or less similar from the outside. Swift public speaking and debating constitutes a significant part of both in deducing solutions for pressing social and global issues. However, in reality, the objectives, approaches, and experiences gained are poles apart in the two circuits.

FRIENDS VS FOES

Debates are cut-throat battlefields. A statement has already been provided in the form of a motion, and teams have to strictly support or refute that statement. You have to counter your opposition's argument and prove why YOUR stance is superior to theirs (along with thorough analysis of your assertions). Good debaters will often use minor arguments to pinpoint the "core issues" they're endorsing, showing real reasoning. Rankings are given in each round, breaking teams reiterating the aforementioned process with a different theme and motion in each advanced round until there's ONE winning team at finals.

In stark contrast, MUN conferences are almost entirely about collaboration to solve the issue at hand. You could put forward proposed solutions, the next step being trying to convince as many member delegates as possible to vote for your ideas and help implement them for betterment of the committee. Bits of debating still

exist in the form of Points of Inquiries and Point of Orders, but these are simply for clarification purposes in case a delegate fails to understand a proposed policy or thinks there has been a gaffe. MUNs are competitive too, but there's no dismissal/breakthrough involved – MUNers have to go all the way. Awards could be won by persuading fellow delegates to side with you and consequently produce a sustainable resolution, thus standing out as a leader.

Diplomacy, negotiation and lobbying are a must in MUNs, which is probably the reason it's easier to make friends there compared to debate tournaments.

WIDE KNOWLEDGE VS SPECIALISED KNOWLEDGE

Debaters are expected to be aware of nearly EVERY prevalent dispute – local or global, in-depth; motions could range from a celebrity going topless to world leaders claiming climate change to be a hoax. Researching during tournaments is a near impossible feat if you have zero idea of the theme, with so little time allotted for preparation. Hypothesising is allowed, with debaters advocating for/against the cause as a *free individual*.

MUNers, on the other hand, only need to research THE topic (assigned beforehand) and resolve predicaments relevant to their committee only. You *role play* for your delegated country, using facts and figures to infer/vote for a solution best for that country/committee as a whole. Thus, MUNers might not always prioritise solv-

ing the issue at hand *fully*, and instead have their judgement narrowed towards their committee. Platitudes like "I support Equality" are commonplace at conferences.

Strategy is often just as important a factor as knowledge, if not more, to ace MUNs. The resolution being expounded needs to be as acceptable as possible to most countries *whilst* being fruitful, so they can unite with you and create the preponderant bloc (in case competition exists, with other delegates passing different resolutions). For instance, NO member can deny a proposition that'll accelerate accomplishment of the SDGs.

BREATH-taking ORATORY VS BREATH-taking ORATORY

While both activities require participants to speak eloquently yet fast, debaters only get one speech at the podium, whereas MUNers get multiple chances (unless they've been placed in a small committee). As a result, the formers' speeches need to be spot-on in one go, if they want to break to the next round.

Neither MUNers nor debaters can be outstanding by spewing out drab, impassive speeches, thus both have to be actively convincing while articulating speeches at the pulpit. However, as I mentioned before, MUN speeches are more diplomatic in nature – the goal lying in garnering support for your propositions, whereas *stimulating* debate contentions are pretty convincing to adjudicators – even if they conflict severely with the

opposition's notions.

SOCIALS VS. INFINITE SOCIALS

Hear about MUNs and the first word to pop up in your mind would be "socials". While break nights in debate DO count as socials, they're no match for the pumped-up dance nights at MUNs. It's no surprise to find someone bringing multiple dates from five different committees to one, or being asked out by a complete stranger from another committee.

Now, not everyone selects a solitary activity from the pair and sticks with it. Renegades partaking in both MUN conferences and debate do exist. These people are pigeonholed as traitors by their peers at every event ever, but they are the ones with greatest insight into the subtle differences of the two pursuits.

Warish Zaman, one such rebel, reveals his findings after years of dominating both circuits, "Debaters think MUNers are a bunch of pansies who cover up their lack of actual talent in anything other than gossip with showing off their latest suits and heels. MUNers think debaters are self-obsessed, narcissistic egomaniacs too busy listening to the sound of their own voices to bother listening to anyone else. Why is the beef so thick? It's because neither side is wrong."

Crystal's a foodaholic whose only life achievement has been being the insanest one in the room involuntarily. Yes, it's her real name. Send her dank memes, good music, and all things aesthetic at crystalafnan@gmail.com