



EX NIHILO

SPEECH AND DEBATE

Speak, Proclaim, Defend

EX NIHILO SPEECH AND DEBATE

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EX NIHILO SPEECH AND DEBATE CLUB

About Us

GREETINGS

We are so glad you are considering joining us on this journey in Speech and Debate. All of us who have participated in this activity have found the road to be filled with blessings.

As all journeys go, they are filled with excitement, hard work, smiles, tears, and a few bumps on the road. When we travel together, in unity, and supporting one another, we share in each other's joys and troubles, always looking to the Lord for His guidance along the way.

It is our desire to bless you and your family by offering a place where your homeschooled children can learn the value of competitive forensics in their lives. Regardless of your family's vision for your children's future, we believe that competitive forensics will help you and your children in their walk by being able to Speak, Proclaim, and Defend their faith.

As a competitive speech and debate club affiliated with Stoa, the national, private Christian homeschool speech and debate league (www.stoausa.org), Ex Nihilo is committed to helping parents fully develop their children's God-given abilities in the areas of communication, apologetics, critical thinking, and writing.

Ex Nihilo is an all-volunteer, parent run, private Christian homeschool, competitive speech and debate club. The club was founded in 2019 by veteran, competitive speech and debate parents with a vision to greatly expand speech and debate opportunities to the private Christian homeschool community.

EX NIHILO – WHAT IT MEANS

From Latin, Ex Nihilo, literally means "Out of Nothing." We believe that all creation was created out of nothing by the spoken word of our Creator and strive to fulfill his purpose in our lives in the area of Speech and Debate.

Genesis 1 tells us that the Lord created us out of nothing and we believe that without Him and His guiding hand in our lives we cannot accomplish the purpose for which we were created.

PURPOSE

Ex Nihilo is organized to train Christian homeschooled youth to speak, proclaim, and defend a Christian worldview using the vehicles of competitive speech and debate as training tools.

HOW DO YOU SAY IT?

Pronunciation is quite easy as it is almost phonetic but with a slightly silent or soft "h" in the word Nihilo. 'eks 'nē(h)əlō

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Taking off on the journey

The first steps on our journey are simple:

1. Register for membership in Ex Nihilo Speech and Debate Club
 - Cost is \$100 for the first student, \$50 for the second, and \$25 for the third student, with a maximum family cost of \$175 per family.
2. Register with Stoa (stoausa.org) – *more on that later*
 - Cost is \$95 per family.
 - Cost goes up to \$125 after September 30, 2024.

Our club meets on Monday nights at The Chapel at Grossmont, 5651 Water St., La Mesa, CA 91942

As with any activity, you will get the results you want depending on the amount of effort you put into it. With that in mind, we encourage weekly attendance, but understand that sometimes this is not possible. We ask that you communicate with club leadership so we know whether or not you will be present.

Competitive Forensics is not a “drop off” activity and relies heavily on the participation of parents, adult coaches, and alumni coaches so we ask that you stay with your student(s) throughout the entire club night.

For families with children who are not of age to compete but would like to participate and learn, we offer a Junior track. Families are required to have an active competing student in order for younger siblings to participate in the Junior track. Recommended ages are 9 to 12 years of age.

Choosing which events to compete in can be a daunting task. Please see the write up in Appendix A to help you choose what events may be best suited for your child.

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Membership Eligibility

The goal of Ex Nihilo is to glorify God and prepare our students for life and to:

- *Speak* – Truth into the lives of those they encounter
- *Proclaim* – the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- *Defend* – the Faith by developing a better understanding of the Word of God

QUALIFICATIONS

- Students shall be 12 years of age by October 1.
 - Students may not compete and judge during the same competition season.
- Parents and Students must agree with and support Ex Nihilo and Stoa's Statement of Faith
 - Stoa's Statement of Faith can be found in Appendix B
- For the purposes of membership in Ex Nihilo and Stoa, the following two statements must be affirmed:
 - Each competing student is at least ONE of the following:
 - Exempt from public education enrollment and/or attendance in California
 - Homeschooled under the statutes or regulations in California
 - Enrolled in a non-public, home-based educational program according to California laws
 - Covered by the HSLDA

AND...

- Not enrolled in a charter school or public school independent study program
- Not enrolled full-time in a college. The college institution defines what constitutes full-time
- Enrolled in a non-public, home-based educational program according to California laws
- Covered by the HSLDA

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Member Responsibilities

BE PREPARED

You will get out of competitive forensics what you put into it. If you are assigned homework by one of the coaches, please take every effort to complete it by the assigned date.

You will have the opportunity to present speeches to parent and alumni coaches, who will gladly give you feedback. Take the time between meetings to prayerfully incorporate that feedback in your speeches.

CONDUCT

Ex Nihilo club members and their families are expected to behave in a wholesome and winsome manner, thus representing themselves, their families, the club, and the Lord. To that end, all speeches should be God-honoring in their content and delivery. The club reserves the right to withdraw a student's submitted speech if it is deemed to be contrary to the purposes of the club.

All participants are expected to be familiar with the Speech and Debate codes of conduct found in Appendix C.

Ex Nihilo club members are expected to know the rules for the events in which they are participating. These rules can be found on the Stoa website.

PARTNERSHIPS

Members competing in Duo events (Duo Interpretation, Team Policy, and Parliamentary Debate) must partner with students from the club unless the coach for that specific event gives prior approval.

TOURNAMENTS

Participation in Stoa tournaments requires a commitment by the parent to fulfill the judging requirements set by each tournament. Please ensure that you are able to fulfill the judging requirements before signing up a student for competition. Stoa tournaments are not a Drop Off event. Parents or an adult designee are expected to be on the tournament premises unless prior arrangements are made through the club leadership.

Appendix A – Skills Development

The world of Speech and Debate can be somewhat intimidating at first glance. With its own vocabulary and culture, sorting it all out and making decisions can be overwhelming. Below are some reasons why competitive forensics makes for a better-rounded student.

In addition to the objective skill your student can develop, competitive forensics will round out your student's academic transcript.

The list below can help you determine the area(s) of speech and debate you may want to pursue. Platform speeches, Interpretive speeches, Limited Preparation speeches and the three types of debate each offer a unique skill set that is highly desirable in today's world.

Individual Events (IE), or speeches, provide students the opportunity to inform, entertain, persuade, and enlighten their audiences with original material, interpretations of literature and responding to questions in impromptu style.

Debate is offered in three types, each with its own offering of skills. Team Policy (TP), perhaps the recommended choice for most beginners, provides the widest range of skills. The content and research are restricted by the debate topic, allowing for students to better focus on the basic mechanics of debate.

Lincoln Douglas Debate (LD) and Parliamentary Debate (Parli) both require a broader knowledge of diverse subjects and the ability and confidence to engage in an impromptu style of speaking. While the debate topic for Lincoln Douglas (and Team Policy) changes each year, allowing ample time for preparation, the debate topic for Parli changes each debate round!

Don't be afraid to ask for help from other, more experienced competitors and parents. Remember that we are in this journey together.

The skills gained through Stoa Speech & Debate include:

1. Interpreting literature
2. Coordinating rehearsed presentation
3. Defending Christian theological concepts
4. Doing research
5. Analyzing data
6. Evaluating sources of information
7. Writing summary briefs of information
8. Writing speeches
9. Delivering a memorized speech
10. Persuading an audience through platform speaking
11. Defending points of view under cross examination
12. Defending points of view with impromptu speeches
13. Weighing values using general knowledge
14. Weighing policy issues through a forensic process
15. Using evidence in speeches

Appendix B – Stoa Statement of Faith

Stoa's Statement of Faith

1. There is one God eternally existing in three persons: the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 3:16, Matthew 28:19, John 10:30, 2 Corinthians 13:14)

2. Man is sinful and therefore separated from God, who is holy and perfect.
(Isaiah 53:5-9, Romans 3:23, I Peter 1:15-16)

3. Jesus Christ paid the eternal penalties for our sin through His death on the cross.
(Luke 24:46, I Peter 2:21)

4. Jesus Christ also resurrected bodily and ascended into heaven and will return one day to fulfill His kingdom. (Matthew 28:6, Revelation 19:11)

5. Only through Jesus Christ and the grace of His provision of salvation, may we be saved from eternal punishment, enter into God's family and receive eternal life.
(Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 6:23, Romans 8:11, I John 1:9)

6. The Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible and authoritative Word of God and the truth for Christian faith and practice.
(2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21, John 17:17, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, Psalm 19:7-11, John 6:67-69)

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Appendix C – Speech and Debate Code of Conduct

I will conduct myself in a professional, Christ-like manner in all my interactions at club and at tournaments, especially with judges, parents, and opposing teams.

SPEECH CODE OF CODUCT

I will NOT complain about judges, ever, anywhere.

I will take responsibility for my rankings and not blame others.

Recognizing that being part of Ex Nihilo is a privilege and provides many benefits:

- I will remain teachable and listen carefully to constructive criticism.
- I will respect the opinions of others even if I don't agree with them.
- I will be responsible to carefully consider feedback and implement changes to my speech with the goal of consistent improvement.

Recognizing how I relate to my partner reflects my character:

- I will seek agreement with my partner regarding frequency of practice, goals for the speech, and individual responsibilities (who does what).
- I will remain committed to my partner throughout the speech season. I will NOT blame my partner for any given performance.
- I will maintain a team spirit through critiques and performances.

DEBATE CODE OF CODUCT

I will NOT complain about judges, ever, anywhere.

I will take responsibility for my losses and not blame my partner, the judge(s), or the opposing team.

All evidence violations (i.e. changing the original meaning of a piece of evidence) will be raised AFTER the round, first with my coach and then with a tournament official (with my coach's approval).

I will follow the Stoa Standards of Evidence.

I will share all of my assigned research with the club.

I will NOT share any information about my fellow club members' cases and arguments with anyone outside the club without their or the head coach's permission.

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I will NOT share any flows/case information Ex Nihilo has accumulated with anyone outside the club without the head coach's permission.

I will NOT share any evidence with anyone outside the club without the head coach's permission.

I will accurately quote my evidence.

I will NOT cut my evidence to change the meaning/intent.

I will NOT take evidence out of context.

I will have a complete citation for every piece of evidence available on paper with me when I use it in a round.

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Appendix D – Governance and Operations

The membership of the Ex Nihilo Board of Directors consists of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. For functions necessary to the execution of the Ex Nihilo mission, Officers are assigned on an as needed basis, such as the Point Loma Classic Tournament Director. All assigned officers report directly to the Ex Nihilo BOD.

Any money earned through club activities including hosting tournaments will be used to pay for the club's operating expenses, sending active competitors to speech and debate camps, active parents to the annual Stoa Academy, and any other scholarship opportunities the BOD determines as appropriate.

The lifespan of a family in speech and debate is often limited to competitive involvement of the family's students, usually, not more than a few years. Therefore, Ex Nihilo works to ensure that parents are always being trained in the various responsibilities of governing and running the club so as to promote the long-term viability of the club. To that extent, Ex Nihilo actively seeks out parents to train them in the various leadership positions within the club.

As a club, we not only value the role Ex Nihilo parents play in running the club and tournaments, we absolutely depend on them to ensure the success of our endeavors. Therefore, the members of the Ex Nihilo BOD includes both husbands and wives, with each family represented on the Ex Nihilo BOD having just one vote. Emeritus Members of the BOD serve in an advisory capacity and do not have a vote.

Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, the following Ex Nihilo parents will be serving on the Ex Nihilo BOD.

President – Steve Hosmer

Vice President – Ben Hodge

Secretary – Andy Weld

Treasurer – Daniel Hefner

Members – Monique Hosmer, Susanna Hodge, Emily Weld, Josh and Jessica Halfpap, and Hillary Hefner

Emeritus Members – Scott and Mary York, and Alex and Susan Arroyave

Officers

Southern California Classic Tournament

Tournament Director – Steve Hosmer

Assistant Tournament Director – Ben Hodge

Administrative Director – Jessica Halfpap

EX NIHILO SPEECH AND DEBATE CLUB

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Club Information

Ex Nihilo Speech and Debate Club

La Mesa, CA

www.nihilo.club

Glossary of Terms

Ballot – a sheet of paper on which judges give feedback and record evaluations for each competitor

Break – to make it past the preliminary rounds in a tournament; all rounds after prelims

Flowing – the term used for note taking during a debate round

Flowsheet – the notes taken during a debate round

Green Check Mark – the symbol awarded to speeches and debate records that rank at or above a prescribed percentage in their category at a specific tournament. Percentages are established by Stoa prior to season start.

Individual Events (IE) – another name for speech events (usually used at a tournament)

Interpretative speech (Interp) – a category of speeches that creatively explores and develops the intellectual, emotional, and artistic embodiment of a piece of literature (theater of the mind) without using costumes, props and scenery

Impromptu speech (IMP) – in Impromptu speaking the speaker is given two (2) minutes to prepare a speech on a randomly drawn quotation or topic; the goal is to create a polished speaker who is able to give an original, spontaneously prepared speech within the room, using the selected topic as the central theme

Limited-preparation speech – an original speech, prepared on the spot; the student will pick three topics from an envelope, choose one, and return the other two; each speech should be a fresh, unique, original presentation which is developed from the chosen topic

National Open Tournament – a qualifying tournament that is open to any Stoa member (note that most, if not all, Stoa tournaments are national opens)

NITOC – the National Invitational Tournament of Champions which marks the end of the competitive season; in order to qualify for competition at NITOC, students must receive two green check marks in a specific category at prior tournaments

Outrounds – after preliminary rounds in a tournament, students ranked high enough in their events at that tournament, qualify to continue competing

Platform speech – a category of speeches that is researched and written by the student and is not literary in nature

Posting – the competition schedule posted prior to the beginning of each round of competition; it generally contains the name of the event, a list of speakers and their order, and the room number where the competition takes place

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Qualifying tournament – an official tournament sanctioned by Stoa

Resolution – the topic of a particular debate

Round – a cycle/session within a tournament; early rounds are called preliminary (prelims); later rounds are called outrounds (debate), quarter-finals, semi-finals, or finals

Round Robin – a practice tournament

Tab – the people involved in calculating the results for the tournament (tabulation)

Wildcard Event – seasonal speech events that are specific for a particular tournament year; the 2024-2025 Wildcard individual event is Slam Poetry