



Summer Camp 2024

Camp Syllabus RDI Overnight Camp

Camp	Location	Dates	Age Groups	Price
RDI Overnight Camp	Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)	July 28 - August 4 Sunday to Sunday (7 Nights)	High School (ages 13-17)	\$1,400

Camp Description

Richmond Debate Institute's (RDI) Overnight Summer Debate Camp is held at Virginia Commonwealth University and provides high-quality, interactive instruction centered around competitive speech and debate. Since 2018, we have welcomed both students completely new to the activity and seasoned veterans who are looking to take their skills to the next level. Our camp separates students into novice, intermediate, and varsity "labs" where they navigate our curriculum, and culminates in the RDI annual championship tournament on the final day of camp. Residential students immerse themselves in a collegiate environment with modern dorm facilities, and participate in evening after-camp activities and team social events.

Learning Objectives

- Introduce new students to competitive speech and debate and the wide variety of events available (RDI specializes in Public Forum, Lincoln Douglas, Congressional Debate, and all Speech events).
- Identify areas of growth and create an action plan for students with previous speech and debate experience.
- Develop argumentation fundamentals and debate competencies.
- Enhance research skills, including source validity and analysis.
- Strengthen quick-thinking with cross-examination drills.
- Improve public speaking skills: volume, intonation, and fluency.

Residential Activities

- Stay at VCU's modern Gladding Residence Center (GRC).
- Tour of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA).
- Evening study sessions at VCU's Cabell Library.
- Office Hours with resident instructors over thought-provoking topics.



- Movie nights, game rooms, and arcade sports.
- College & career readiness workshops and advising.
- Outdoor exercise and recreation opportunities.

Speech & Debate Categories Offered

- **Public Forum Debate (PF):** PF is a 2 v. 2 event, meaning you have a partner (students can either come to RDI with their partner or be partnered up at camp). Topics (called resolutions) are based on current events and change each month. PF is fact, evidence, and reasoning-based. Students write constructive speeches both for and against the resolution that lay the foundation for the debate. They then learn strategies on how to refute the arguments from the other side, and organize that speech giving off-the-cuff rebuttals, summarizing the debate into key issues, and a final focus on key voting issues.
- **Lincoln Douglas Debate (LD):** LD is a 1 v. 1 event, where students debate a resolution for two months. LD resolutions focus on conflicting values of social and philosophical issues by having students examine questions of morality, ethics, and justice, and students will prepare for both sides. Students will write constructive speeches, and learn strategies for refutation and off-the-cuff rebuttals.
- **Congressional Debate:** Congressional Debate is an event that emulates the US House of Representatives. Students draft proposed laws as 1/2 page - 1 page documents that identify problems in society and a proposed solution, and they will debate these proposals and vote to pass or fail. Competitors are given three minutes maximum to speak on each item, followed by a cross-examination period. Congressional Debate uses parliamentary procedure, so students will also learn “motions”, all skills important in the political and corporate world.
- **Speech Formats:** There are three main categories within Speech:
 1. Limited Preparation Events - Events like Extemporaneous Speaking and Impromptu Speaking help develop the ability to think on your feet, become well-read about current events, and organize your thoughts around a particular theme.
 2. Platform Events - Student-written events like Original Oratory (persuasive, argument-driven speaking) and Informative Speaking (educational speaking) allow students to speak about topics and causes they are passionate about, and develop strong writing and delivery skills.
 3. Interpretation Events - Whether it be humorous, dramatic, poetry, or storytelling, interpretation events allow students to select and perform published material, and appeal to many who enjoy theatre and acting.



Project–Final: RDI Tournament

On the final camp day, students will compete in a full-day speech and debate tournament. Students will go head-to-head with their peers to give them competition experience, as well as written evaluations in the form of ballots they can use moving forward. At the end of the tournament, RDI will host an awards ceremony that highlights student performance with certificates and awards for the highest-achieving students. Parents and families are invited to volunteer as parent judges (we provide judge training in the morning) and to our award ceremony to celebrate their student's progress and enjoy picture-taking opportunities.

Varsity Students

Varsity students attending our camp will be organized in separate labs and navigated by collegiate debaters and seasoned coaches. Varsity students will have a curriculum catered toward them developing the necessary skills and knowledge base to contend on the national circuit. Varsity Public Forum debaters will learn advanced debate techniques and tech debate. Varsity Lincoln Douglas students will learn both traditional and progressive debate techniques.

Debate Topics

Our camp topic is chosen during the summer when the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) announces the Public Forum and Lincoln Douglas topics. Topics will be released on our social media this July.

Course Expectations

Participation

In each course, students will actively engage in both large and small group discussions and debate with their peers, so regular attendance and participation are expected. This also means preparing each night for the following day so you are making accelerated progress.

Collaboration

Collaboration is a cornerstone of competitive speech and debate. Throughout the course, students will learn how to work as a team and have active listening skills to develop and defend their position through research and discourse. Students should come prepared to work together with their peers and be open to new ideas and approaches.



Research

Students are expected to have a basic understanding of internet use for research and analyzing sources. Each course will delve deeper into research skills, finding the best, most compelling sources, and strategies to strengthen their position.

Attendance & Punctuality

Day campers are expected to arrive before 9 am and residential campers are expected to be on time and present for all classes and events at their given call times. Instructors will begin classes promptly at the scheduled times and expect students to be ready to learn.

Technology & Computer Use

Technology will be an important tool in this course but should be used thoughtfully and appropriately. Students are expected to remain focused and on task while working on their computers and stick to sites that support their research. For students to fully take advantage of our program, they should bring a computer or tablet with a keyboard each day. Off-task or inappropriate use of technology will not be tolerated.

Required Materials

All students should come prepared with a laptop and charger, paper or notebook, pens or pencils, and a reusable water bottle. Please charge your laptop each night before class as there may not be enough outlets for many students to use at once.

Assignments

Homework will be assigned and will include activities such as readings, research, writing assignments, and preparation for class speaking activities and debates. It is expected that all homework assignments will be completed on time and to the best of your ability. Instructors will assign and review student assignments and progress daily.

Grading

No formal grades are given within this camp, however instructors will review assignments to progress through our curriculum. During RDI's final tournament, students are given awards and recognized for their performance.

Instructor information

Details about RDI's experienced instructors may be found on our website under "About Us". Guest lecturers will be announced on the website before the start of camp. RDI can be reached anytime by email: Operations@RichmondDebate.com.