# Moderator Training LWVGH (revised January 2022)
## Questions and Formats

I. **Asking good questions** [more to add/edit ]

    a. Avoid leading questions
- i. Q1. "Don't you think CT would be better off with a climate change resolution that bans fossil fuels?"
- ii. What about "do you think…?"
- iii. "What is your opinion on banning fossil fuels by…?"
- iv. "Are you for or against banning fossil fuels…? Explain."

    b. Fairness and consistency – things to watch out for
- i. Address people in the same manner (always formal or always first name)
- ii. Same time allowed for each candidate
- iii.

    c. Audience screened written questions – LWV or in cooperation with co-sponsor
- i. relevant to the office
- ii. policy not personal; avoid leading questions

If screening with political parties, be sure to have a representative from each on the screening team that has two or more LWV screeners who have the final word on appropriateness.

II. **Debate Formats – a sample summary**

    a. <u>Traditional or Formal:</u>  This kind of debate begins with a "proposition" or "resolution," a statement of opinion on an issue. Each candidate addresses the proposition in an opening statement/response; each candidate then has an opportunity to rebut or respond to the statement.

    b. <u>Question-and-Answer with Timed Responses</u>    This "classic" debate formula is perhaps the most familiar. A moderator or panelist addresses a question to a candidate and the candidate has a set time to respond.

    c. <u>Cumulative Time Format</u>    The League is indebted to Don Noel of The Hartford Courant for introducing us to the concept of cumulative time for debates. Over time our experience has led us to vary his approach somewhat but his original concept is still here.   Each candidate gets a bank of time (10 minutes).  When speaking, is timed by his or her own timekeeper and each cumulative time is kept.   This format encourages candidates to respond as briefly as desired on a topic deemed less important or on which there is no disagreement and to use the allotted time to discuss more fully subjects considered more important.  Each candidate has a set time, usually two minutes, for a closing statement.

d. <u>Modified Cumulative Time Format</u>  This format can be modified to fit most debates of any length of time.  Each candidate will answer each question in 2 minutes or less. A timer will hold up a card indicating the amount of time remaining at 30 seconds, 15 seconds and then 0. Each candidate will have a "bank" of time that can be drawn on to elaborate on a response or to use for rebuttals. All elaborations and rebuttals are deducted from bank time regardless of how much time was used to initially answer the question. The bank should be at least 2 minutes long and could be up to 15 minutes long.

e. <u>Round Robin Format</u> Source: Mark Russak presented this "Sample of a Round Robin Format" at the Voter Service Workshop at LWVCT Convention 2003. Preliminary Note: The problem with the Round-Robin format is that the candidates can not all be heard on all questions. However, the format works well for "issue" debates or forums (including those outside of election season), when the different parties have different views on a particular issue, such as charter revision, and where clarity may be increased by each side's selection of speakers on particular aspects of the issue being debated. Sample Round-Robin format for a 2-hour debate with 16 candidates. Seven issues will be addressed (more if time allows). 14 minutes will be allotted for each issue. One candidate from each party will be selected by lot to answer the first question and lot will also decide the order they will start. Each candidate will give a one-minute closing statement (optional). Lot will also decide the two candidates starting the closing statements.

f. "<u>Round Table Meeting</u>" Format In the Round Table Meeting format, tables are set up for the audience, and one or two candidates sit at each table and take audience questions for a set period of time. At the end of each time segment, the candidates rotate to the next table. This format is useful for giving large groups a chance to meet each candidate face-to-face and to focus on questions of personal interest.

RESOURCES: for the Full Booklets on debates

- Go to LWVCT.org
- Local Leagues
- League Resources
- Scroll down to LINKS (purple)
- 'How To' series: Debate Planning *and* Debate and Forum Formats