Stuff you need to Know when you Gonna PO (it's a rap!)

- Dress appropriately – nothing less than a suit and tie will do (for guys); ladies – a suit is almost essential.
- At the beginning of the session, introduce yourself and if you have been to big tournaments, brag; if not, tell them how glad you are to be there. Explain your gaveling procedure; then explain to them how you will select speakers and questioners. BE SURE THAT YOU HAVE A SEATING CHART. If the chart is not filled out, you should pass it around to the kids to fill out DURING your gaveling and selecting explanation. Collect the chart – you'll need it!
- Begin the session by saying, "The chair (that's you!) will entertain a motion to open the floor to debate." You are asking for someone to say either, "I so move," or "I move to open the floor to debate." When you get that motion say, "Is there a second?" After the second, say, "I declare that this (first/second) session of congress is now open."
- Begin the agenda by saying, "We will begin this session with A Bill (or A Resolution) [READ THE TITLE OF THE FIRST PIECE OF LEGISLATION HERE]. Is the author present?" When the author stands up, say, "For what purpose does the speaker rise?" He/she should say that he/she is the author so you say, "You may have the floor." At this time, sit down (usually at the teacher's desk). Your responsibility now is to time the speech and to keep track of recency. Each time a person gives a speech, you will assign them a number at the bottom of his/her name block on the seating chart. The first speaker of the session gets a 1, the second gets a 2, and so on. You will refer to these numbers when you have to choose who speaks next (the person with the lowest number has preference to speak). Also, remember to keep track of your gaveling. When the student has finished his/her speech, announce the time of the speech, "That speech was 2 minutes and 59 seconds long." One of two things will happen now: 1) The student will have used all of the time and there is none left for questioning so you say, "You may return to your seat with the thanks of the chair."; OR, there is time left for questioning or it is an authorship speech which requires a 2 minute questioning period so you say, " We are now in line for a {however much time is left or 2 minute} question and answer period. Anyone wishing to ask a question of the speaker, please rise at this time." Now you use geography to choose the questioners – you should have divided the classroom into 4 quadrants. You choose questioners located in different quadrants – you can go in a clockwise or counter-clockwise direction, in an X formation, or any other pattern that is fair and consistent. Be sure to put a hash mark for each question asked – these go in the seating chart box for each competitor – this is how you keep track of who asks questions a lot so that someone who has NO hash marks will be called upon before someone with a boatload of hash marks. Keep track of the time – YOU determine when the question and answer period ends. When time has elapsed, say, "The question and answer period has elapsed. You may return to your seat with the thanks of the chair."
- What happens next depends on where you are in the session. Here are the possible scenarios:

- o If the previous speech was an authorship speech, you say, "We are now in line for a negative speech. All those wishing to speak negatively, please rise at this time." Be sure to select the speaker based on recency, geography, and activity.
- o If the previous speech was a negative speech, you say, "We are now in line for an affirmative speech; anyone wishing to speak affirmatively, please rise at this time." See note above.
- o If you ask for speakers and there is a preponderance of speeches on one side or the other, say, "The chair frowns on a one-sided debate. I recommend that you call for the previous question, table the bill, or create a speech on the other side." If they keep only speaking on one side, you have the power to move to the previous question. Just be sure that those people who have speeches and haven't spoken yet get the chance to speak. Crying that their teacher requires them to speak twice is NOT a reason to allow the lop-sided debate to continue.

VOTING -
- o The previous question has been called or the debate has petered out so now you vote on the legislation.

    If they call the previous question, you say, "The question has been called. Is there a second?" If no one seconds, you say, "As there is no second, we will continue with speeches." You have to keep track of whether you left off on an aff or neg speech. I suggest that for each speech given, on a separate sheet of paper, write a shortened name for the bill and under that, write A and N for each speech given (either side by side or running down).

    If there IS a second, you say, "The previous question has been called and seconded. Anyone wishing to move to previous question, please rise at this time." ***Just a note here – The PBCFL does NOT allow congress to suspend the rules to vote by saying aye or nay or to raise hands on a vote. Don't allow them to try this!***Also, it is against PBCFL rules to suspend the rules to extend question and answer periods. If they try to do this, stop them, tell them that they are out of order because it is against PBCFL rules, and move on with the session.*** For the vote, say, "We will now vote on A Bill (read the entire bill or resolution title here). All those wishing to pass this bill, please rise at this time.'' Now you verbally count out the votes. Use the gavel to point at the students as you count them. Write the total on the board. Now say, "All those wishing to fail the bill, please rise at this time." Count it the same way you did before. Put the number on the board. Then say, "Abstentions?" – that means is there anyone who didn't vote? Put those on the board. Announce the decision – "By a vote of 12 to 6 to 1, the bill passes." Then move on to the next bill – "I will now open discussion on A Bill to (state the title of the bill). Is the author present?"

- Recesses – After about an hour of debate or as close to the conclusion of a bill (after the vote of one and before you begin another), ask the judges if they need a recess. If they do, say, "The chair will now entertain a motion to recess for 10 minutes. Do I hear such a motion?" If you don't, call a recess anyway. After a recess, say, "I call this session back to order."
- Personal privilege – You need to tell the chamber ONLY if this happens. If more than 2 people do the personal privilege – permission to exit chambers thing, tell them that you will only allow 2 representatives out of the room at a time and that they will have to wait until one of the people who left returns. Don't leave people standing at the doorway after they return. Get them back in as fast as possible.
- Amendments – I would be shocked if any novices bring up amendments, but if they do, they must be in writing, handed to you, and presented to the chamber during a negative speech. They must be properly worded and tell the chamber exactly what the amendment will do. After the amendment has been presented, you say, "We will now vote on whether to accept the amendment to this bill. All those in favor of adding this amendment to the bill, please rise at this time. All opposed, same sign. Abstentions? This amendment passes by a vote of [ ]. The bill, with its amendment, will now read (You read what the bill NOW says with the amend-ment)."
  If the amendment is failed, you say, "The amendment fails so we will continue to discuss this legislation in its original form."
- If you have a noisy or difficult house who do not respond to gaveling or being told that they are out of order, ask one of the Jupiter kids in the house to go to the Tab Room to find me and take me there. I'll fix it.
- What if you don't know something – try to wing it as best you can. Most of the novices and judges don't know the intricacies of debate so you are the authority in the room > what you say goes. Be sure to make your decisions based on fairness, because kids get very testy if they think that you are favoring others over them.

I'm brain dead, so if you think of anything I didn't, let me know and I'll add them to this after the fact. MT