

It's an important time of year for politics. The different candidates go head to head on all sorts of issues. But why do we have them? It's finally debate season, and this is Pop Poli.

Presidential debates are a big deal. It's a chance to hear the different candidates ideas about a range of different topics. It's also an opportunity to see them battle it out on stage for millions to see. More importantly, they are a chance to sway voters and help undecided votes pick a side.

But behind the intense questioning and fact-checking, everything is coordinated. From the type of microphone to the sides of the stage, they are all discussed between the two parties. However there are still some very important things that the candidates don't have control over. Like the questions.

[Lester Holt- 26:06 to 26:40]

The participants tonight are Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. This debate is sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization. The commission drafted tonight's format, and the rules have been agreed to by the campaigns.

The 90-minute debate is divided into six segments, each 15 minutes long. We'll explore three topic areas tonight: Achieving prosperity; America's direction; and securing America. At the start of each segment, I will ask the same lead-off question to both candidates, and they will each have up to two minutes to respond. From that point until the end of the segment, we'll have an open discussion.

The questions are mine and have not been shared with the commission or the campaigns. The audience here in the room has agreed to remain silent so that we can focus on what the candidates are saying.

The moderator for the first of the presidential debates was Lester Holt, the host of NBC Nightly News. Due to the nature of the questions, it can often be hard for candidate to prepare.

[DEBATE Interview- 2:33]

The candidates have some idea about the topic area even though they may not necessarily know the questions specifically.

Jacleen Joiner is the debate coach and an English teacher at Carmel High School.

[DEBATE Interview- 2:44]

The moderator forms questions based on what the voters think are the most important issues and so obviously the candidates would know to some measure what voters' expectations are. What voters' think are most important. So campaign managers will have them practice, do research. They have a whole team behind them, helping them get ready and sometimes the people within in the campaign act like the opposition and they go through the questions with the presidential candidates to make sure that they can stand up to those questions.

The question focus for this election is mainly on national security, taxes, and job development.

The candidates may talk a little about how to deal with the racial violence and education but the focus will most likely be on terrorism and the economy.

The debate on October fourth was different. It is known as the Vice President Debate. This year it was moderated by Elaine Quijano from CBS News. The debate is divided into nine time segments each about 10 mins long. It similar to the normal presidential debate but just for the vice presidents. It give the running mates the chance to show voters a different side of the candidates and clarify any policies that may be getting a lot of media attention or confusing in general.

For the October ninth debate, take everything about normal debates and throw it out the window. This debate is known as the Town Hall debate. The half the questions are asked by citizens who are uncommitted voters and the other half are questions are asked by the moderator of the debate. For the debate on the ninth it was Martha Raddatz from ABC “This Week” and Anderson Cooper of CNN. The questions from the moderators are based on topics that people have been talking about and have been getting a lot of media attention. This style of debate goes quicker since the candidates only have two minutes each to answer the question and another minute of the moderator to ask follow up questions.

[DEBATE Interview- 4:55]

They need to listen to the citizens, the voice of the citizens. What are they saying so that they can offer, um, so that they can stand up to that questioning period and to not just believe that because that they believe something that it is right but what are the expectations and what are the, um, what are the expectations of the citizens here and how are you going to offer to fix the problems that we currently face.

These question might be more personal for the citizens and possibly harder for the candidates who don't know the situation to answer.

For the October nineteenth debate, we go back to the normal presidential style with moderator-created questions. The moderator was Chris Wallace of Fox News Sunday.

Questions led the conversation during a debate. But they don't answer the question of why we have debates. Debates are change for the candidates to get together to talk about their views on the same topic. They are great for simplifying ideas since they both answer the same question.

Debates don't just happen with presidential candidates. Local elections have them too. If you are interested in the Indiana debates, check out [indiana debate commission dot com](http://indiana.debatecommission.com).

Will you be watching? I know I will. For WHJE, I'm Kendall Fahey with Pop Poli: A Podcast about Politics. For more stories like this and for more episodes of Pop Poli, visit [W-H-J-E dot com](http://W-H-J-E.com).