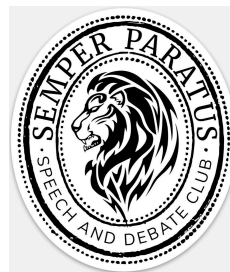


SEMPER PARATUS (Canton Campus) Family Handbook 2024-25



Welcome to SEMPER PARATUS Speech & Debate Club! Our Latin name means **Always Ready**. This reflects our club's mission for our students to fulfill the command found in 1 Peter 3:15 to "...always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you..."

The primary focus of our club is to enhance students' critical thinking & communication skills resulting in real-world application. This can be accomplished in the supportive and competitive environment of speech and debate. Our prayer is that the Lord will use these students to further His kingdom by living and articulating a Biblical worldview and the gospel message.

Club Details:

Meetings Day/Time: Thursdays - Alternate Speech/Debate 9-11:30

Lunch (optional but encouraged): 11:30-noon

Location: Grace Church PCA - 1160 Butterworth Rd, Canton, GA 30114

Registration Form: https://form.jotform.com/Unite_HSN/semper-paratus

Club Association with NCFCA:

SEMPER PARATUS functions in partnership with the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association (NCFCA, www.ncfca.org) and under the umbrella of Unite Homeschool. Parent & student volunteers provide weekly meetings to train students in speech and debate and encourage them to learn about the year's NCFCA resolution topic so that they can participate in NCFCA qualifying tournaments. Competition is an ESSENTIAL part of the experience as it provides a forum for students to practice and develop the skills taught in club. It is like a sport, in that practicing is for participating in the tournaments.

All club families are **REQUIRED** to affiliate with NCFCA by registering and paying an annual fee to compete in its sanctioned tournaments. Upon affiliation, you have access to hundreds of speech and debate resources. Office Depot/Max gives us a generous discount on copies and some products through a national account. Last year the earlybird rate of \$125 ended 31 Aug when the fee went up to \$160 per family. This date can vary slightly, so please check ncfca.org for updates. PLEASE AFFILIATE ASAP as there is an accountability date which will determine allocation of Region 8 nationals' slots. We will announce specific dates as they become available.

It is required that parents and students **READ** the League Handbook once it comes out in the Resource Library of your NCFCA portal.

Eligibility:

Participation is open to home-educated students no younger than 12 by Jan 1st 2025 and no older than 18 as of Sep 1st 2024. Eligibility is established by the NCFCA and can be found on ncfca.org in the FAQs.

Club Leadership:

Administrative Directors:

Karen Tryon
KarenT@unitehomeschool.org
214-403-6223
Kerri Whitacre
Kerri@unitehomeschool.org
253-441-1840

Speech Coaches:

Nina Wadzeck
nwadzeck@gmail.com
949-524-2050

Debate Coaches:

TBD

Club Communication:

The majority of club communication on the Unite Homeschool platform. Upon registration, you will receive a code for a free Unite Homeschool membership. Semper Paratus will have a Facebook-like private club group on that platform with the ability to share information, documents and calendar items among members. Parents and students should use unique emails to create their Unite Homeschool account. We will provide some training on how to use the platform during our club orientation in the fall. We prefer for students to have a gmail account as coaches typically share and receive documents via the Google apps.

Important Dates (subject to change)

Early Bird Registration:	now - Jul 15 th
Regular Registration:	ends Aug 1 st
Late Registration:	after Aug 15 th
Club orientation	Date TBD
Club Begins:	Sep 5 th - Both Speech and Debate
Debate Weeks:	Sep 12 th , Oct 3 th /17 th /31 st , Nov 14 th , Dec 5 th
Speech Weeks:	Sep 26 th , Oct 10 th /24 th , Nov 7 th /21 st , Dec 12 th
Fall (CCSD) Break:	Sep 19 th
Thanksgiving Break:	Nov 28 th
Christmas Break:	Dec 26 th
Optional (Pre-Competition):	Dec 19 th

Club will meet on an as needed basis in the Spring based on the tournament schedule. We will definitely not meet on the following days:

Winter Break:	Feb 20 th
Spring Break:	Apr 3 rd
Club Ends:	early May (based on NCFCA competition calendar)

Club Dues:

Club dues are collected at the time of registration and cover our curriculum costs, insurance, club events, and admin costs.

Yearly Club Membership Fee:

- \$50 for speech OR debate only students
- \$75 for speech and debate students
- \$10 sibling discount
- \$15 early registration family discount (if paperwork/fees in by Jul 1st)
- \$15 late registration fee (if paperwork/fees in after Aug 15th)
- \$150 max per family

Club Curriculum:

- Team Policy Debate:
 - Sourcebook TBD
- Lincoln Douglas Debate:
 - Lasting Impact Guidebook
- Optional speech & debate resources: <https://monumentpublishing.com/> *Highly recommended for Team Policy Debate
- Apologetics:
 - Fearless Apologetics Basic Competitive Package (Student Workbook & Online Videos):
<https://www.theapollosproject.com/product/fearless-apologetics-basic-competitive-package/> *Highly Encouraged*
 - Apologetics Journal available on NCFCA Shop

Picture Policy:

You are encouraged to take lots of pictures of club activities, however, if you have a picture that includes someone outside your family, you must get their permission prior to posting it on any social media platform. The only exception will be the Unite Homeschool platform where you can upload pictures that only our group will be able to see.

Student Commitment and Expectations:

Time Commitment: Participation in debate requires more time than speech. Students must be committed to attending weekly club meetings and be willing to research, study, and practice at home to improve their skills. This often entails several hours of work outside club each week for debate, less for speech. It is possible for a student to compete in debate while only taking time outside club to write their case, which can take only a few weeks. However, to be competitive, continued research is necessary. Commitment levels vary. Some debaters spend hours each week researching and refining their case. Many others do not. It should be understood, the amount of time a student spends depends on level of interest and an agreement with their team partner.

For speech, the goal in the fall is for the students to prepare their speeches to be ready for competition starting in January. It is a process, and it is imperative that students complete their assigned homework each week for optimum results.

Debate Team Commitment: This topic ties very closely to time commitment. Team Policy debaters should understand that they have made a commitment to their partner to work hard and seek to improve for the benefit of the team. Students should not expect to get full value from the debate experience unless they are willing to research. Teams should carefully discuss interest levels, burden sharing, and mutually determine their team's commitment level.

Travel Commitment: Competitiveness in this league will require travel. The minimum we ask from our club members is to participate in ONE the regional qualifying tournament, however, it is highly encouraged to participate in as many as possible. Tournaments are the primary catalyst in a student's growth as a speaker. There will be 3 regional qualifier opportunities in addition to several online and in-person national opens and regional mixers. You can *estimate* one tournament about every two to four weeks Jan-April plus the Region 8 Championship (for those who have qualified) in late Apr/early May.

Skills gained are directly proportional to the number of tournaments in which a student competes. The PURPOSE of club and practice time is that of preparing students to COMPETE in the tournaments. This is not just a "club", but competitive forensics.

Parental Participation and Responsibility-In Club:

Parental involvement is crucial for the success of your student, as well as the club itself. As with any activity, the more time and energy a parent spends in the activity, the more successful the student is likely to be. Your input is valuable! Active involvement will give parents the opportunity to learn speech and debate *language* alongside the student, enabling you to help your student develop and improve.

1. Parents are REQUIRED to attend weekly club meetings. We know many of you have younger children and plan to set up a rotating schedule of moms to watch them during club. Please discuss any circumstances that arise necessitating a parent's absence with your student's coach.
2. This is a completely volunteer organization. We ask that parents serve in some capacity to help make this a great club that students look forward to participating in. There are a list of ways you can serve on the membership application.
3. Parents will hold their students accountable to prepare assignments for club meetings, to adhere to dress codes, and the student code of conduct.
4. Parents are responsible for their student's own financial needs required to participation in club and tournaments.
5. Parents will strive to do all they can to have good relationships with all the members and families in the club.

Tournaments and Participation:

There is an official chaperone policy with the NCFCA which you can access once you are affiliated as are all policies in the Affiliate Handbook. First-year parents, we recommend you do as much judging as possible so you can learn that much more to help your students. For families that have been in a year or two, if you would like to be trained in a tournament job, we encourage that. In coordinating a tournament, there are many different volunteer opportunities that must be filled by the parents. The tasks are straight-forward and require very little "advance preparation" time. After experiencing multiple tournaments, there is an expectation that the parents will

“progress” to taking on more significant volunteer/staff positions. It should be noted that we “graduate” parents out of debate every year and those roles need to be re-filled.

Remember, *none* of our children can “compete” in a tournament unless there are judges. While these are *mainly parents*, there is a goal to additionally recruit community judges that are friends, relatives, friends of friends, church acquaintances, etc. For out of town tournaments the burden is on the local host, but parents, or other chaperones provide most of the judges in addition to the local club. *Local parents* hosting the event are typically staffing. Remember, this is an all-volunteer organization and our children have this opportunity because we all work together. Plus, it is fun!

Tournament Dress Code:

Please be aware that there is an official dress code for tournaments (details in the League Handbook which is linked on the first page). In general, the competitors must wear business attire, and if they do not have the appropriate attire, they can be disqualified from the round.

League and Club Statement of Faith:

Families and students of Semper Paratus need to agree with an evangelical Statement of Faith that is posted on the NCFCA website. Students and their parents should be aware that this is the foundation from which the club is ordered. Students participate in devotions and prayer at the beginning of each club meeting. We are uniquely Christian in our worldview and approach and recruit like-minded families. Please see <https://www.ncfca.org/about/foundational-beliefs/> for more information.

SEMPER PARATUS Code of Conduct

We want our group to reflect a high standard of excellence in word, deed, speech, and conduct. It is our desire to see our group grow in grace in the Lord and in friendship with one another. In viewing our relationship to one another we want to honor each other and treat one another, as brothers and sisters in Christ as well as respect those in authority.

We would appreciate the following:

1. Participants will be punctual and eager to learn.
2. Students will put away cell phones and computers unless required for club participation.
3. Students will be courteous towards fellow members. Coaches will not tolerate demeaning comments of other students. If a student is found engaging in such behavior, he will be reprimanded. Upon repeated conduct, there will be a meeting with parents to discuss correction.
4. Students will participate in all club activities and assignments unless previously discussed with the coach.
5. We follow the “more than two” rule. In essence, no adult should ever be alone with any child under 18 except their own. Adult coaches and parents should not enter a classroom if only one student is present and vice-versa.
6. Any conflicts that arise between club members/families should be handled based on the model found in Matthew 18:15-17. If a problem arises, the offended party should confront go to the person who offended him/her directly first. Then, if the issue is not resolved, the matter should be brought to the attention of club leadership, and we will do our best to settle the conflict in a Christ-like manner.
7. Attire will be modest, respectable, and conservative at *all* club functions.

General and Social Functions:

Gentlemen - Pants or modest shorts; T-shirts, polo's acceptable. No muscle shirts, saggy jeans, or jeans with holes.

All ladies - Modest tops with no: midriff showing, spaghetti straps, low-cut or excessively tight shirts or blouses. Appropriate shorts, skirts (knee length), pants, or jeans. Please make sure that hair is out of the eyes and not a distraction.

8. No two students of opposite gender shall be alone or out of sight of others; there should be no “flirtatious” conduct. If in a classroom, doors must be left open.

Semper Paratus recognizes that these standards are different from the world. We have a high calling to fulfill and we believe that there are many blessings and rewards to experience when we choose the “narrow path” and the “high road”.

Someone once said, “Where there are high expectations, there can be high achievements.” This is how great leaders are developed.

We are honored to have each family in our club and expect great things as we grow, work, and learn together. Your support and backing for our efforts is much appreciated.