

Rules of the Debate

The first 2004 presidential debate takes place tonight at 9 at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Fla. News commentator Jim Lehrer will moderate the 90-minute debate. All broadcast and cable news networks will provide coverage.



The candidates may have **paper and pens** at their lecterns for taking notes but nothing else.



The layout
On a verbal cue by the moderator, the candidates proceed to center stage, shake hands and go directly to their lecterns. They may not leave their lecterns for the duration of the debate.

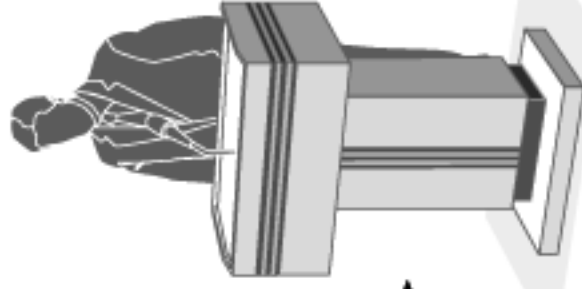
The lecterns measure 50 inches from the stage floor. They are 10 feet apart and equally turned toward the center of the stage.

The moderator sits at a desk in front of the two candidates at an equal distance from both lecterns.

50 inches

10 feet

TV cameras will be locked into place during all debates but can tilt and rotate as needed. Cameras at the back of the stage will be used only to take shots of the moderator.



Questions and responses

The winner of a coin toss before the debate will decide whether to field the first question. The candidates will not make opening statements.



QUESTION

1

The moderator asks one of the candidates a question on foreign policy or homeland security.

The moderator enforces time limits. There is no audience participation.



RESPONSE

2

The candidate has two minutes to respond to the question.

2 minutes

Candidate 1 response

3

Then other candidate may comment on the question or the first candidate's response for 1½ minutes. They may not ask each other questions.

1½ minutes

Candidate 2 comment

4

The moderator may extend the discussion of the topic, with each candidate getting no more than an additional 30 seconds.

30 sec.

Possible extension

CLOSING

5

The moderator repeats this format with a different question. He alternates candidates each time. The candidates will address at least 16 questions.

6

After the question period ends, each candidate may make a closing statement for as many as two minutes.