

The National Debate Project's



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with

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NDP  
National Debate Project

Georgia State  
University

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# Contents

What Is Debate? .....	2
Speech Cheat Sheet .....	5
The Constructive Speeches .....	8
The Rebuttals .....	9
Flowing Tips .....	10
Symbols and Abbreviations.....	11
This Is What It Sounds Like In a Speech.....	12
This Is What It Looks Like On the Flow.....	13
Introduction to Speaking Style .....	14
Delivery and Staying "In Shape" for Debate .....	17
Cross-Examination.....	20
Case Attacks .....	25
Disadvantages .....	26
Answers to Disadvantages .....	28
Topicality .....	29
Answering Topicality .....	31
Critiques.....	33
Answering Critiques .....	35
Running Counterplans.....	36
Answering Counterplans.....	37
How to Give Good Rebuttals.....	38
The First Negative Rebuttal.....	39
The First Affirmative Rebuttal .....	40
The Second Negative Rebuttal .....	41
The Second Affirmative Rebuttal.....	43
Strategic Considerations for Rebuttals.....	44
Checklist for Winning and Losing .....	45
Cutting Cards and Citing Evidence .....	47
Guidelines for Briefing.....	48
A Sample Brief .....	49
Glossary: Boring Words You Need to Know .....	50

# What Is Debate?

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Everyone knows what a debate is. You see debates every day. Presidential candidates have debates, senators have debates, sports commentators have debates, and even normal people at parties have debates about important topics like whether potato chips are better than French fries. And what about you? You have debates too, whether you know it or not. You and your friends might debate about a favorite athlete, or which rapper is better, whose fashion sense is the best, or whose momma is fattest.

This manual is not about those kinds of debate (though the experience you already have at debating with your friends will be very useful). The point of this document is to teach you about competitive policy debate, which is a formal kind of debate that deals with questions of change. One of the most important questions we ask ourselves (and each other) every day is “what should we do”? We ask what should be done about simple issues, like finding something to eat for dinner, and we ask what should be done about complex social questions like racism or war. Policy debate tends to be about those larger kinds of questions. Still, this doesn’t necessarily tell you what debate is. It’s time for a real definition of policy debate.

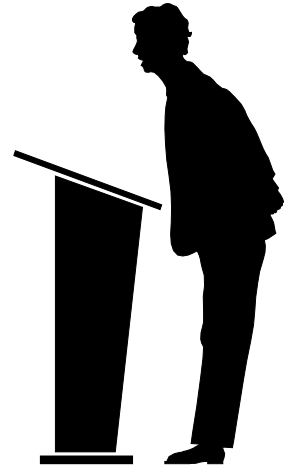
## Debate Is a Game

Wait, that’s it? That’s the great definition we promised you? Yes. Oh, don’t worry, we’re going to say more about what debate is later. At the beginning, though, it is important to understand that, whatever else debate is, it is a game. It has teams, points, winners, losers, tournaments, and trophies. Like many games, it is not always fair (even though we try hard to make it fair). Most importantly, debate is supposed to be fun. Keep that in mind.

The easiest way to begin understanding debate is for us to describe how the game is played – its basic structure and rules.

## The Players

A single debate team is composed of two people. That means that you will work with a partner. A round of debate competition involves two teams competing against each other. The winner of the round is determined by at least one judge who watches the debate. Sometimes there will be more than one judge, and there will almost always be an odd number of judges. The debaters are usually students, and the judge might be a teacher, debate coach, graduate student, former debater, or some other person (like a parent or a community member). Judges may or may not have extensive debate experience (although most college judges do).



## The Topic

At the beginning of the year, a policy debate topic is chosen for the entire country. One topic is chosen for college, and one for high school. K-8 debaters usually debate about the high school topic. How are these topics chosen? The processes differ from high school to college, and there are many committees, procedures, and votes. In the end, representatives from the debate community pick a topic that is timely and deals with an issue of national concern.

The point is that there is one topic for every debate season (starting in the Fall at the beginning of school and ending in the Spring or Summer). Students debate about this one topic for the entire school year, which may seem like a long time, but the topic is designed to be interesting and flexible enough to keep you involved for a long time. The debate topic is called “the resolution” because it takes the form of a kind of proposal for change that might be made by a politician or a diplomat in congress or the United Nations. This means that the resolution

(the topic) does not look or sound like a question – it looks and sounds like a statement. Instead of asking “what should we do about racism?” (for example) a debate resolution would say “we should pass better laws to punish businesses that have racist hiring practices.” Just to make sure that you know a debate resolution when you see it, we start every topic with the word “resolved.” So, continuing the example above, a debate resolution might be something like “Resolved: that the United States Federal Government should enact a policy to eliminate racist hiring practices in the United States.” Some resolutions deal with problems within the U.S., while others deal with international issues or foreign policy.

### The Structure of a Debate Round

The two debate teams who are competing against each other have specific jobs to do. One team’s job is to argue that the resolution – the statement that we should make some specific change to address a national or international problem – is a good idea. We call that team “the affirmative” because it is their job to *affirm* the idea of the resolution. The other team’s job is to argue that the resolution is a bad idea. We call that team “the negative” because it is their job to *negate* the idea of the resolution. One team is for the kind of change described in the resolution, the other team is against that kind of change.

An important thing to know is that the affirmative usually proposes a very specific policy called the “plan.” So, if the resolution says the U.S. should enact a policy about racism, the affirmative has to come up with a specific proposal, or plan.

Will you be affirmative or negative? Well, there’s the interesting part – in some debate rounds, you will be the affirmative, and in other rounds you will be the negative. We’ll talk about debate tournaments more in just a minute, but get ready for the idea that you will learn to debate both sides of the resolution!

In a single round of debate competition, each person gives two speech-

es. The first speech each person gives is called a “constructive” speech, because it is the speech where each person *constructs* the basic arguments they will make throughout the debate. The second speech is called a “rebuttal,” because this is the speech where each person tries to *rebut* (or answer) the arguments made by the other team, while using their own arguments to try to convince the judge to vote for their team.

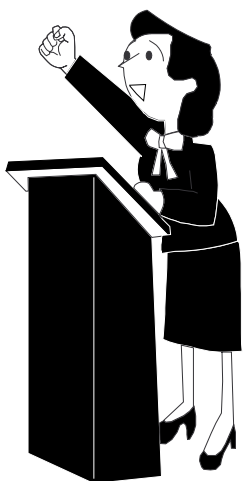
The affirmative has to convince the judge to vote for a change, which makes their job hard since people are usually unwilling to do things differently. Because we recognize this difficulty, the affirmative gets to speak first *and* last – this makes them kind of like the prosecution in a criminal trial, trying to overcome the presumption of innocence. The order of speeches in a debate is listed in the box to the right.

What do all these numbers and letters mean? Well, each debater on a team is either the first speaker or the second speaker. That is to say, a single debater gives the first constructive speech AND the first rebuttal speech. The other debater gives the second constructive speech AND the second rebuttal speech. The numbers in the list above indicate which debater we are talking about (the first or the second), the letters indicate what team the person is on (affirmative or negative) and what speech the person is giving (constructive or rebuttal). Thus, 1AC means “first affirmative constructive” and 2NR means “second negative rebuttal.”

But wait, there’s more. In a debate round, you don’t just get to give speeches. You also get to ask questions. Each debater gets to spend a period of time (usually 3 minutes) asking one

## Speeches In a Debate

- 1AC
- Cross-Ex
- 1NC
- Cross-Ex
- 2AC
- Cross-Ex
- 2NC
- Cross-Ex
- 1NR
- 1AR
- 2NR
- 2AR



of the debaters on the other team questions. We call this question-and-answer period “cross-examination” because it’s a lot like the time during a trial when a lawyer asks a witness for the other side questions. There is one cross-examination period *after* each *constructive* speech. The person who just finished speaking answers the questions. That makes sense, since the point of the cross-examination is to talk about the speech that just ended. The person on the other team who is *not about to speak* asks the questions. So, when the IAC is over the second negative speaker asks the questions and the first affirmative speaker answers the questions.

### Debate Tournaments

Debate tournaments are held so that students from different schools can get together at a central location in order to compete against one another. This brings us to one of the most important things about competitive policy debate: teams from the same school almost never debate against one another at a tournament. The point of having a tournament is to allow many different two-person debate teams from many different schools to compete without having to debate against people from their own schools. One school (or some other debate-related organization) usually hosts a tournament and invites schools from all over the area (and sometimes all over the country) to come debate.

Going to a debate tournament means that you and your partner will debate several times. Everyone at the tournament debates for a certain number of rounds. At the end of this preliminary series of debates (or “prelims”), the teams with the best records advance to the elimination debates (or “elims”), where they continue

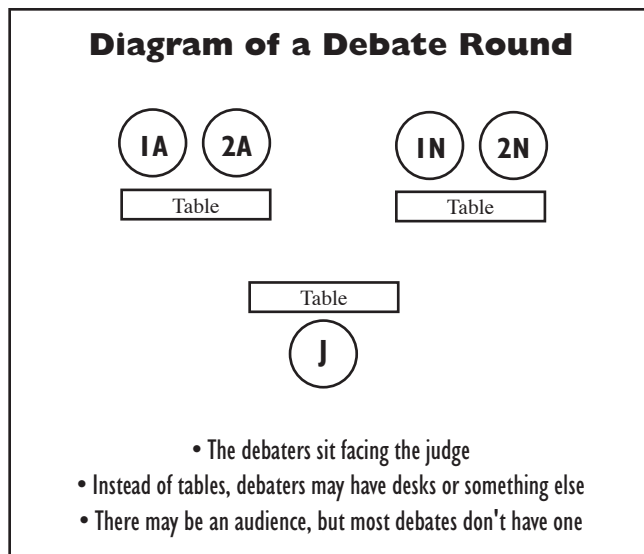
to compete in a single-elimination format until a single team is crowned champion. Tournaments usually have 4 or 6 prelims, though college tournaments might have as many as 8. An individual team will debate half their prelim rounds on the affirmative and half on the negative. So, in a tournament with 6 prelim rounds, you and your partner would be affirmative 3 times and negative 3 times.

If this whole situation sounds really complicated, don’t worry. You and your partner will not have to deal with the complicated part. Instead, when you arrive at the tournament, you will be given a piece of paper that tells you who you and your partner are debating in the first debate round, what side you are debating on (affirmative or negative), who is judging you, and what room you are debating in.. This piece of paper is called a “pairing” or a “schematic.” Before every round, you will receive another pairing that tells you where to go and who to debate. Remember that debate tournaments

can be busy and confusing places, so you may have to find the pairings yourself if no one shows you where they are. There may not be enough copies of the pairing for everyone, so bring writing supplies to copy down your own information for each round.

Pairings will usually tell you when each round is supposed to begin. However, a debate

round cannot start until both teams (all 4 debaters) and the judge are present in the room. Teams and judges are sometimes late, so do not assume that your debate has been cancelled if the other participants are not there when you arrive. Most students do not have a clear idea of what to do in the first few debate rounds. If you get confused, don’t hesitate to ask the judge for help.



# Speech Cheat Sheet

## Speech Order and Responsibilities

(all speech times in minutes)

### CONSTRUCTIVE SPEECHES

	Jr. High	H.S.	College
IAC — Read the case and plan. ....	4/5	8	9
CX — 2NC asks the questions .....	2	3	3
INC — Present the disadvantage shells first, if time permits, case arguments .....	4	8	9
CX — IAC asks the questions .....	2	3	3
2AC — Answer ALL negative arguments. Rebuild and strengthen the case. ....	4	8	9
Point out arguments that the negative has not attacked.			
CX — INC asks the questions .....	2	3	3
2NC — Present any additional case arguments not covered by INC.....	4	8	9
Remember to take only part of the negative arguments — leave some for the INR speech			

### REBUTTAL SPEECHES

INR — Present all other negative arguments not covered in the 2NC. Do not present the same arguments as your partner. Decide ahead of time who will cover which arguments. ....	2	5	6
IAR — Answer ALL of the negative arguments from both the 2NC and the INR. ....	2	5	6
Any dropped argument could mean a negative victory.			
2NR — Pick a few arguments that you think the negative side is winning and concentrate on those. Tell the judge exactly why to vote for you. Tell the judge why the negative arguments outweigh the arguments of the affirmative .....	2	5	6
2AR — Respond to negative arguments. Point out any arguments that have been dropped by the negative team. Tell the judge why you win. Tell the judge why the affirmative arguments outweigh the negative arguments. ....	2	5	6

## Debaters Talk Funny!

The judge evaluates who wins the debate by comparing the quality of the arguments made by each team — and by deciding how those arguments interact with each other. Judges who have been involved in debate a long time are able to evaluate a very large number of arguments in a short period of time. For their part, debaters have an incentive to make as many arguments as possible in the short period of time they have to speak. Thus, one style of debate has evolved in which debaters speak really, really fast. We're talking fast here. They make those guys who talk fast at the end of radio commercials sound slow. Debaters don't always talk fast. Sometimes your judge is not experienced enough to enjoy or appreciate fast debate, and some judges don't like

fast debates no matter how long they've been around. Some debaters make the decision to emphasize more traditional styles of persuasion. Speed is very common, though, so don't be shocked if you hear a fast debate.

There are two other elements of debate style that you should be aware of. First, debaters tend to use a lot of *structure* when they speak. That means that debaters organize their speech into individual arguments, and they even organize those individual arguments into larger groups or argument types. Debaters even like to number their arguments. Imagine an argument you're having with your parents. You want to stay out late and your parents have refused to let you. A normal person might say "but I'm so responsible, come on..." and so on. A debater would say

“I have four arguments in favor of letting me stay out. First, I’m very responsible. Second, I have a cell phone so you can call me to check on me. Third, I’ve gotten three As on my report card for three semesters in a row. Fourth, the other kids all get to stay out later than me and I’m worried that your reputation as cool parents will start to suffer if you don’t change your policy.”

Another thing about debate that’s important to know is that debaters rely on *evidence* when they speak. The word “evidence” can mean a lot of different things, but in debate it generally means arguments made by experts and journalists in published documents like newspapers, magazines, web sites, and books. Debaters copy parts of published arguments to use in their own speeches. This doesn’t mean they’re stealing other people’s ideas. Debaters are careful to tell the judge who wrote their evidence and when it was written. You might hear a debater make an argument and immediately follow it with the name of an expert, a year, and a long quote. This is an example of a debater reading evidence in a speech. Because debate is so reliant on evidence, you will end up reading a lot of things that have been written by experts on the topic. You will even end up doing your own research to find new arguments about the debate topic. Don’t worry – it’s not homework, so it’s not as boring as stuff you have to do for school.

There are definitely kinds of evidence that don’t involve academic experts. Personal experiences, stories written by normal people directly involved with important issues, and even arguments made in music or on film can count as evidence in debate rounds.

## **Arguing About Change**

There are many different ways to debate, and every year creative debaters and coaches come up with even more new ideas. Over time, however, debaters have developed some standard kinds of arguments that help them understand how to debate issues of national and international policy. For an affirmative to prove that the judge should vote for them – that the judge should vote to change the way we are doing things right now – the affirmative must

address five “stock issues.” The part of the IAC that addresses these issues is called the affirmative “case” – as in “the case for change.”

### ***Topicality***

Remember that the affirmative is generally expected to have a specific policy proposal for change called “the plan.” Topicality deals with whether the affirmative plan is an example of the resolution – whether the plan does what the resolution says should be done. If the plan does not support every word of the resolution, the affirmative team may not actually be supporting the resolution. This is unfair to the negative team, who is prepared to debate the resolution and not some random idea the affirmative has. The negative would say that the affirmative is “not topical” and should therefore lose the debate.

### ***Significance and Harms***

“If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” This classic argument reflects the assumption that most people have about change – it isn’t necessary unless something is wrong with the way we’re doing things now. The affirmative must demonstrate that something bad (“harms”) is happening now, and that the harms are important (or “significant”). If nothing is wrong right now, the judge won’t be persuaded that a new plan is necessary.

### ***Solvency***

It’s great to have a plan for change, but not all plans work. Remember that time when you were 6 and you thought you would make the cat happy by plugging its tail into an electrical outlet? Didn’t work too well, did it? Affirmatives must use evidence to prove that their plan *solves* the problems they have described as significant harms. If a plan doesn’t solve any problems, the judge won’t vote for it.

### ***Inherency***

Sometimes you don’t need to do anything about a problem because it’s not going to be a problem for very long. One day, you may have a substitute teacher who is really annoying and smells bad. You think about going to talk to the principal about this problem, but



then you realize that your regular teacher will be back tomorrow and the classroom will be stink-free. Inherency deals with whether the significant harms identified by the affirmative will continue to be a problem unless the plan is enacted. Will the problems solve themselves? Are plans already in effective that will take care of the problems without the affirmative's new idea for a policy? Is the government already on its way to passing a similar plan the to one the affirmative has proposed? If the harms are not inherent to the way we are doing things now, the judge won't vote for change.

### **Fiat**

Sadly, the government does not listen to you. It generally likes the way things are being done now, and is unlikely to change. Debate is not about whether the government *would* do the things the affirmative is recommending. Debate is about whether the government *should* do those things. For the purposes of debate, the judge makes a decision based on what would happen if the plan was enacted – even if it is very unlikely that the government would ever agree to do it. “Fiat” is the word for the idea that the judge gets to pretend they have the power to make the plan happen.

Not all debates involve fiat. Some debaters argue that we should focus on what we can accomplish in the actual debate round without pretending we have power over the government.

### **Judges and Winning**

If you haven't already figured this out by now, you should know that the judge is crucial in determining who wins and loses a debate. In fact, the judge is the *only* person in the round who gets to decide who wins and who loses. The judge signs a ballot at the end of the debate voting for one team or the other. The judge also assigns speaker points to each individual debater and ranks the debaters as first, second, third, and fourth speaker in the debate. If you don't persuade the judge to vote for you, you *lose*, regardless of how great you thought your arguments were and how bad you thought your opponents were.

Every person sees the world just a little differently, so different judges have different methods for evaluating debates. It is important for you to know some things about the judge who is evaluating the



debate round, and to discover what their particular preferences are. Talk to your coach, your friends, and other debaters about the judge before the round. Don't be afraid to ask the judge what kind of debate they like or how they decide a round before you start debating. Most judges don't like to intervene in the round – they like to let the debaters decide who wins by evaluating only the arguments that are made in the debate (and not using their own biases to determine who won).

Generally speaking, judges are persuaded by debaters who do a good job of developing their own arguments AND answering the arguments made by their opponents. This means you have to explain your own arguments very clearly. When your opponents make a point against one of your arguments, you need to explain to the judge why that point is not valid. In addition, you need to answer the arguments your opponents make that are not necessarily related to your own arguments. You must help the judge to understand why, given all the different arguments in the debate, your side should win. It's a good thing you have two speeches and a partner to help you!

At the end of the debate, many judges will give what's called an “oral critique” – they will talk about what the two teams did well and what they did poorly. Some judges may even reveal their decision about who won the round. It is important to understand, however, that not all judges reveal their decisions and some judges do not even give oral critiques. It is okay to ask a judge if they reveal their decision, but they may say no. You will find out who voted for you and why at the end of the tournament (if not before) because your team will receive a copy of all your judges' ballots when the tournament is over.

# The Constructive Speeches

<u>IAC</u>	<u>INC</u>	<u>2AC</u>	<u>2NC</u>
<p><b>Significance/Harm</b> There is or there will be a significant problem.</p> <p><b>Inherency</b> The present course of action is insufficient to cope with this problem. Absent preventative or corrective action, the problem will continue to occur.</p> <p><b>Plan</b> A specific proposal to change the present system in order to solve the problem. The plan must be an example of the sort of action called for by the resolution.</p> <p><b>Solvency</b> The plan is sufficient to solve the problem, or at least to mitigate it to some significant degree.</p> <p><b>The IAC Structure</b> There are 2 basic types: I-Significance/Harm II-Inherency PLAN III-Solvency</p> <p>I-Description of Status Quo PLAN Advantages A) Significance/Harm B) Inherency C) Solvency</p> <p>Debaters are creative, so don't be surprised by strange case structures.</p>	<p><b>“Case” Arguments</b> The negative may argue that an element of the affirmative case is incorrect—there is no problem, the present system is sufficient to cope with the problem, or the plan is insufficient to cope with the problem in a significant way.</p> <p>The negative may also argue that any argument made by the affirmative is not only incorrect, but is actually the <i>opposite</i> of the truth.</p> <p><b>Topicality (T)</b> The plan is not an example of the sort of action called for by the resolution.</p> <p><b>Disadvantages (DAs)</b> The plan causes undesirable side-effects, not necessarily related to the resolution or the case. A) Brink B) Link C) Impact</p> <p>The negative argues that the bad effects of the plan outweigh whatever advantage(s) the affirmative claims.</p> <p><b>Counterplans</b> A <i>Negative</i> proposal for action to solve the problem forwarded by the affirmative. These proposals are different from the plan and can be non-topical.</p> <p>Another requirement for counterplans is that they demonstrate some reason why the case is a bad idea—“competitiveness.”</p> <p><b>Critiques</b> The negative may argue that the plan should be rejected because the basic assumptions of the affirmative are bad or it uses bad language or ideas.</p>	<p><b>Answering the Negative</b> The 2AC attempts to answer the arguments made by the INC, but it is <i>also</i> the job of the 2AC to pre-empt the arguments that will be made by <i>both</i> of the next two negative speakers. The 2AC must therefore make much more extensive arguments in certain areas than the INC. This is a definite disadvantage strategically, as the arguments made by the 2AC must be good enough to withstand the entire block of negative attacks.</p> <p><b>Using the IAC</b> Most 2AC's will attempt to use arguments and evidence which have been forwarded in the IAC to answer arguments made in the INC. Affirmatives write their first constructive speeches not only to make their case to the judge, but also to provide them with arguments that will be usable by the 2AC.</p> <p>This is the last speech in which affirmatives are usually allowed to make new arguments.</p>	<p><b>Extending PART of the INC</b> The 2NC must choose some (but NOT ALL) of the arguments made by the INC to extend. The 2N and the IN must communicate with each other to make sure that they are not trying to extend the same arguments.</p> <p>Most of the 2NC will be spent extending and expanding on arguments made in the INC. The 2NC must also answer the arguments made by the 2AC. The negative arguments may change substantially from their original form during this speech.</p> <p>There is no requirement that the 2NC cover particular arguments, but many 2NC's like to cover plan arguments, especially disadvantages.</p> <p><b>New Arguments</b> It is not common, but 2NC's will sometimes make completely new arguments. Even when the 2NC does not make a <i>completely</i> new argument, there will often be new links, impacts, or specific case or counterplan arguments. The IAR can respond freely to both kinds of new arguments.</p>

# The Rebuttals

<u><b>1NR</b></u>	<u><b>1AR</b></u>	<u><b>2NR</b></u>	<u><b>2AR</b></u>
<p><b>Extending OTHER INC Arguments</b></p> <p>In many ways, the 1NR is like having several more minutes of 2NC. This is the second speech in what is called the “negative block.” Because the 2NC and the 1NR are like two parts of the same speech, the 1NR must be careful to extend <i>different</i> but <i>complementary</i> arguments from the 2NC. For example, if the 2NC extends disadvantages, the 1NR might extend arguments against the affirmative case.</p> <p>Unlike the 2NC, the 1NR is <i>not</i> allowed to make new arguments unless they are in response to arguments made by the 2AC.</p> <p><b>Pick and Choose</b></p> <p>There is no requirement that the 2NC and the 1NR extend ALL of the arguments made by the 1NC. Most negatives pick and choose their best arguments. However, the affirmative can extend arguments made in the 2AC that aren’t answered by the negative block, so BE CAREFUL! If the negative does not extend a disadvantage that the affirmative has “turned,” the affirmative is free to claim that disadvantage as an affirmative advantage.</p>	<p><b>The Hardest Speech in the Debate (maybe)</b></p> <p>The 1AR must respond to BOTH the 2NC AND the 1NR in a very small period of time. This means that most 1AR’s tend to be fast and at least somewhat confusing. This is the speech in which the affirmative begins to select the issues on which they will base the debate.</p> <p>Good 1AR’s will make these issues clear to the judge while still giving the 2AR plenty of options.</p> <p><b>Don’t Forget Your Previous Speeches</b></p> <p>The 1AR must answer the arguments made by the 2NC and the 1NR, but don’t forget to extend the arguments made in the 2AC. Even though it may seem like the 1AC was a long time ago, remember to extend your “case” arguments as well.</p>	<p><b>Overcoming the Presumption of the 2AR</b></p> <p>True, the 1AR has more speech time to cover, but the 2NR has to be so persuasive that the judge remembers his or her arguments even after the 2AR is over. The 2NR must make sense out of the 1AR and refute those arguments in a clear and conclusive fashion.</p> <p>At the end of a good 2NR, the judge should understand the fundamental negative position in the debate as well as the reasons the negative feels it should win the round.</p> <p><b>Telling the Story</b></p> <p>Given the number of arguments in the round, it is easy to get bogged down. Make sure to put all the arguments together into a “story”—an explanation of which issues (such as disadvantages and case arguments) the negative is winning and why those issues are more important than any arguments the affirmative might be winning. This story is usually told at the beginning of the 2NR as an “overview.” The overview should be short but comprehensive.</p>	<p><b>The Final Word</b></p> <p>The 2AR is probably the most powerful speech in the round because there can be no response to the arguments made in it. The 2AR usually walks a fine line between extending the arguments made by his or her partner and making arguments which have not been made before in the debate. Because new arguments are not allowed in most rebuttal speeches, it is important to stay on the right side of the line!</p> <p><b>Telling the Story</b></p> <p>A good 2AR traces the affirmative line of argumentation from the 1AC to the final speech, making the judge understand why, in light of the arguments made in the 2NR, the affirmative should still win the round. As with the 2NR, this “story” usually appears in the form of an overview to the speech.</p>

# Flowing Tips

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1. Don't ever give up and stop. When flowing a fast debater do not stop and listen. If you miss a response, go on to the next response. You can always ask the debater in cross-examination for your missed responses. Remember, the more you practice, the easier flowing gets.
2. Don't be disorganized. When flowing the disorganized speaker, do not follow his or her example. Write all of his or her arguments in one column on a separate legal pad. Then in your speech, answer all of his or her arguments. Then go back to the structure and point out what you are winning and what your opponent failed to answer in his or her speech.
3. Use structure. Structure and label all the arguments on your flow the same way that the speaker you are flowing is structuring and labeling his or her arguments. Be sure to write down all the numbers and letters you hear on your flow so that you can refer to specific subpoints of your partner or the other team later in the debate.
4. Use pre-flows. Flow all of your arguments clearly before you speak. Before the debate, it will sometimes be possible to pre-flow generic arguments on post-it notes.
5. Use your partner. If you cannot flow all of your arguments before you speak, hand your flow to your partner during cross-examination and have him or her fill in your flow for you. Use the other team's prep time to talk to your partner about arguments you might have missed.
6. Label your arguments. On your briefs and pre-flows, label your arguments with short, accurate, precise, and specific labels, which are no more than four words long. As you are labeling, put the crucial words first. If you label arguments correctly, you will be able to give a better speech because your

judge, partners and opponents will find you easier to flow.

## The Need for Lots of Flowpads and Many Sheets of Paper

You should use many sheets of paper for each argument and you may wish to use different flowpads for different arguments. In any debate you will have:

- a flow related to the 1AC structure.
- a flow listing arguments of the 1NC which are not related to the case (disads, T, counterplans, etc.)
- a flow listing any 2AC arguments
- a flow listing extensions of the 1NC or new arguments made by the 2NC

## Flowing Speech by Speech

1AC: Everyone flows this speech. The Affirmative team should have this speech pre-flowed on post-it notes or legal pads. Use lots of space between each argument.

1NC: Everyone flows this speech. The negative may have their generic arguments already pre-flowed. During the cross-examination period following the 1NC, the 2NC flows onto the 1NC's flow any responses that the 1NC didn't get.

2AC: Everyone flows this speech. Use cross examination to get parts that you missed or have your partner fill in the missing information.

2NC: Everyone but the 1NC flows this speech. The 1NR follows this speech with extension arguments.

1NR: Everyone flows this speech.

1AR: Everyone flows this speech.

2NR: Everyone flows this speech.

2AR: Everyone flows this speech.

# Symbols and Abbreviations

because	bc	outweighs	ow or o/w
causes/caused/leads to	→	overview	OV
change	Δ	plan/policy	P
competitive	comp	question	?
constitutional	C	ratios/per	/
counterplan	CP	real world	RW
decision rule	DR	repeat cite	ld or SS
disadvantage	DA	should	s/
dropped/conceded argument	∅	should not	s/n
evidence/card	ev or X or ✓	significance	sig
fiat	F	solvency, solved	Ⓢ
greater than	>	standard	std
impact	I or !	takeout (or takes out)	to or t/o
increase/high	↑	theory	Θ
inherency	Inh or ①	therefore	∴
is/equals/approximately	=	threshold	TH
is related to	~	topicality	T or ①
isn't/not equal/not/won't/don't	≠	turn, turnaround	T/
kritik/critique	K or ②	unconstitutional	UC
less than	<	underview	UV or U
link	L or ③	uniqueness	U or ④
low/decrease	↓	voting issue	VI or ⑤
no link	NL or ∅	was caused by	←
not unique	N/U	with	w/
number	#	without	w/o
observation	Obs or O	within	w/n

## Other strategies for abbreviation

Sometimes you will hear words that are too long to write out, but you don't know how to abbreviate them. Here are three possible strategies. Experiment and see what works for you.

	<u>Acronyms</u>	<u>No Vowels</u>	<u>First Letters</u>
<u>Description:</u>	Flow the first letter of each word in a phrase	Flow only the consonants in difficult words	Flow just the first few letters of long words
<u>Examples:</u>	"New York Times" = NYT "Peace Corps" = PC "United States Federal Government" = USFG "Plan of Attack" = POA	"service" = srvc "poor" = pr "death" = dth "nuclear" = nclr	"argument" = arg "volunteer" = vol "substantially" = subs "nanotechnology" = nano

# This Is What It Sounds Like In a Speech

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## **First Affirmative Constructive (IAC)**

Now, Observation 2: there is too much crime in America. This problem presents itself in several different ways. Subpoint A: Violent crime is ravishing our country. The Wall Street Journal explains in 2006: "There can be no question that gun violence is a major problem in this country. Last year alone, over ten thousand people fell victim to gun violence. The carnage has not been limited to the inner cities. The still of the suburban night is regularly broken by the sound of gunshots."

This impact is worse than a full-scale war. The New York Times reports in 2005: "What is most surprising is that it has taken Americans so long to react to the horrible cost of gun ownership. After all, thousands of people are killed by guns every year. In some smaller countries in the world, this kind of loss of life would rival the death toll of a border war or a major famine."

Subpoint B: Robberies plague our cities. John Willis, a reporter for the *Alpharetta Gazette*, in 2006: "The problem seems to be escalating. It is nearly impossible to attend a gathering of any size in this city and not hear stories of robberies, muggings, and carjackings. These criminals do not discriminate between old and young, rich and poor, man and woman. All are potential victims. If we do not address this problem soon, we will not be able to leave our houses without fearing for our lives."

## **First Negative Constructive (INC)**

On observation two, subpoint A, they say violent crime is a problem. Group the two cards. One, both these cards assume that we should pass gun control laws, not that violent crime is a problem. Two, neither of these cards says the problem is getting worse. For all we know, ten thousand deaths could be significantly less than two years ago. Three, violent crime is on the decline. Celeste Brown, professor of sociology at Emory, in 2005: "Ironically, amidst all this panic and paranoia, violent crime is on the decline. Unnoticed and virtually unreported by the supposedly liberal mainstream media, rates of murder, rapes and other violent assaults have reached ten-year lows." Four, they over-state their impacts. The second card only says we're a large country, not that crime is worse than war. Five, there are no qualifications for their sources. Are these real articles or letters to the editor?

On Subpoint B, they say robberies are bad. One, their author is awful. He's a reporter for a tiny newspaper I've never heard of. Two, the evidence is weak. It only says that the author thinks there's a lot of crime in her city. There's no research and no warrant for her claim. Three, most robberies are insignificant. The *Los Angeles Times* in 2004: "Although robberies have been on the rise since the early 1990s, the increase has largely been in the area of small break-ins. More people are losing their car stereo, but there are few major robberies." Four, the evidence overstates the impact. Robbery means you lose stuff, not that you fear for your life.

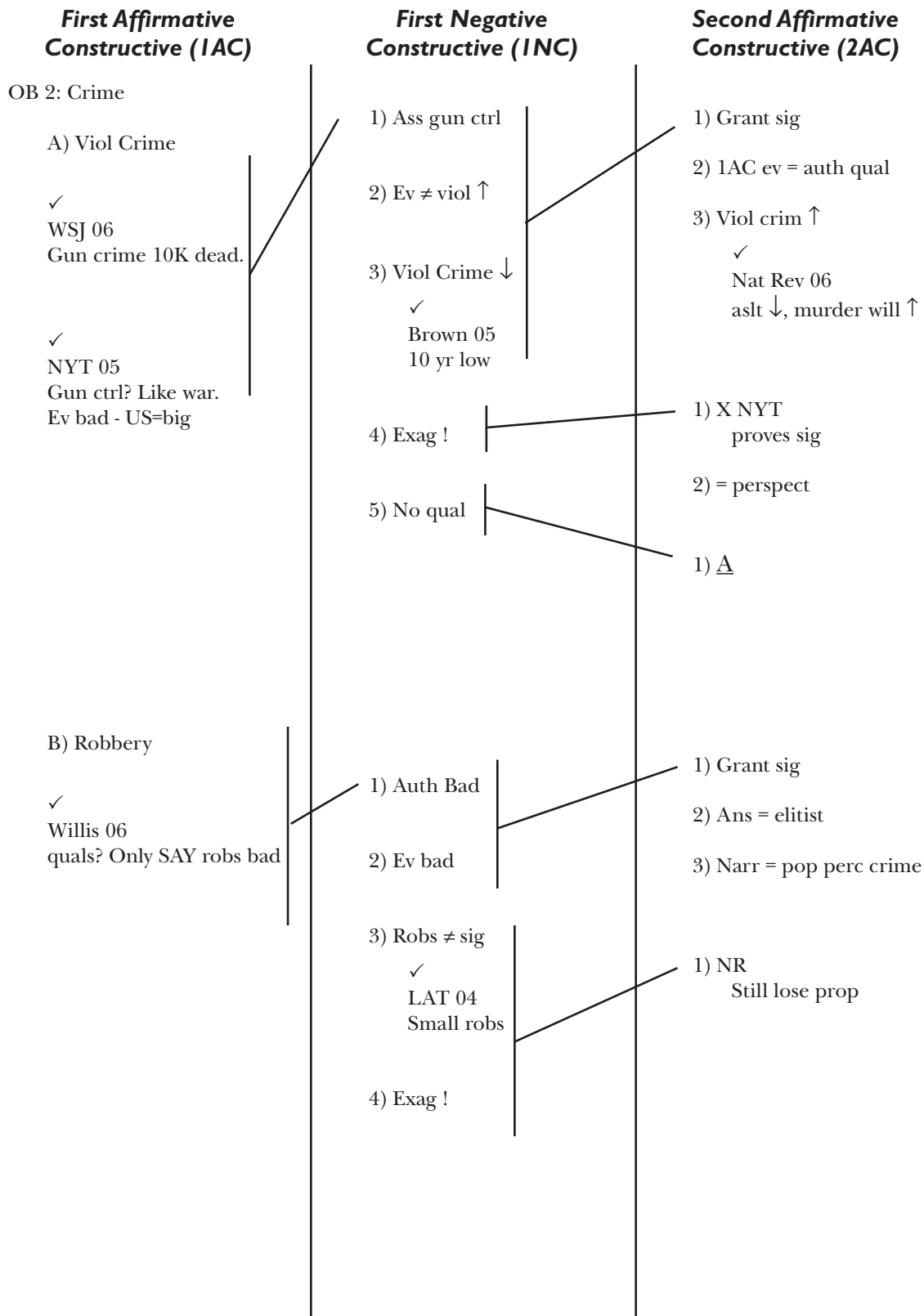
## **Second Affirmative Constructive (2AC)**

Now, observation two, subpoint A. Group their first three answers. One, they concede that the problem is significant. It doesn't matter if our authors agree with our plan or if they think progress is being made, ten thousand people are dying every year. Two, both 1AC cards are from prestigious newspapers. The authors are both reporters. Three, predictions of a decline in violent crime are wrong. The *National Review* in 2006: "Those who think violent criminals are going to fade into the night are mistaken. Minor assaults are down, but newspapers are full of stories of mass murders. These reports will only increase in the years to come."

On INC number four, I have two answers. First, extend the New York Times card. It proves that thousands die every year. Second, our card gives perspective. Just because we don't think much of killing thousands of people in the US doesn't mean that is the right mentality. On INC number five, that's answered above.

Now, subpoint B. Group their first two answers. One, this card proves that robberies are threatening the suburbs. Two, their answers are elitist. Just because Willis is writing for a small paper doesn't mean her arguments are wrong. Three, narratives like this prove that normal citizens think crime is a major problem, even though the negative refuses to open their eyes. INC three and four are nonresponsive. So what if robberies are small, they're still bad. Even if you don't die, you are robbed of your rightful property.

# This Is What It Looks Like On the Flow



**Note:** On an actual flow, you would NOT write the full titles of the speeches on the top of the page.

# Introduction to Speaking Style

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Debate is a form of competitive public speaking. This means that debaters need to develop their delivery skills. In this context, "delivery" just means your ability to speak well, or to speak in an appropriate way for the occasion.

Sounds pretty easy, doesn't it? It's not. Come on, you've read this much haven't you? You should know by now that debate is full of tricks. The real question is "what does it *mean* to speak well?"

## Audience Adaptation

The real answer to this question is that "good" speaking almost always means whatever kind of speaking your audience will like. In the case of debate, there is one person whose opinion matters most in terms of deciding what counts as good speaking: the judge.

Want to win a debate? Convince the judge to vote for you. It's that simple. Oh, you may *think* you won the debate even if the judge didn't vote for you. You may have great arguments about how wrong the judge was not to vote for you. You may commission a panel of national experts on debate to prove, scientifically, that you really should have won.

Guess what? None of that will matter. The only way to win a debate is to persuade the judge to vote for you. Period. If winning is your goal, adapting your speaking style to the judge's preferences is critical. In order to adapt effectively, you need to know some things about the different styles of speaking you might see in a debate. There are a lot of ways to find out about your judge—ask your coach, talk to other debaters, read a judge's philosophy (if one is available online or elsewhere) or talk directly to the judge before the debate.

## Speaking Style in Debate

You already know that debaters tend to speak with a lot of structure, and that some debaters choose to speak fast in order to make a lot of arguments in a short period of time. Other debaters choose to talk more slowly and emulate

great speakers like social activists or philosophers. As a debater, you must be aware of these different styles so you can choose which kind of speaking works best for you—or which style is most appropriate for a particular judge you might need to convince.

### *Fast Debate (a.k.a. "straight up" or "traditional")*

One very popular delivery style that has developed in debate involves speaking very quickly with a lot of structure. Most people can process a lot more information in a shorter period of time than they normally do. Fast debate takes advantage of this idea, and debaters who engage in this style practice extensively to increase number of arguments and the amount of expert evidence they can read in a debate round. Fast debate is a style of delivery that is truly unique to competitive debate.

*Pros:* Allows debaters to make the maximum number of arguments in a short period of time, giving them a potential strategic advantage over their opponents. Allows discussion of multiple subjects within a single debate round. For those who are good at it, creates an adrenaline thrill. Promotes quick thinking.

*Cons:* Many debaters overestimate how fast they can speak and remain clear. Some judges, debaters, and regular folks find this style annoying and hard to follow. The uniqueness of this style mean fast-talking skills don't necessarily translate to "real world" speaking skills.

*Best for:* Judges who have debate training and enjoy fast speech.

### *Slow Debate (a.k.a. "performative" or "non-traditional")*

This is really a group of very different kinds of styles all of which speak at a roughly conversational pace. Some debaters work to sound like great political speakers. Others take on the role of a professor or a philosophy teacher, emphasizing explanations of complicated ideas. Still others incorporate aspects of the performing arts (like rap or theater) into their speeches so they can create powerful emotional responses or deep levels of



understanding in their audience. Often, non-traditional debaters use different kinds of structure in their speeches than traditional debaters do.

*Pros:* Develops speaking skills that translate easily into traditional public speaking situations. Allows great depth of discussion on certain issues. Appeals to a broad audience, including those with no formal debate training.

*Cons:* Slower speech means fewer arguments made in a given time period. Slower debaters may be at a strategic disadvantage when competing against fast talkers. Fewer issues can be discussed in a single debate, and there is less time for expert evidence to be read.

*Best for:* Judges who have no formal debate training, or who express a preference for slower debate.

### Hybrid (no known alias)

Because debaters are beginning to recognize the advantages of both fast and slow speech, some are working to develop a style that incorporates the best of both worlds. Typically, hybrid debaters speak faster than conversational speed but do not work to achieve their maximum rate. This style also emphasizes speaking efficiently (so as to compete with those who speak fast) and making a few arguments that deal with many of the other team's claims at the same time.

*Pros:* Allows discussion of multiple issues without sacrificing depth or acquisition of useful speaking skills.

*Cons:* By trying to walk the line between speed and slower styles, hybrid debate runs the risk of missing out on the advantages of both other styles. This style has not been developed as fully as the others, and can be difficult to learn.

*Best for:* If you are good at this, you can adapt to almost any judge. If not, it is best for judges with debate training but who are most com-

fortable with debate that is not top speed.

### Transitions, Signposts & Roadmaps: Speaking with Structure

Regardless of which style of speaking you choose, it is inevitable that you will end up dealing

with many different issues in a single debate. The best way to ensure that the judge understands the order in which you address these issues is *signposting*. Signposting is the practice of labeling arguments during your speech so that the judge and the other team can easily tell which issue you are talking about at any given time.

Transitions between arguments also help the judge to follow the order in which you move from argument to argument. This will be helpful not only to the other team and to the judge, but also to your partner. Having a coherent discussion of the issues will help the whole debate to move in a much smoother way and allow more clash with the other team.

Several terms are important to understand:

**On-Case.** The arguments on the flow pages that begin with the 1AC. These are arguments which are used to prove the stock issues of inherency, significance, and solvency.

**Off-Case.** These are the arguments that are brought up by the negative which do not directly refute the case arguments of inherency, significance, and solvency. They are usually disadvantages, counterplans, topicality arguments, or critiques.

**Roadmap.** Allows the judges and the other teams to know which major arguments will be addressed in what order.

A. Usually done at the beginning of the speech for the judges and the other team. Usually short and not timed.

B. Debaters usually put the most important arguments first (in the 1NC, that means off-case first, usually).

C. Examples:

1NC: "3 off case, then the case debate."

2AC: Will identify the off-case arguments to be answered first, then the case.

2NC: Since the 2NC usually extends some off-case arguments, the 2NC usually identifies the specific off-case arguments in the sequence they will be answered.

**Signposting.** Allows the judge and other teams to identify the specific argument being addressed within each major argument.

A. Done throughout each speech, this requires distinguishing between each



- argument and labeling each argument.
- B. Usually numbers and letters are used, but debaters might also use other forms of distinguishing between each argument.
  - C. Examples include: "One. Not-Unique. Present policies will cause the disad. Two. No link. The plan does not cause the disadvantage. Three. Turn. The plan solves the impact to the disad." Debaters can substitute the word "next" in place of specific numbers, but the important thing to do is post a sign which indicates that the next thing you are about to say is a different argument. This will notify the judge and the opponent to record each argument and not miss your brilliance.

**Transitions.** Transitions provide information about where you are on the flow, while also providing the judge time to organize their flows.

- A. This addresses the way that we move from one off-case argument to another or between the off case and on case.
- B. Often in the INC, one disad will be read and when moving it to a second one, you should say "Next off-case."
- C. When moving from the off-case to the on-case, you should say, "Now, on the case debate."

### **"Covering" the Other Team's Arguments**

One of the most important idea in most debate rounds is the *principle of clash*, also known as the *burden of rejoinder*. These phrases simply mean that it is each team's responsibility to answer the arguments their opponents make. When it comes to delivery, this means you need to explain to the judge how the arguments you are making relate to (and answer) the arguments made by the other team. If you forget to talk about an argument, the judge may assume you are admitting the other team is right about it.

One way to accomplish this is to do what's called "going straight down the flow" or "going line-by-line." This style of delivery means that you think of your opponents' arguments as a kind of check-list. For each major issue (such as a disadvantage or a case advantage), you answer

each one of the arguments the other team made in the same order they originally made them.

A classic technique for covering arguments in this way is to use the "They Say - We Say" pattern of speech. Debaters signpost each of their opponents' argument, then provide at least one of their own arguments to answer the other teams claim. For example, in a debate about crime, you might hear someone say "They say we must pass new laws to prevent crime, but our evidence proves that criminals are not deterred by the threat of prison."

There is more than one way to "cover" another team's arguments, however. Instead of dealing with every single argument individually, you can "group" several similar arguments and answer them all at once. For example, in a debate about politics, you might hear someone say "The other team reads about 5 pieces of evidence claiming that the president gets credit when new laws are passed, but none of their authors have qualifications. They are all newspaper reporters. Our authors are political science professors, and should be preferred." In this way, a single argument can answer multiple claims by the other team.

It is possible to cover your opponents' argument even more efficiently if you can locate similar themes among many arguments. If the other team makes 15 arguments against one of your disadvantages, for example, you may notice that these 15 claims are not all very different. Instead of answering all 15 claims in order, you can treat similar arguments as a single claim and simplify the entire issue for the judge. You might hear a debater in this situation say "they have 15 answers to the disad, but there are only 3 arguments here. The first is a bunch of answers to our link, the second is three cards that disagree with our impact claim, and the last is cards that say the link is inevitable. Here are my answers to these three arguments." Debaters who choose to speak in a slower style often use techniques like this to overcome a faster opponent's speed advantage.

Speaking with structure is not something we normally do in our everyday lives. Learning to do it well takes practice, but you'll be surprised at how quickly you catch on!

# Delivery and Staying "In Shape" for Debate

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## Debate Delivery

As the previous section on speaking style should make very clear, it is difficult to generalize about exactly how you should speak when you debate. Obviously, what style of debate you choose will do a lot in terms of providing you with appropriate models for good speech.

That having been said, there *are* some tips you should always follow when you speak.

1. Act like you freakin' care! This is the most important rule of public speaking. If you don't act like what you are saying is important, why should anyone else care? Sound passionate, and your audience will follow you.
2. Speak loud enough for everyone to hear you. It's natural to be a bit nervous in a public speaking situation, and that often translates into less volume. Everyone in the room should be able to hear you without straining. Also, *reasonable* increases in speech volume are often interpreted as evidence of forceful argument. It's better to be a bit too loud than a bit too quiet.
3. Stand up when you speak. You may see some debaters who sit down when they speak. Don't they look cool? Oh, well, maybe they don't look quite as cool when they turn red in the face and pass out. Standing up when you speak is the best way to make sure that the part of your body involved with breathing (from your mouth to your waist) stays straight. Sitting down or bending over cuts off your air flow. Also, standing up gives you more presence and makes you look bigger.
4. Look at the judge. Although you will probably spend a lot of time in your speech reading from evidence or your own notes, it is crucially important to look at your judge frequently. Eye contact gives people a sense of involvement and makes them think you're a more powerful speaker. It is also important to see the judge's face so you can see, for

example, if they are giving you the "what the @#\*\$! are you talking about?" look. You can't adapt to what you can't see.

5. Don't do anything stupid with your body. There are a lot of potential landmines waiting for you that can distract the judge or ruin your speaking cred. Chewing gum when you talk? Such a bad idea. Playing with your pen? It's always fun until it flies out of your hand and causes the judge to lose an eye. Drinking a bunch of carbonated soda right before you speak? Ew, yuck. Pounding the table or podium constantly when you talk? Can you say "migraine"? Pacing around the room while you talk? The judge will think you're leaving or you really need to pee. Got it? Just don't do anything stupid. These are important life rules we're teasing you here.

## How to stay in shape for debate

Like any other sport, debate requires physical and mental stamina. In order to win, you have to maintain your peak performance level. Here are some common ways to keep in shape—even during the off-season!

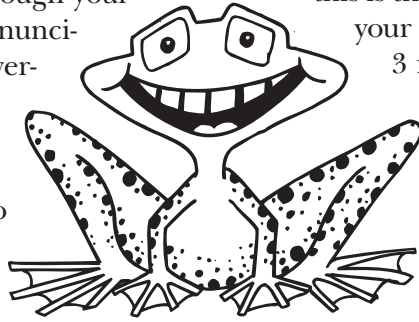
### Do speaking drills

The importance of speaking drills cannot be emphasized enough! Even if you do not want to speak fast in debates, you should do speaking drills to enhance your clarity of speech. Fast or slow, the most effective way to impress your judge is by reading as comprehensibly as you can.

Each drill should be done for at least 10 minutes. Since constructive speeches are 9 minutes each, it is important to be able to maintain your pace for more than 9 minutes. Otherwise, you risk running out of steam. Gasping for breath at the end of your speech will only hurt your speaker points. Since different drills address different problems, one strategy is to alternate drills for a period of thirty minutes to an hour. Still, even 15 minutes of drills can be helpful.

### Some basic drills

1. **The Wide-Mouthed Frog.** Based on a bad joke, and it makes you look stupid, but boy does it work. Read through your evidence slowly, over-enunciating every syllable (e-ver-y syl-la-ble). For every syllable, open your mouth as wide as you can, but don't forget to over-pronounce any hard consonant at the end of the syllable. Do this until your jaw starts to hurt.



2. **The Pen In the Mouth.** Place a pen horizontally between your teeth as far back in your mouth as it will go without hurting yourself (like a horse's bit). Read as fast as you can and as comprehensibly as you can. Focus on overpronunciation and volume. The point of this drill is to learn to talk without opening your mouth too wide. It's a great thing to do after the frog drill.
3. **Flip the Script.** Read your evidence backwards, word by word, as clearly and comprehensibly as you can. This helps you to get through difficult evidence and solves any problem you might have with reading ahead of yourself.
3. **And-Infinity.** Read a piece of evidence, while saying "and" after every word. Go as fast as you can, but don't forget to insert "and," and stay comprehensible. This helps solve any problem you might have slurring words together, and aids enunciation.

### Have practice debates

Set up intrasquad practice debates. Ask a coach or fellow debater to be the judge and give a real critique. Treat them like real debates. You should speak and conduct yourself in the same way you would in an actual debate round. You can use the speeches you give in these debates to do speech re-dos later or immediately following the debate. Make sure to set up enough debates so that you get practice being affirmative and negative.

Of course, between classes, jobs, and extracurricular commitments, there is not always time to have a full-length practice debate. If this is the case for you, set up mini-debates with your teammates. Instead of the 8-5-3 or 9-6-3 format, you can do 4-2-1 debates. You can also have practice debates that focus on your specific weakness. For example, you can pretend specific answers were read in the constructives and start the debate with rebuttal speeches. You can do the same thing for cross examination by having debates with shortened speech times and elongated cross ex time.

Practice debates are also a great way to get more experience flowing. If you hear that some teammates are having a practice debate, you can sit in to flow their arguments. After the debate, compare your flow to your teammates' to see where you need to improve and what you did well.

### Do "re-dos"

Save your flows from every tournament. Make sure you can tell by looking at them what everyone said in the round. Write down the suggestions your judge gives you as well. When you get back home, give one of the speeches again in front of a coach or a more experienced debater until you both agree that the speech is near perfection. This may require giving the same speech over and over again, but it will be worth it. The more you give great speeches, the more likely it is you will give one on the first try at the next tournament. The goal is to eventually give such good speeches that you will have a hard time making them better in re-dos!

### Read or watch the news

A huge variety of arguments is made in debate rounds over the course of the year. Of course, it is impossible to be able to anticipate every argument, but being aware of what is going on in the world can help a whole lot. Having smart analytical arguments about the current state of affairs will increase your credibility with judges.

You can keep abreast of current events by watching the news every night or reading the newspaper every day. And that doesn't mean just the first 5 minutes of your local news or the front page of the newspaper. Watch an entire newscast or browse through an entire paper. Keep your eyes open for articles that could relate to the topic, speak to the current political climate, or prove an argument you've heard (or you make) true or false.

If you happen to have regular access to the Internet, the possibilities are endless. While a lot of quality content on the Internet requires you to pay, there are great resources like Google News ([news.google.com](http://news.google.com)) that allow you to keep yourself educated. However, for this to work you have to have some regular practices. Instead of just browsing the Internet, make it a practice to, for example, enter the same search of key topic words into Google News every day. This will make your Internet time more like reading the paper and less like playing around.

### **Read about debate**

Knowing what is going on in the debate world is an important as knowing what is going on in the rest of the world. Preparation is a huge part of winning debates. The Internet gives you the ability to access a lot of debate information online. While the college and high school communities use different forums to talk about debate, there are resources available for you to learn more about theory or keep up with national trends.

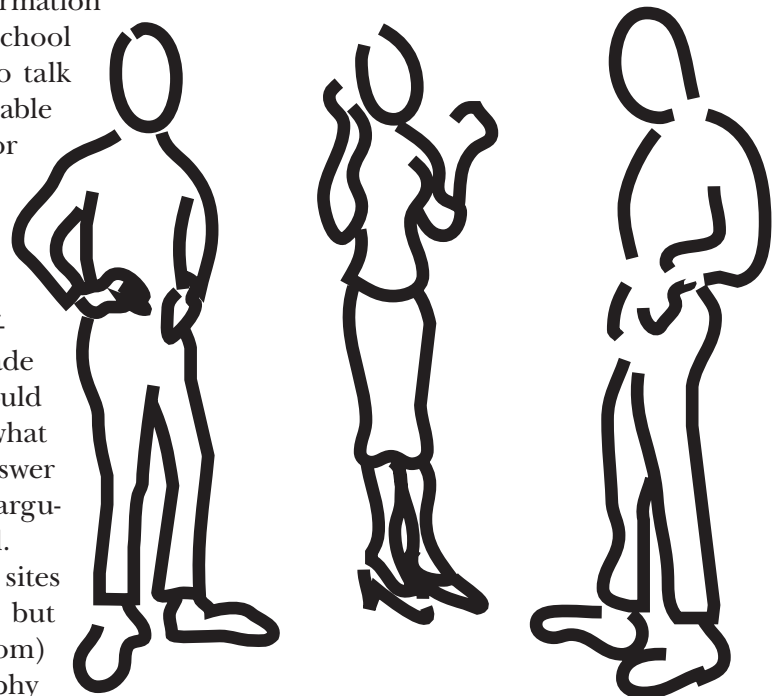
For example, after some tournaments, caselists are released to the debate community or posted on free web sites. Caselists outline both the affirmative and negative arguments made by the teams who attended. You should always read these! They will tell you what arguments you need to be ready to answer and perhaps give you some ideas on arguments to include in your own arsenal.

Be aware that some debate web sites will charge you for high-level access, but many (such as [www.planetdebate.com](http://www.planetdebate.com)) offer basic caselist and judge philosophy

information for no charge. One more thing: the fact that people are involved in debate doesn't necessarily make them any smarter, more informed, or more mature than the next person. Like anything to do with the Internet, the online debate world is full of *both* geniuses and crazy people (and some who are both). Be careful who you talk to, and don't take candy from anyone.

### **Talk about debate**

A lot of beginning debaters tend to forget about debate when they are not at practice or tournaments. This is a big mistake! It is important throughout the season to keep your head in the game! That means, talking about debate with your teammates on the ride home from tournaments, calling, e-mailing, or instant messaging your friends and teammates with your thoughts about debate on your time off. Your teammates and friends in the debate community are a great resource. Talking with them can teach you ways to look at an argument that you would have never thought of on your own.



# Cross-Examination

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Cross-examination is a series of question-and-answer periods in a debate round designed to allow debaters to clarify issues, gather information, and achieve strategic advantage. While most beginning debaters (and many judges) say they enjoy cross-examination (a.k.a. “cross-ex” or “CX”) more than any other part of debate, few can say they are truly skilled. With some preparation and basic strategy, you can become one of those few.

## Who speaks when?

The basic principle that will help you remember who cross-examines whom is this: the person who *just spoke* **answers** the questions, and the person from the other team who is *not* about to speak **asks** the questions. Here’s how it works:

After the IAC:	2NC asks	IAC answers
After the INC:	IAC asks	INC answers
After the 2AC:	INC asks	2AC answers
After the 2NC:	2AC asks	2NC answers

## “Tag team” cross-examination

Okay, so now you know who is *supposed* to talk, but is that really a rule? Is it okay for you to answer a question someone asks your partner? Is it okay for you to ask a question when it is your partner’s turn to ask? The answer to these questions is “it depends.”

Like anything else in the debate round, the attitude of the judge is critical. Some judges consider this kind of “tag team” cross-examination a violation of basic rules, and they will not allow it. Others have no problem letting partners share cross-ex questions and answers. If you and your partner do this kind of thing regularly, make sure to ask the judge before the round what his or her attitude is. You can adapt to a judge who does not like tag team cross-ex by doing things like talking to your partner before you start asking questions to see if they have specific requests or passing notes to help out your partner if they are struggling. The bottom line is that you and

your partner *both* need to have the ability to ask questions and give answers. If you are the IAC and you cannot explain your own affirmative plan, for example, you are in trouble.

## But what do I do?

Cross-examination gives you, the person who is asking the questions, an important opportunity to accomplish several basic tasks. Generally speaking, cross-ex is used to achieve one or more of the following five objectives, listed in the order of importance:

1. To clarify points or gather information
2. To expose errors
3. To set up arguments
4. To obtain admissions
5. To save prep time

## Clarifying points and gathering information

Regardless of what style the other teams chooses to speak in (fast or slow, simple or complicated), it is likely that *something* will be said by the other team that you do not really understand. Even if you understand the words, you might not understand the meaning. Even if you understand the meaning, you might not understand what the other team is trying to achieve by making a particular argument. The most important thing you can do in cross-ex is make sure you understand the other team’s arguments.

One way you can accomplish this is to ask the other team questions. This is particularly useful when you are asking questions of interpretation (“but why is that good?”). However, it does tend to take a lot of time, especially if you have a lot of questions. Another thing you can do in cross-ex is ask the other team for their evidence and their “blocks” (sheets of prepared evidence and analytical arguments). For example, if they other team reads a 1AC you have never heard before, it is common for you to ask them to let you look at their 1AC.

Do you have to let another team see your

evidence? It is normally considered extremely rude to refuse a request for evidence or blocks. However, make sure that the other team gives you back your blocks when it is your turn to use them to prepare or at the end of the debate. Many teams carry two copies of their IAC—one to read, the other to give their opponents after the IAC.

### *Exposing Errors*

Some debates are won and lost in the cross-examination. One of your jobs as a debaters is to pay close attention to what the other team says to see if it is logically consistent. If you find a major flaw in the other team’s logic or in their evidence, you can use cross-examination to point this out.

Flaws in logic often occur in terms of what we call “links,” or explanations of how one action can lead to another. Let’s say the affirmative plan calls for a ban on building campfires in national parks as a way to prevent forest fires. However, as the 2NC, you know that studies show most forest fires are either caused by lightning or cigarettes. You might ask the IAC “what evidence do you have that campfires cause most forest fires?”

Another common place to find flaws is in the other team’s evidence. Especially if the other team is using quotes from experts, you will need to pay close attention to ensure that the quotes match up with the claims made by the other team. Because experts often make complicated argument, debaters sometimes oversimplify or misrepresent their authors’ opinions. It is also common for debaters to read only parts of a quote (or “highlight” the quote) so that only the important words are read in the debate. In these cases, you may notice that key quotes make arguments that might undermine your opponents’ claims. Let’s stay with the forest fire example. Suppose the IAC reads a piece of evidence from an expert that is labeled “most forest fires are caused by campers.” If you read carefully, you may find out that the part of the quote that is *not* read by your opponent goes on to say that campers cause fires by throwing cigarettes into the forest while they are still lit.

You might read that part of the quote to the IAC and the judge, then ask “doesn’t this mean that your plan doesn’t prevent most forest fires, since you only deal with campfires?”

### *Setting Up Arguments*

While debaters often try to simulate real-world policy-making by advocating real pieces of legislation and using quotes from policy experts, a lot of debate is about interpreting arguments that are made in the round. Cross-ex allows you to encourage your opponents to interpret their own arguments in a way that will make your arguments seem better. There are several traditional strategies for setting up arguments. Here are two of the most famous:

### The Pit of Doom

A classic cross-ex strategy is to “push” your opponent closer and closer to an answer that will help you destroy them. But how do you talk someone into walking closer to the edge of the pit? By acting reasonable and pretending there is no pit there, of course. Let’s say that the IAC is advocating a plan to offer financial incentives to get people to vote in presidential elections. You are trying to get your opponent to admit that their plan won’t work. You can’t just tell them to admit the plan is bad. You have to coax them gently toward the pit. Here is one way you might do this:

- You: So, you’re going to pay people to vote, right?  
Your Opponent: Yep. Our authors say this will increase voter turnout by 50%  
You: Wow. I’d vote if they’d pay me. But there are still going to be people who don’t vote after the plan, right?  
Your Opponent: Maybe.  
You: I mean, my uncle doesn’t vote because he thinks the government is controlled by aliens. You can’t get him to vote, can you?  
Your Opponent: Probably not.  
You: And the people who refuse to vote as a protest, you can’t buy them off, right?  
Your Opponent: Yeah, but that’s not many people.  
You: Sure. What about people who have to work all day and have families to take care of. They don’t vote because they’re too busy. Will you get them to vote?

Your Opponent: Actually, yes. Our authors say that paying them \$20 to vote will get them interested.

You: Oh, sweet. So, you've got evidence that \$20 is enough to get people to quit their jobs?

Your Opponent.: What?

You: Well, you know if I skip out on my job at WalMart to go vote, they're going to fire me. So, you've got evidence that \$20 is enough to get me to quit my job?

Your Opponent: No, that's stupid. You'd just go after you got off work.

You: Oh, okay, now I get it. So, you've got evidence that \$20 is enough to pay the babysitter to watch my kids and make dinner for them while I spend 3 hours waiting in line to vote? Can I see that evidence?

Your Opponent: Um...

At the end of the above exchange, your opponent is a lot closer to the edge of the pit. You've gotten them to say that their plan won't solve for people with fringe beliefs, people who hate politics, people who have to work all day, and people who have to take care of their families. That's a lot of people, especially if you've prepared by finding statistics about what percentage of people who don't normally vote fall into those categories.

### The Reverse Pit of Doom

Your opponent is not entirely stupid (well, *probably* not). They may be aware that you're trying to get them to say things that aren't in their best interest. They will be trying to figure out what you want them to say so that they can say the opposite. The "reverse pit" takes advantage of this situation by making your opponent think you want to answer one way when you really want them to answer the other way.

Let's suppose you are negative and the affirmative is going to pay people to vote. But this time, you don't want them to say the plan won't work. You've looked, and you can't find any evidence attacking the plan that way. Instead, you want to argue that the affirmative plan would be too expensive. To make that argument, you need the affirmative to say that *everyone* will take their money and vote. To get them to say that, you start by convincing them you are really

attacking their ability to solve. The exchange might go like this:

You: You're going to pay people to vote? That's ridiculous.

Your Opponent: Whatever. Our authors say that the plan will increase voter turnout by 50%.

You: Come on. You're not serious. Nobody's going to vote just because you pay them. Most people don't vote because they don't care.

Your Opponent: Wrong. The IAC contains five quotes by four different experts who've done studies that prove more people will vote if we offer them money. You got nothin'.

You: Puh-lease. When my partner gets up and reads 10 pieces of evidence that says your plan won't work, why should the judge vote for you?

Your Opponent: Bring it.

You: We will. What's your best piece of evidence say? 5 million more people will vote?

Your Opponent: You wish. Our evidence from Smith in 2006 says that the plan results in 20 million more votes, and Smith thinks that estimate is low. We'll claim that 30 million more people will vote after the plan is passed.

You: 30 million? That's your claim?

Your Opponent: Yep. Take that to the bank.

You: I think I will.

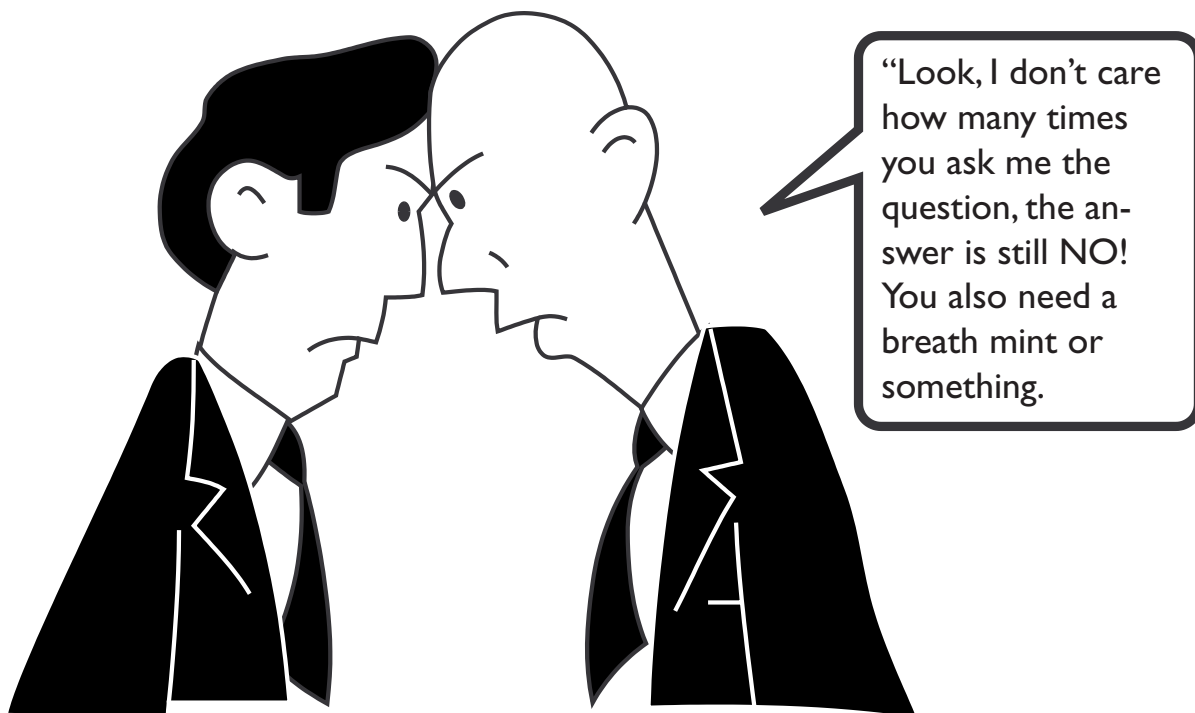
See how nice your opponent was? They gave you a giant link to your argument that the plan will cost the government too much money. The fact that they thought you were trying to push them to admit one thing caused them to overreact and give you 10 million more reasons (times \$20) why the plan is a bad idea.

### *Obtaining Admissions*

I've got some bad news for you. You know all those cop shows you watch on TV? The ones where the cops catch this guy who they think committed a murder, and the guy confesses? I am sad to tell you that those are all lies. In the real world, no one confesses. In fact, one of the best ways to guarantee that someone *won't* confess is to say "you'd better confess because we know you did it!" Debate is like that, too. It is nearly impossible to get someone to admit they are wrong.

Still, there are times when you might ask





your opponent to admit that something they said is wrong (or, at least, not relevant). For example, let's say the INC reads 10 pieces of evidence saying that your plan to lower gas prices by getting people to buy hybrid cars won't work. The third piece of evidence says that electric-only cars are not practical. You might point out to your opponent in cross-ex that you aren't advocating electric-only cars. If they are willing to admit this is true, you might ask "so, I don't have to answer this argument, right?" If you're lucky, they'll say something like "no, but those other 9 pieces of evidence are all reasons you lose." See what I mean? Nobody confesses.

### *Saving Prep Time*

Here's a dirty little secret we don't normally like to tell people. One of the most important uses of cross-ex from the perspective of the questioner is that it allows your partner time to prepare for their speech. Remember, the person who is *not* about to speak is the one who asks the questions. This means that, while you are asking questions, your partner is scrambling to figure out what to say.

What does this mean? The most important implication of this is that you should *never* cut

your cross-examination short unless your partner tells you it's okay. Use every last second, even if you can't think of any brilliant questions. If you are negative, ask the affirmative to explain why the judge should vote for you. If you are affirmative, ask the negative to explain the basic idea of their major argument. Pick important pieces of your opponents' evidence and attack them even if you haven't read them. Whatever you do, keep talking until the timer goes off. Your partner will thank you, and you will make it more likely that you will have some prep time left at the end of the debate for your own rebuttal.

### **Speech-By-Speech Tips**

Here are some questions that each speaker should try to get answered during their cross-examination. These tips will make even more sense after you have read the sections of this manual that discuss possible negative strategies.

#### *2NC Cross-X /AC*

1. Get missing signposts and arguments.
2. Center most of your questions on the plan. Look for plan errors and possible links to disadvantages. Ask for a copy of the plan and read it.

3. Make sure that you understand the thesis of the case and what advantages are being claimed. If you are not sure ask-now is the time do it not after the 2AC!

#### *1AC Cross-X 1NC*

1. If the 1NC argued topicality, make sure that you know what the violations are and what standards they are using to prove that you are not topical.
2. Make the 1NC explain any arguments that you do not understand.
3. Ask the 1NC to explain the links, thresholds, and/or impacts to the disads that were run out of the 1NC.
4. Ask the 1NC to explain why the counterplan is better than the affirmative. Ask them to compare specific quantifiable disadvantages.

#### *1NC Cross-X 2AC and 2AC Cross-X 2NC*

1. Ask for any responses that your partner missed.
2. Ask for any briefs or evidence that you or your partner need in order to answer every response given by the 2AC/2NC
3. Ask the 2AC/2NC to explain why he or she may have granted out some arguments—especially on advantages or disadvantages.

### **Answering Cross-Ex Questions**

One of the best ways to be a good answerer of questions in cross-ex is to understand how to ask good questions. If you know what strategy your opponent is using, you can anticipate their goals and adjust your answers accordingly. Here are some other tips for getting out of cross-ex without doing too much damage to your own team:

1. *Answer requests for information clearly and honestly.* You are not generally going to win debates by misleading your opponent about, for example, what the plan does—and if you do, the other team and the judge will hate you forever. You have prepared to answer logical arguments the other team might make against your claims. If you mislead them, they are more likely to make argu-

ments that you have not anticipated. In other words, there are good reasons to be honest.

2. *Don't be a jerk.* Judges might sometimes like you to be aggressive, but nobody likes a jack-ass. If your opponent is hostile in cross-ex, respond by being reasonable. In fact, one of the best ways to take advantage of another person's hostility is to be even nicer than you normally would. This tactic helps the judge notice that the other person is being inappropriate, which will decrease their speaker points and increase yours.
3. *If you don't know the answer, say so.* More rounds have been lost by people who make things up than by people who admit they don't know the answer to every question.
4. *Avoid making claims beyond the ones in your speech.* The “reverse pit of doom” example above is a good case of what can happen when you exceed the basic claims you made in your speech or your evidence.
5. *Avoid hypotheticals.* Debaters like to ask “what if” questions like “what happens if we prove that your plan doesn't work.” You should answer “you won't.” Another kind of hypothetical question involves asking you to respond to arguments the other team has not yet made. You are not under obligation to answer those questions. A common way to answer those kinds of questions is to say “if you make that argument in a speech, we will answer it” or “we have not taken a position on that question yet.”
6. *Refer back to your evidence.* If someone asks you about an argument you have made that is supported by a quote from an expert, explain the quote to them. They may try to get you to make arguments that aren't in the quote. In general, you should resist this and continue to explain the quote. Your evidence is a great source of explanation for questions you may not know how to answer completely.

# Case Attacks

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The negative team has the obligation of proving the affirmative's claims false. There are three major strategies of which at least one must be used: Disadvantages, Topicality, and Counterplan. These three options will be discussed in separate chapters.

Generally speaking, the 1NC would run these positions and the 2NC would attack the case and/or extend (advance) these positions. Your strategy will vary from debate to debate, but always try to have at least one disadvantage in your negative approach.

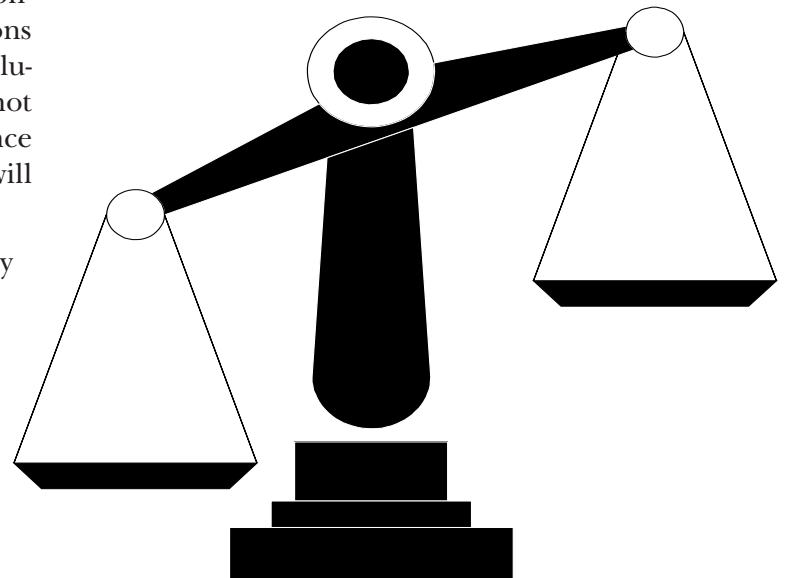
Let's take a look at what the negative could argue about the affirmative case. We will call these case attacks.

1. Anecdotal evidence. If you hear the affirmative talk about one isolated example, you should make the claim that this is anecdotal evidence. Further, you should claim that one should not base policy on one example.
2. Assertions. If the affirmative makes a claim without giving any supporting evidence or reasoning, this is an assertion and not a proven argument. You should point this out to the judge as an unsupported claim will usually not stand.
3. Conclusionary evidence. If the affirmative reads evidence which merely states the conclusion of the author without the reasons and evidence used to support that conclusion, then the validity of the claim cannot be assessed. This is a poor use of evidence and should be noted to the judge who will usually dismiss such evidence.
4. Biased source. Be on the lookout for why an author might make certain claims. Sometimes bias can be revealed in their job, their affiliations, or the manner in which they state their case. Identifying biased sources will hurt the credibility of some evidence.
5. Dates. On rapidly changing issues, the

date of the evidence is extremely important. If the affirmative reads evidence that says the economy is on the brink of collapse, or a war is about to start or some other timely issue, when the evidence was written can be extremely important.

6. Vague references. Many times different authors will use the same word to refer to different ideas or situations. A political disaster for a Democrat is entirely different than an political disaster for a Republican.
7. No causality. Sometimes evidence will refer to correlations between events, but this assertion does not mean that one causes the other. The tragedy at Columbine High School illustrates how some saw the cause as access to weapons, some as access to the Internet, some as access to violent games and movies, and others as part of an alienated suburban youth. The existence of all these variables in the same place does not guarantee that there IS causation between any of these problems and the tragedy in Colorado.

The affirmative would win if there were more advantages than disadvantages.



# Disadvantages

Disadvantages (also called “disads” or “DAs”) are negative arguments which prove the effects of the plan would be bad. Thus, the disadvantages are compared to the advantages to decide whether the effects of the plan are more advantageous than disadvantageous. There are many different parts to a disad and most disads have some or all of these parts. These parts are:

## Brink

The brink states that a certain situation exists where something could go either way. This means there is a risk of a problem happening at some point in the future.

## Uniqueness

The uniqueness states that this problem will not happen in the future, or is happening now. This is referred to as the status quo, or what is going on right now.

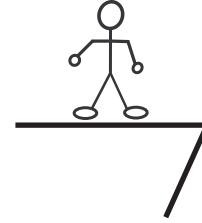
## Link

The link states why the affirmative plan causes this problem to happen. The negative usually reads a piece of evidence saying why the affirmative plan causes the way things are now to change.

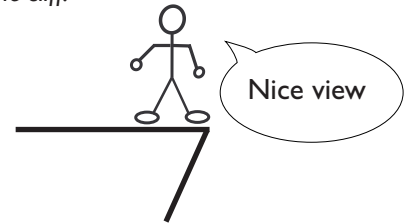
## Impact

The impact describes the problem that will happen and why it is bad. This impact is usually something very large and harmful. The negative uses this impact to say that the affirmative plan should not be done because although the plan might cause something good to happen, the problems the plan causes are worse.

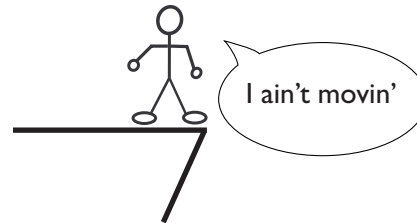
*A disad can be thought of like a person standing on a cliff:*



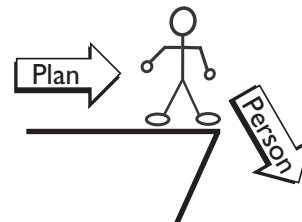
*The brink would mean that the person is standing on the edge of the cliff:*



*The uniqueness would mean that the person will not jump off the cliff unless pushed:*



*The link would mean that plan comes up and pushes the person off the cliff:*



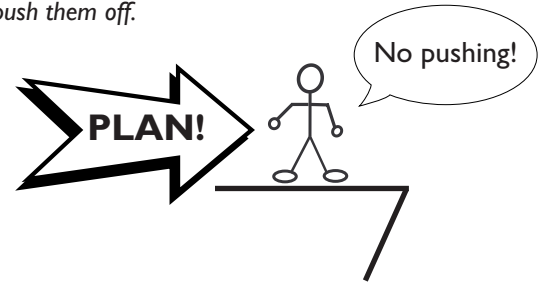
*The impact would mean that the person hits the bottom of the canyon really hard:*



## Threshold

The threshold is how big the plan has to be to cause the problem presented in the disad to happen. If the plan is a very big one, it will probably cause the problem. If the plan is tiny, it probably won't cause the problem. Saying that a disad has a small threshold indicates that it won't take a very large force to push the person off the cliff.

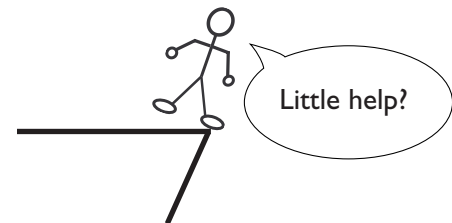
*The threshold would measure how hard the plan would have to push for the person to fall off the cliff. If the person was seven feet from the edge of the cliff, the plan would have to be huge to push them off.*



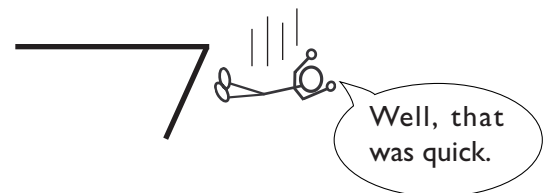
## Time Frame

The time frame is how long before the problem the disad presents happens. If there is an especially short time frame, then the problem the plan creates might happen before whatever good things the plan creates. If that happens, then the plan probably isn't a good one. If there is a long time frame, then the good things the plan creates would happen before the problems it creates. If this is the case, the plan probably is a good idea.

*The time frame would measure how long before the person fell of the cliff. If there was a long time frame, then the person would teeter on the edge of the cliff for a while before falling.*



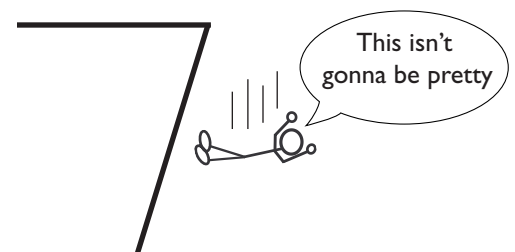
*If there were a short time frame, then the person would fall off the cliff right away.*



## Internal Link

Sometimes when the plan changes something, it does not cause a problem right away. This is when an internal link is needed. The internal link states that when the plan causes something to change, which is the link, then that causes the problem, which is the impact.

*The internal link would be that when the plan pushes the person off the cliff, the fall will be so big that the person will hurt. Connecting the fall and the hurt requires an internal link: falling hurts and the hurt is the impact.*



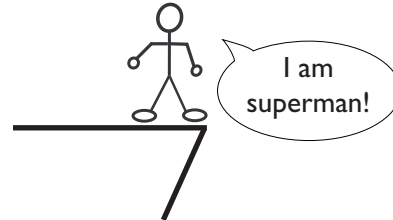
# Answers to Disadvantages

There are many affirmative arguments that give reasons why disadvantages are not true. Here are a few of the more popular ones:

## Non-unique

The non-unique argument states that the problem the disad presents will happen anyway in the status quo. If it were to happen anyway, it doesn't matter if the affirmative plan causes the problem or not.

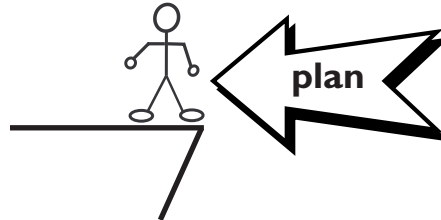
The non-unique argument would mean that the person was jumping anyway. It doesn't matter if the plan pushes them or not.



## Link Turn

The link turn states that when the affirmative plan happens, the problem the disad presents is avoided. This often means that when the affirmative plan happens the exact opposite of the problem happens.

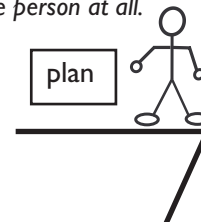
The link turn would mean the plan pushed the person away from the edge of the cliff.



## Link Take-out

The link take-out states that the affirmative plan doesn't actually cause the problem the disad presents.

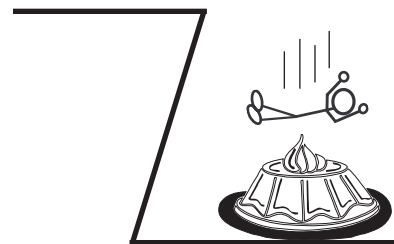
The link take-out would mean that the plan doesn't push the person at all.



## Impact Turn

The impact turn states that the problem the disad presents is actually a good thing.

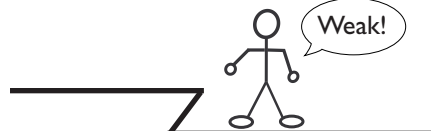
The impact turn would mean that the person lands in lime jell-o. Mmmmm! J-E-L-L-O!



## Impact Take-out

The impact take-out states that the problem the disad presents is not serious or harmful.

The impact take-out would mean that the cliff was only two feet tall. The person stubs their toe.



# Topicality

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## What Is Topicality? (a.k.a. “T”)

Debate is about making good policy, and you can't have a good policy unless you know what the key words of the policy mean. Some words are very difficult to define, and there are huge debates about them. How do you define “good” or “bad,” for example? It's easy to understand this concept by thinking about a conversation you might have with your parents. Let's say your parents tell you to be home “at a reasonable hour.” When you show up at 2:00 a.m., you get in big trouble. “But I *was* home at a reasonable hour,” you complain. “All my friends stay out until 4:00.” Your parents are not impressed by this argument. “Reasonable means midnight,” they say. How were you supposed to know what “reasonable” meant? Topicality deals with arguments about what words mean.

Every year there is a different resolution for high school policy debate. It is the affirmative's job to come up with specific policies (or “plans”) that support the general idea of the resolution. What if the affirmative policy is a good idea, but it doesn't support the resolution? For example, the affirmative might argue that every hungry child in America should be fed. This may seem like a good idea, but what if the resolution says we ought to make schools better? The plan is fine, but it doesn't support the resolution. The negative would argue that the affirmative plan is “NOT TOPICAL.” This kind of argument can be even more powerful than a disadvantage.

## Arguing About Definitions

Of course, most affirmative plans seem fairly topical at first. However, if you research different definitions for the words in the resolution, it is easy to find definitions that contradict what the affirmative plan does. For example, what if the resolution says we should increase aid to African nations? The affirmative might offer a plan to increase aid to Egypt. Is Egypt an African na-

tion? Many people might say “yes,” since Egypt is on the continent of Africa. Many experts might say “no,” however, because Egyptian culture might be considered “Middle Eastern” instead of “African.” There is no right or wrong answer for what a word means, but it is possible to make arguments about which definition is **better**.

## Winning With Topicality

Topicality exists to LIMIT what the affirmative may talk about so the negative can have a reasonable chance to argue against the case. If the affirmative could talk about anything, how could the negative prepare for the debate? The negative argues that topicality is a VOTING ISSUE. In other words, they argue that the affirmative should lose the debate if the negative can prove that the affirmative plan does not support the resolution. You can win the debate by talking about definitions!

Topicality is a very powerful argument because the affirmative can lose the debate on topicality even if they are winning every other argument in the debate! After all, if the plan is not an example of the resolution, then who cares what a great idea it is? The judge would throw out all the affirmative arguments, just like a judge in a courtroom can throw out a case if it is irrelevant. This argument is referred to as “jurisdiction.” It means that the judge cannot vote for a non-topical plan because it is not in her jurisdiction.

## Making a Topicality Argument

Topicality arguments can be written ahead of time, just like disadvantages. In general “T” arguments have the following format:

- A) Definition  
Evidence that defines one or more important words in the resolution.
- B) Violation  
An explanation of why the affirmative plan

is not an example of the kind of action described by the resolution. Answers the question “why does the plan *violate* the negative definition(s)?”

- C) **Reasons to Prefer the Negative Definition**  
Arguments about why the negative definition is better for debate than other definitions of the word(s) being contested. If the affirmative offers a different definition, why should the judge prefer the negative definition?
- D) **Voting Issue**  
Reasons why the affirmative should lose if the negative wins topicality. The two main reasons are Jurisdiction and Debatability. Jurisdiction means the judge can't vote for the plan if it is not part of the topic. Debatability means that the negative would not have a fair chance to debate if the affirmative did not have to operate within the limits of the resolution.

### **Reasons to Prefer the Negative Definition(s)**

There are basically two types of arguments negatives use to prove their definitions are the best: Standards and Specific Arguments.

#### *Standards*

Standards are very general arguments about definitions. They describe what kinds of definitions—in general—are best. For example, many negatives argue that definitions that draw a Bright Line are best. This means that the definition makes it clear what is topical and what is not. For example, if I wanted to find a definition of the word “apple,” I would not want a definition that described it as “a fruit.” That definition does NOT draw a bright line between apples and all other fruit. I would want a definition that distinguished apples from other kinds of fruit.

There are hundreds of possible standards for definitions.

#### *Specific Arguments*

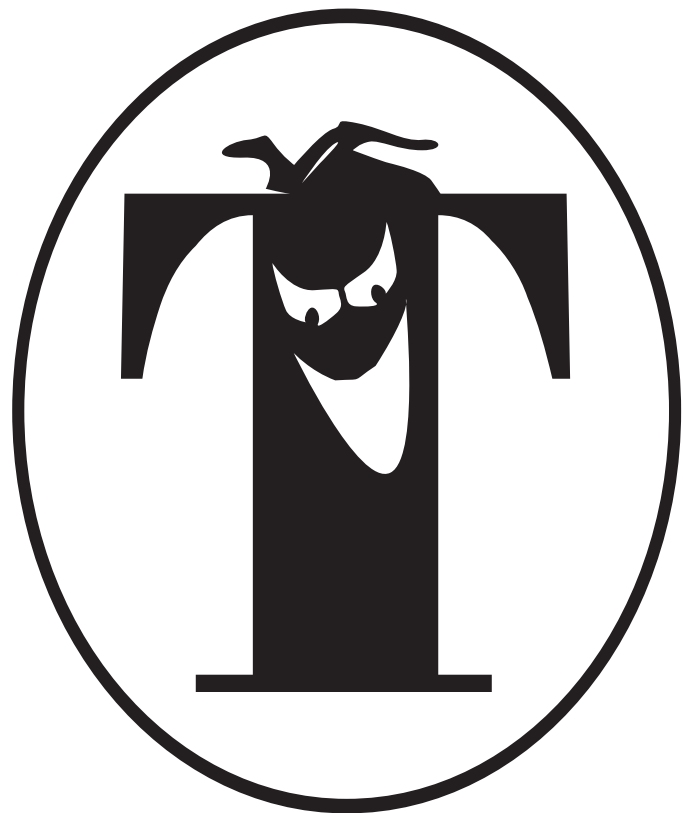
Specific arguments talk about the negative definition *in the context* of the resolution

or the debate round. If the resolution is about computers, for example, I might argue that the word “apple” should mean “a specific brand of computer” instead of “a fruit” because the first definition is more specific to the other words in the resolution.

Specific arguments might also include arguments about grammar. For example, some words can be nouns or verbs. A specific topicality argument might discuss the fact that one of the words in the resolution should be defined in a certain way because it is used as a noun and not a verb. Like standards, there are hundreds of possible specific arguments.

### **Remember: To Win Topicality, the Negative Must Prove**

- (1) That the Negative Definition(s) are Superior AND
- (2) That the Affirmative Plan Does Not Meet Those Definitions





# Answering Topicality

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Don't panic! Just because the negative makes an argument, don't assume that it's true. The truth is that it is very difficult to win topicality on the negative and relatively easy to win topicality on the affirmative. Don't get cocky, though. If you're not careful, topicality can ruin an otherwise successful affirmative round.

## Affirmative Topicality Tips

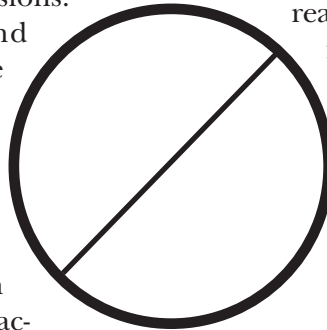
1. Write your plan with an eye to topicality. When you write your affirmative case, you make a series of strategic decisions. Most of these revolve around solving the problem your case identifies. Usually, you try to find the policy that solves the problem the best. Similarly, you should look for a policy that seems to be a clear example of the resolution. Does the plan sound like it takes the kind of action required by the resolution? Write the plan using as many of the words in the resolution as possible.
2. Research the words of the resolution. The negative will research various definitions of the important words in the resolution. The affirmative should do the same thing. Look for definitions that clearly include the kind of action taken by the plan. Failing that, look for the broadest possible definitions.
3. Research "contextual" evidence. Most people believe the function of topicality is to provide a reasonable limit on the number of cases the affirmative can run. If you can find evidence that talks about your policy and the words of the resolution in the same sentence or paragraph, you can read that evidence against topicality violations to make your case sound reasonable.
4. Remember: Advantages don't make you topical. Topicality focuses on what the PLAN does. The fact that your advantages talk

about the same things as the resolution is largely irrelevant. Make sure your PLAN is topical.

5. Prepare your topicality answers ahead of time. Anticipate the kinds of topicality arguments the negative is likely to run against you and write out answers and counter-definitions before the tournament.

## Common Answers to Topicality

1. Counter-definitions. The negative will read a definition of one of the words in the resolution that makes your plan sound non-topical. It is your job to answer that definition with a "counter-definition": a different definition of the same word that makes your plan sound topical. Once you read a counter-definition, make sure to make additional arguments about why your definition is better than the negative definition.
2. Contextual evidence. Reading evidence from the topic literature that links your plan with the words of the resolution can help make your plan sound reasonable.
3. The "We Meet" answer. Read the negative's definition. Most of the time it isn't as exclusive as they say it is. Try to think of reasons your plan actually "meets" their definition. In other words, think of reasons why the negative's definition actually describes the plan, instead of excluding it.
4. Things that check abuse. Negatives will try to argue that the plan is abusive; they will say that, if the judge allows the plan to be topical, hundreds of other plans will also become topical. This is "abusive" because it puts too much of a burden on the negative to research those hundreds of new plans. The affirmative often argues that other things "check" or prevent this abuse:



- A) Literature checks. The affirmative should argue that their plan is reasonable because it is based on evidence found in the topic literature. In other words, the affirmative argues that the judge should not worry too much about topicality because the affirmative case generally concerns itself with the same issues as the resolution.
- B) Other words check. The resolution is composed of many different words. The affirmative often argues that, since the plan has to be an example of ALL the different words in the resolution, then violating a single word is not such a big deal. If the plan meets all the words in the resolution except one, for example, then it is still talking about the same general things as the resolution.
- C) Solvency checks. The affirmative has to prove that its plan solves the problem identified by the case. On topicality, the affirmative often argues that its definitions could not really add hundreds of new plans to the topic because most of those new plans would not solve any significant problem.
5. Counter-standards. The negative assumes that the judge must use certain standards to decide the issue of topicality. The affirmative should think of its own standards. The most common affirmative counter-standard is “reasonability,” also known as “debatability.” The affirmative argues that, as long as the plan is reasonable, the judge should ignore topicality. The affirmative must provide reasons why its plan is reasonable. These reasons might include things like “if the negative has evidence against the case—if the negative can fairly DEBATE the case—then the plan is reasonably topical. The bottom line of reasonability is that it urges the judge not to choose between two competing definitions. Instead the judge is urged to decide whether or not the plan unfairly harms the negative in the round.
6. Reasons why topicality is NOT a voting issue. Most debater are taught that topicality is an absolute voting issue, which means that the negative can win the entire round just by winning topicality. Not everyone agrees that this is true, however. Here are some common reasons affirmatives give why the judge should not consider topicality:
- A) Language is indeterminate. Is there such thing as “the best” definition? Ultimately, the words we use to describe things are not precise. Using an earlier example, what is “a reasonable hour” for a teenager to get home at night? There is no precise answer to this question. Because language is imprecise (or “indeterminate”), many affirmatives argue that it is unfair to base a decision in a round on competing definitions.
- B) Topicality is not “real world.” Many topicality arguments are based on the assumption that a debate round is like a courtroom. In a courtroom, a judge can throw out a case if it does not meet certain strict definitions. In such a case, we would say that the judge lacks jurisdiction over the case. Many people believe that debate rounds are more like legislatures than court rooms. In a legislature (such as Congress), representatives are free to debate about anything, as long as it is important. Many affirmatives argue that topicality does not reflect the “real world” requirements of policy-making.
- C) Topicality silences important voices. In many cases, important ideas are not heard by policymakers because they come from people who have unpopular opinions. Policymakers avoid listening to these important ideas by using obscure rules and procedures. Some affirmatives argue that topicality is just another meaningless procedure which prevents important ideas from being debated. Evidence describing the importance of the plan is helpful in making this claim.

# Critiques

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## A Different Way to Attack the Affirmative

Most of the arguments in a debate round are based on the kinds of arguments made by traditional policymakers, such as legislators and political analysts. Traditional policymakers are not the only people who comment on important public issues, however. Increasingly, debaters have begun to model some of their arguments on the objections of philosophers, rhetorical critics, and other scholars.

The critique—a.k.a. the kritik or the K—is an argument usually used by the negative to attack the affirmative’s fundamental assumptions. Sometimes the affirmative makes these assumptions by choice, and sometimes they make these assumptions because it’s their job to defend the resolution. In either case, the negative focuses on what the other team says IN THE ROUND, not what they propose to do outside the round.

One of the simplest examples of a critique might be an argument that the language the affirmative uses is racist. For example, some scholars argue that certain kinds of policy language contains hidden racism, such as some of the arguments made against welfare. If the affirmative were to make one of these arguments, the negative might use a critique to point out the hidden racism in the case as a reason to vote against the affirmative.

### Huh? What? Excuse Me?

Don’t worry if you’re confused. Critiques are complicated arguments, and many people are not familiar with the kinds of ideas associated with critiques. Let’s answer some basic questions.

*What is the critique?* A critique is a way to criticize the assumptions an affirmative makes or the language debaters use to make their arguments.

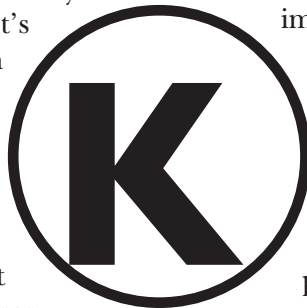
*What is an assumption?* An assumption is a part of an argument which people think is true, but they never explicitly prove to be true.

*How are assumptions revealed?* Sometimes assumptions are revealed by the language that we use to make our claims and arguments. Sometimes assumptions are revealed in the way we claim to know something. The first type of criticism is a language critique and the second type of criticism is a philosophical critique.

*How does a negative attack the assumptions?* First, the negative must identify the assumption and how it is revealed. Second, the negative must explain how the assumption links to the critique.

And, third, the negative must explain the implications of the critique. Sounds like a disadvantage, doesn’t it?

*What are the possible implications of the critique?* Generally, critiques can have three implications. One is that they might prove that the affirmative case does not prove the harm. Second, they might prove that the affirmative is unable to solve, they might have consequences similar to those of a disadvantage. In other words, a critique might justify voting against the affirmative altogether in order to reject the assumptions the affirmative makes.



### Another Example

The critique can operate in the simplest facets of your life. You witness some of these in your own classroom. Thinking about testing and test-taking can illustrate how a critique might function.

- 1) Challenging the harm assumptions. Many people assume students do not learn as much as they used to because test scores are lower than they were in the past. However, the negative might challenge the assump-

tion that test scores are a reliable measure of student achievement. This challenges the way proponents of testing assume test scores provide useful information. If the test scores are unreliable, then the affirmative cannot prove the harm by proving test scores are low. Test scores, the negative would argue, do not reveal accurate information of student achievement, therefore they cannot be used to prove that students are underachieving.

- 2) Challenging solvency. Many people argue that testing should be used to guide curriculum changes in order to enhance student learning. However, if tests are critiqued because they do not truly measure what a student has learned, then using test results to revise the curriculum is a wasted exercise and will not achieve the goal of improving student achievement.
- 3) Disadvantageous consequences. The negative might argue that there are disadvantage implications of supporting the affirmative in light of the critique. Some might argue that testing does not measure knowledge but instead indicates how good students are at taking tests. Consequently, increasing tests or making tests more rigorous will only serve to perpetuate racism and sexism in education. The negative might argue that the judge should reject any policy that results in greater racism and sexism.

### Why Are Critiques Valuable?

Critiques are valuable arguments for several reasons.

- 1) Critiques are highly generic—that is, they can be applied to a large variety of cases. The resolution always makes critical assumptions, such as who should act, how the policy should be implemented, why a particular area is important, etc. The critique provides a general argument that can be used to attack those critical assumptions.
- 2) Critiques have multiple consequences—that

is, they can minimize the affirmative advantage while also providing an argument to weigh against whatever advantage the affirmative can claim.

- 3) Critiques integrate many arguments into one position. Because the case arguments frequently stem from the critique, the negative has a position in the debate that is coherent.
- 4) Critiques frequently have a priori implications. An *a priori* argument is one that must be resolved first, usually before the substantive issues of the debate are resolved. In our example of testing, the negative could argue that policies that reinforce racism or sexism are so noxious that they need to be avoided absolutely. If testing is racist or sexist, it should be rejected regardless of substantive benefits that might result from increased testing.
- 5) Critiques frequently avoid uniqueness problems. Critiques are often found in the writings of those who criticize current policies. Affirmative debaters frequently rely on some element of the current system to implement their plans or to prove why new policies would better achieve the goals of the present system. Critique writers frequently argue, in effect, that the goals of the present system should be rejected at every opportunity. In addition, many critique writers argue that the most important place to reject accepted ideas is in individual settings, thus making the critique unique each time a judge has the opportunity to reject the affirmative.
- 6) Critiques shift the debate to negative ground. Affirmatives are used to debating on THEIR ground: the case evidence and the implications of the plan. Critiques offer negatives the opportunity to shift the focus of the debate to an issue they are more familiar with: the intricacies of the critique. This can give the negative a sort of “home

# Answering Critiques

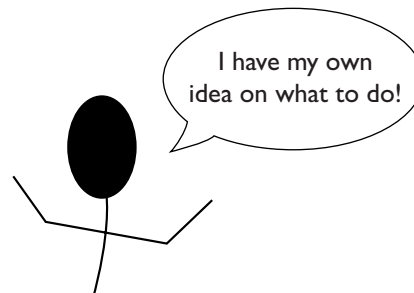
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While critiques are a valuable negative argument, they are also vulnerable to some general affirmative answers. The following arguments are suggestions that require more substantive development from you as you research and debate critiques during the academic year.

- 1) Debate the specific critique. There are many answers to critiques that merely require research like any other negative argument. Remember that philosophers and rhetorical critics get into arguments with each other just like legislators and policy analysts do. The general rule is: for every group of scholars who support the ideas behind the critique, there is a different group of scholars who think the ideas in the critique are terrible. If you find out that a certain critique is being run, research it just like you would any other argument in order to find those scholars who disagree with it.
  - 2) Use cross-ex time to ask about the critique. You can't debate what you don't understand, and critiques can be very difficult to understand. Often, evidence in critiques uses academic jargon and obscure words. Don't be intimidated. If the other team can't explain what these words mean, the judge won't be willing to vote for them. If they CAN explain them, then you will be able to understand them, too. Ask how the plan links to the critique and what implications the critique has in the round. Don't let the other team
  - 3) Don't forget to use your own brain! Once you understand what the critique says, you can answer it with arguments that make sense to you. Also, remember that the evidence in the IAC is designed to answer objections to the case. Use that evidence creatively.
  - 4) Utilize your specific affirmative answers. Many of the implications of the critique
- are very generalized, but the affirmative can point to specific evidence to prove both their harms and their solvency. Thus, general indictments might not be as persuasive as the specific proofs offered by the affirmative.
- 5) Debate the uniqueness of the critique. Negative critique debaters try to avoid the uniqueness debate and argue that it is irrelevant. However, the implications of the critique frequently occur at the margins of incremental impact. In other words, the critique often talks about harms that are already occurring all around us. The affirmative should stress that if the affirmative advantage is intact, the marginal increase in disadvantage beyond the present system does not merit rejection.
  - 6) Argue that there is no alternative. If the affirmative harm is substantial, the plan is largely solvent, and the critique has uniqueness problems, press the negative to defend what their alternative to the plan and the present system will be. If there is no alternative, then it makes uniqueness arguments against the critique that much more valuable.
  - 7) Attack the alternative. If the negative offers alternatives to the plan and the present system, then the affirmative can argue that the alternative is a bad idea.
  - 8) Make the negative defend the idea of critiques. Many members of the debate community have accepted the idea of critiquing assumptions as acceptable. However, many others do not believe that philosophical and rhetorical ideas have any place in policy debate. Make the negative explain why we should consider these kinds of arguments if the goal of debate is to train students to study policy issues like legislators and political analysts do.

# Running Counterplans

A counterplan is an alternative to the affirmative plan that is presented by the Negative team. Sometimes the negative will not only argue that the affirmative plan is a bad idea, but will also present their own way of solving the problems cited by the affirmative team.



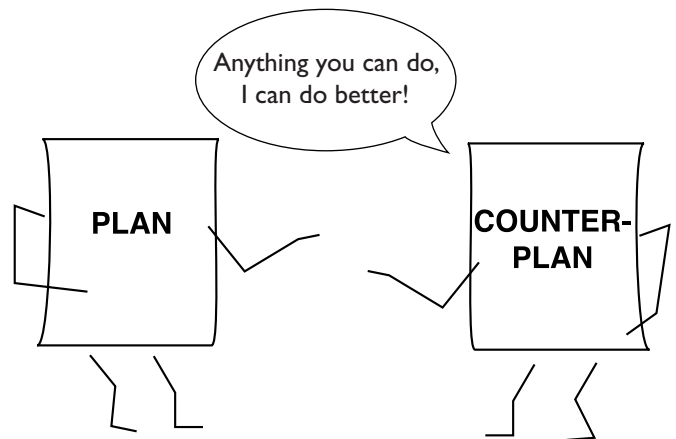
Like the affirmative team, the negative team must prove the counterplan is fair and a good idea. Counterplans have to meet two burdens.

## 1. Counterplans should be different from the plan.

Counterplans can be very similar to the plan, or they can be completely different from the plan. Some counterplans (called "plan-inclusive counterplans") advocate parts of the plan. The point is that you must be able to explain how the counterplan is not exactly the same as the plan.

## 2. Counterplans must be competitive.

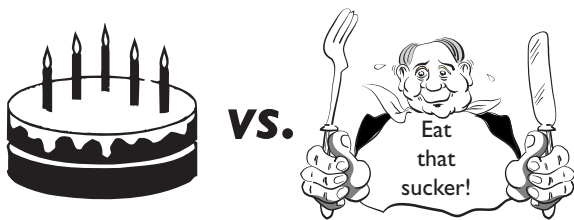
Competition is a term used to describe the battle between the Affirmative plan and the Counterplan. For a counterplan to compete with the affirmative plan, and to win, it must be proven that the counterplan alone is better than the affirmative plan alone or better than adopting the counterplan and affirmative plan together. The competition of the counterplan is determined in two ways.



A) **Mutual Exclusivity.** This means the counterplan and the affirmative plan cannot occur at the same time. They cannot exist together.

B) **Net Benefits.** This means that doing the counterplan alone provides more benefits than doing the plan alone and provides more benefits than doing the counterplan and plan together. Counterplans, like affirmative plans, can have advantages. These advantages prove why the counterplan is better than the affirmative. Often, the advantages of the counterplan are negative disadvantages to the affirmative plan.

### ***You Can't Have Your Cake AND Eat It, Too.***



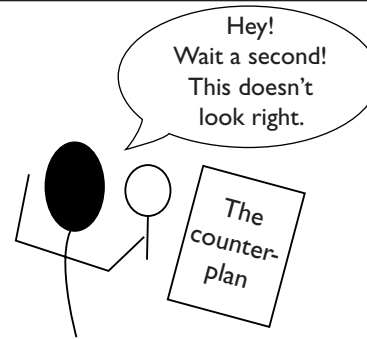
*This old saying describes net benefits pretty well. If the problem is that you are hungry, the plan might be to have a cake. The counterplan would be to EAT the cake. The counterplan is net beneficial because eating the cake solves your hunger problem AND if you try to "have" the cake at the same time that you eat it, you will be very confused (and probably messy). "Eating the cake" is more advantageous than just having it, and "eating the cake" is also a better idea than BOTH "eating the cake" and "having the cake" at the same time.*

A counterplan must meet these burdens in order to beat the affirmative plan.

# Answering Counterplans

Counterplans must meet certain burdens in order to beat the Affirmative plan. Therefore, it is the job of the affirmative to show how the counterplan does not meet these burdens. Affirmative answers should expose the flaws in the counterplan and show why it is a bad idea.

Affirmative answers can be found while looking at different parts of the counterplan.



## 1. The counterplan is too similar to the plan.

Some counterplans include so much of the plan that the affirmative can argue they should not be seen as a legitimate alternative to the plan. Some affirmatives argue that counterplans should be rejected if they include any part of the plan. Others suggest different standards for legitimacy.

## 2. The counterplan is not competitive.

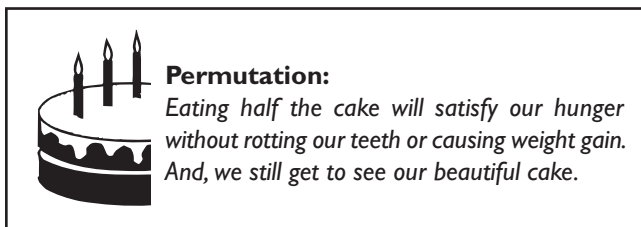
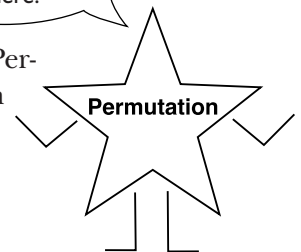
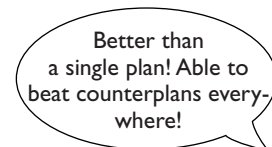
Affirmatives should argue that the counterplan is not competitive with the affirmative plan. In order to do this, affirmative teams have three choices.

### A. Prove it is not mutually exclusive.

### B. Prove it is not net beneficial.

### C. Offer permutations

Permutations are an affirmative's special weapon against counterplans. Permutations are arguments that prove the entire plan can be combined with parts of the counterplan in order to gain the advantages of the counterplan without rejecting the plan.



## 3. Solvency

Affirmatives can argue that the counterplan does not solve. The affirmative should look to see if the counterplan solves the affirmative advantage, the advantages

of the counterplan, and avoids the disadvantages.

## 4. Disadvantages

Counterplans, like affirmative plans can have disadvantages. The affirmative should argue that if the counterplan is done something bad will happen that wouldn't otherwise happen if the affirmative plan is done.



# How to Give Good Rebuttals

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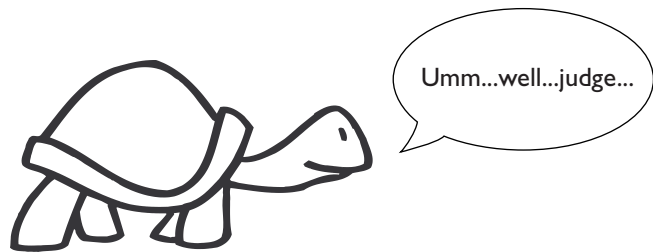
Most debaters, coaches, and judges would agree that rebuttals are the most difficult and yet the most important parts of the debate. Not only is there less time within each speech, but each debater has to sort through all of the issues to determine which ones are the most important ones! What a debater does or does not do in rebuttals will decide who wins the debate. Very few debaters (especially beginners) can hope to extend everything that happened in the constructive speeches. Debaters don't have to do that and just because a team may have dropped a point or an argument is not an automatic reason to vote against that team. What matters is the type of argument that is extended or dropped in rebuttals—this will determine the winner of the round.

## Think about these four issues when rebuttals happen:

- Which arguments have more weight at the end of the round?
- Which outcomes (disads, counterplans) are more likely given lots of internal links?
- What about time frame—what happens first?
- What about the quality of evidence?

## Here are some other helpful hints:

1. Avoid repetition. Don't just repeat your constructive arguments. Beat the other team's arguments and tell the judge why your arguments are better.
2. Avoid passing ships. Don't avoid what the other team said. You must clash directly with their responses.
3. Avoid reading evidence only. You must be explaining and telling the judge why these issues win the debate.
4. Avoid rereading evidence that has already been read in constructives. You can make reference to it by pulling it, but don't re-read it.
5. Avoid "lumping and dumping." Don't try to go for everything. You can't make 12 responses to each argument in a few minutes.
6. Be organized. Don't mindlessly talk about issues at random. Be specific and logical about winning issues.
7. Don't be a blabbering motormouth. Speak quickly but not beyond your ability. If you speak too fast, you will stumble and not get through as much.
8. Don't whine to the judge about fairness or what the other team might have done that you think is unethical. Make responses and beat them.
9. Don't make new arguments. You can read new evidence but you can't run new disadvantages or topicality responses. You are limiting to extending the positions laid out in the constructive speeches.
10. Use signposting. Make sure the judge know where you are on the flowsheet. This is not the time to lose the judge on the flow.
11. Use issue packages. Organize your arguments into issue packages. Choose arguments which you want to win. Don't go for everything. Extend those arguments that you need to win.
12. Cross-apply arguments. If you dropped an argument in a prior speech that you think was important don't act like your losing. Cross-apply arguments you made somewhere else in the debate.



*A rebuttal is not the time to go slow.*



# The First Negative Rebuttal

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**The general purpose of the INR is two-fold: to select winning arguments and to pressure the IAR.**

The single biggest mistake INR's make is to repeat or "extend" exactly what the 2NC did. If you remember only a single idea from this section it should be this: **DO NOT COVER THE 2NC ISSUES!** The proper division of labor in the negative block allows the 2NC and 1NR to pursue separate issues to increase their chances of winning the debate. When the 1NR merely repeats the 2NC, the opportunity for pressuring the IAR is lost, and the debate becomes muddled and confused.

**If you remember  
only ONE idea from  
this section it should  
be this:  
DO NOT COVER  
THE 2NC ISSUES!**

What you need to do is to balloon something. Which argument you balloon will vary from round to round. Typically, the 1NR must realize that with less speech time, they can only balloon one major issue and consequently they must select the right one. Remember, the purpose of the 1NR is to establish winning arguments and put the pressure on the IAR. It follows that the argument chosen must have enough impact to win the round and be developed enough to require time and attention in the IAR.

This strategy necessitates the dropping of arguments. The negative has the luxury of focusing on the weakest part of the affirmative case, so they can strategically drop certain arguments in order to concentrate on those parts.

In addition to ballooning one major issue, and strategically dropping inconsequential ones, the 1NR has the option of quickly arguing a few key case attacks. For example, you may have some clear and persuasive solvency presses.

Finally, the 1NR must cover any additional advantages that were claimed in the 2AC (these are sometimes referred to as "add-ons"). The 2NC could cover add-ons, but usually doesn't because the 1NR has more time to prepare.

## Tips for the INR

1. Give a ten second intro and a one-line conclusion which persuasively states the impact your speech has in the round.
2. When ballooning, it is crucial that you carefully answer 2AC responses point-by-point.
3. Don't repeat tags. Extending an argument is not repeating the argument. It is rebutting the affirmative's argument and explaining why yours is better.
4. Use no prep time. The biggest favor you can do for the IAR is take lots of prep time before your speech. The 1NR speech should be prepared during the 2NC.
5. "Steal" prep time and use it wisely. You have all the prep time used by the 2NC, all the speech time used by the 2NC, and all the time spent cross-examining the 2NC to get your speech ready. That's more time than anyone else in the round! Use it to prepare excellent, written-out explanations of key points in your speech.
6. Anticipate IAR responses and pre-empt them. As the season progresses, you will know what to pre-empt by flowing the IAR. Resist the temptation to close up shop after your 1NR.

# The First Affirmative Rebuttal

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**The purpose of the IAR is simple: don't lose the debate.**

The strategy is equally simple: don't drop anything. Cover every important argument. You cannot answer each subpoint on an argument, but you should answer any argument which could potentially win the debate for the negative. There are three areas in which you may drop some points to cover the entire issue:

- Disads. Pick a set of 2AC arguments to extend. Or, if the disad was introduced in 2NC, go for links or impacts, but not both. You simply don't have time.
- Counterplans. Again, go for a set of 2AC responses. Go for either topicality, competitiveness, or disadvantages. The affirmatives have the luxury of picking and choosing which counterplan take-outs to extend.
- Case attacks. You don't have to win every card on case. You need to win enough to outweigh disad risks. You need to win enough of the prima facie burdens of the 1AC. If you have more than one advantage you may choose to jettison the weakest one.

## Tips for the IAR

1. Word economy. Be concise. Everything should be on blocks. Use abbreviations. Highlight your evidence. Eliminate pet phrases. Don't overexplain. Preflow your speech. Place important words first on the label.
2. Refer to previous evidence. It is not possible to read much evidence in the 1AR. Use the evidence from the 1AC and 2AC by extending the cards.
3. Be organized. It is important to be organized for all speeches, and it is

critically important to be organized for the 1AR. Have all of your briefs in order before you begin to speak.

4. Order of issues. Always put topicality first in the 1AR. Then go to disads/counterplans. Go to case last. Ending on familiar ground helps you allocate the time.
5. Time allocation. The last thing you do before your delivery of the 1AR is to count the number of issues you will be covering. This will give you a sense of how much time you can spend on each argument.
6. Exploit negative contradictions. Look for some of these popular contradictions:
  - A. Inherency-Disad. If negative says the status quo is working, then why haven't the disads happened?
  - B. Solvency-Disad. You may be able to grant a negative solvency argument in order to evade the link to a disad.
  - C. Disad-Disad. Negatives often run disads with contradictory theses. You can grant one disad to prevent another. Caution: do not grant negative arguments that could beat you. For example, if you are going to grant out one solvency arguments to evade a disad, make sure you have another solvency mechanism left to gain an advantage.

**Remember, the IAR has to speak quickly and use good word economy because the IAR has only a few minutes to answer the entire negative block.**

# The Second Negative Rebuttal

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## Now is the time to put all of your eggs in one basket!

The negative search for truth ends in the 2NR. Winning requires the 2NR to choose the issues and approach to create a persuasive bottom line negative position. The 2NR cannot pursue everything in the debate because the judge must be told which arguments to consider. If not given a rationale or “bottom line” position, the judge will not know why to vote negative. A winning 2NR writes the ballot for the judge.

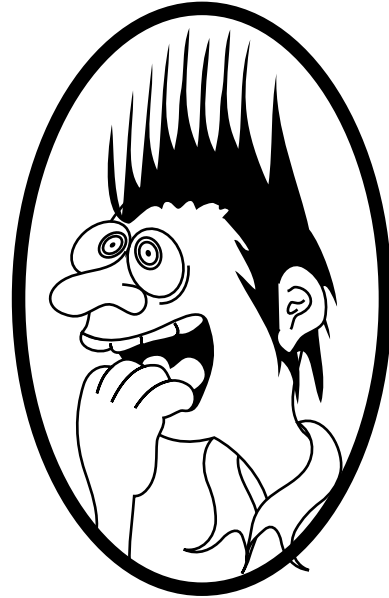
There are two ways to win in the 2NR: “Win the Drop” or “Win the Position.”

- Win the Drop. Many debates are decided because the 1AR could not cover the negative block or because debaters could not flow very well and missed responses. The 2NR’s job would simply be to pull the dropped argument and explain why it is sufficient to vote negative. This entails weighing the dropped argument against the affirmative case. Examples include dropped disads, topicality, or major case arguments.
- Win the Position. The 2NR must pull all negative issues together in a way that jettisons all irrelevant material and focuses the debate on the single negative strategy. Listed below are several typical negative frameworks that can be used alone or in combination with other frameworks. Remember the importance of narrowing the debate to a simple bottom line position and do not employ too many frameworks at once.

Either way, you will still need to win specific kinds of arguments in order to win the round. Here are some examples of the kinds of arguments you need to win in order to win the debate:

High Impact Disads. Win a disad with an impact that outweighs the case advantage(s).

Topicality. Argue that topicality is an absolute voting issue. In other words, the judge should decide topicality before evaluating the



**It can be very difficult to decide which issues to focus on in the 2NR**

rest of the debate. The 2NR may combine the topicality framework with some other framework or the 2NR may wish to pursue topicality exclusively.

Prima Facie Issue. The 2NR may succeed in totally beating the affirmative on their own ground with one of the case requirements. The only problem with this is that, without a good disad, the affirmative can always argue that the judge has nothing to lose by voting affirmative since, at worst, nothing bad will happen—we might as well try to improve the status quo. This is why it is important to make arguments that *turn* the case—arguments that the plan actually makes the problems identified by the case *worse* than they are in the status quo.

The Counterplan Position. The 2NR may choose to focus exclusively on the counterplan position-especially if it competes with the affirmative's advantage(s) and the negatives are unique to the affirmative solvency.

### Tips for the 2NR

1. Preempt the 2AR. Cliches include:
  - No new arguments in the 2AR.
  - No new cross-applications in the 2AR
  - If you can't trace it back to the 1AR, ignore it.
2. Do not go for everything. You must win a position or a dropped argument. Now is the time to consider putting all of your eggs in one basket.
3. Extend your negative block arguments. Don't just summarize. There are two parts to extending an argument. Deny the truth/relevance of the opposition argument and explain why yours is better. Many 2NR's fall into the "no clash trap." You must draw the connection between your arguments and theirs. Cliches include:
  - "They have good evidence here, but ours answers it."
  - "We post-date their uniqueness evidence"
  - "On topicality, they do not extend their own definition, our definition is the only one in the debate."Each of these cliches considers the opponent's argument and attempts to answer it.
4. Sequence. Go to your best arguments first. Spend a significant amount of time on the argument you want the judge to vote on.
5. Compare arguments. Frequently, debaters assume that if they extend their arguments the judge will simply know that their arguments are more important than their opponents'. Do not be so trusting. Cliches include:

- "They may be winning a little advantage, but the disadvantage will outweigh."
  - "They have a good definition, but it unfairly expands the grounds of the topic, so it is not good for debate."
  - "Even if they are winning a risk of a turn on this disadvantage, the counterplan will solve the turn."
6. Take all of your prep time. Use all of your prep time to write out responses to the issues you have narrowed down. Take a moment to look over the flow and be certain you are not going to miss an important affirmative response. Check with your partner to see what issues he or she might think are important.

**Remember: the 2NR and the 2AR represent each team's FINAL OPPORTUNITY to explain its point of view to the judge.**

**If you have anything important to say, NOW IS THE TIME TO SAY IT! Arguing with the judge after the round is over might make you feel better, but it won't change the outcome of the debate and it will probably make the judge hate you.**

# The Second Affirmative Rebuttal

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**The Affirmative gets the last speech in the debate, and they need to take full advantage of it.**

The general strategy of the 2AR is to re-establish case advantage(s) and to minimize or take out the impacts of the negative arguments. In order to minimize the impact of the negative arguments, go to the best issue in the middle of your speech. This trick tends to de-emphasize the arguments that the 2NR claimed were critical in the debate. In order to re-establish your case advantage, begin your speech with your own agenda or overview that puts forth the most compelling reason to vote affirmative. For example, your case strategy may have been to run a low impact, high probability advantage that evades all disad links. In that case, you would first go back to your advantage and claim it to be absolute, then cover the disad, arguing zero risk on each.

## Tips for the 2AR

1. Extend. Don't just repeat or summarize your arguments.
2. Group. Select the strongest 1AR responses to go for.
3. Sequence. Set your agenda. Cover the 2NR. End with a short explanation of why you have won the round.
4. Re-tell the story. Every affirmative has a narrative behind it. Emphasize how your story is more plausible or more compelling or more anything than theirs is.
5. Allocate time like the 2NR. Spend time on the issues that the 2NR spent time on. It will do no good to re-explain case for 3 minutes if the 2NR spent 4 minutes on a disad, a counterplan, and a topicality violation.
6. Wrap up the debate. Explain why you should still win the round even if you have

lost a few issues. If you are unable to beat an argument, then say something like: "even if you grant the negative a partial solvency argument, then you still vote affirmative on the chance the plan will solve." Or, "even with only 50% solvency, you should still vote affirmative since it is comparatively better than the status quo."



### The routine ...

1. 1AC-Case and plan.
2. 1NC-Topicality, disads, counterplan, or case.
3. 2AC-Answer 1NC and extend case.
4. 2NC-Case and answer 2AC-leave case arguments for 1NR.
5. 1NR-Answer rest of 2AC.
6. 1AR-Answer 2NC and 1NR.
7. 2NR-Isolate the voting issues.
8. 2AR-Isolate the voting issues.

# Strategic Considerations for Rebuttals

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## **INR (First Negative Rebuttal)**

1. Select issues not covered by your partner (NEVER, EVER RE-COVER THEIR ARGUMENTS) and extend them as comprehensively as possible to be winning issues (and to put pressure on the 1AR).
2. Finish extending issues that your partner didn't finish.
3. Make sure that the major impacts claimed by the other team are minimized.
4. Take NO preparation time for your speech, as you will have the 2NC and cross-ex (which is a minimum of 11 minutes.)
5. Read extension evidence to make sure that your positions are well explained and evidenced.
6. Do not go for all your arguments. Pick the strongest and most winnable and blow them up.
7. Be careful to not extend arguments that contradict your partner's.

## **IAR (First Affirmative Rebuttal)**

1. Extend several winning arguments against each negative position extended in the block to give your partner flexibility in the 2AR.
2. Don't get bogged down in explanation—there's too much to cover to try and explain everything.
3. Take as little prep time as possible, try to flow your answers to the 2NC during the cross-ex of the 2NC.
4. Have your partner look for evidence for you so you can concentrate on your flowing answers to arguments.
5. Order your arguments and cover them in order of importance (the first being the most important), and make sure to answer new block arguments first.

6. Try to group and consolidate arguments, as well as cutting back the number of cards read to maximize your efficiency.

## **2NR (Second Negative Rebuttal)**

1. Don't go for everything. It is far better to make strategic choices and go for a few things well (this will also probably entail reading FEW cards).
2. Assess impacts to try and get into the mentality of the judge and determine what they will find the most compelling.
3. Close the door on likely 2AR arguments and the things that they're winning the most clearly as well as closing the door on new arguments.
4. Don't go for Topicality unless you can win it in a minute or you intend to go for it exclusively.
5. Spend sufficient time on you partner's arguments and try to order what you can go for in terms of importance.
6. When kicking out a disadvantage, make sure that you leave no room for a turn-around.
7. When extending disads, make sure to extend the arguments dropped by the 1AR and assess impacts as compared to the affirmative case.

## **2AR (Second Affirmative Rebuttal)**

1. Be selective in the answers you go for and REALLY explain them.
2. Assess impacts well and compare the case to the disads that the negative might win.
3. Re-order from the 2NR: address the issues that you're winning first and then deal with the rest of the issues in the debate.

These suggestions appear as explained by David Cheshier in his "rebuttal skills" lecture at the Emory National Debate Institute.

# Checklist for Winning and Losing

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Listed below are some brief guidelines on what the affirmative must do in order to win the debate based on different arguments. Remember, the presumption falls on the negative, and the affirmative has the burden of proving that the affirmative policy is desirable. If the negative can win just one of many issues, that may be enough for a negative win.

1. **Topicality:** The affirmative does not initiate the topicality argument. If it is not presented by the negative, then it will not be an issue in the debate. If it is presented by the negative team, then you must remember to do several things:
  - a. Answer the standards. Make sure you have reasons why their standards are unreasonable.
  - b. Argue each violation. Make sure that you have extension briefs on the definitions that you think will be debated. Make the negative prove why their definitions are better than yours.
  - c. Ask for their Topicality briefs in CX and make sure that you have covered all of the violations. If time permits, examine the definitions that they read and look for inconsistencies within the evidence.
  - d. Argue that Topicality is not a voting issue. Make sure you have briefs on this response.
  - e. Never drop topicality in rebuttals-for most judges that becomes an absolute voting issue and an easy way to decide the debate. Don't let any judges have this luxury of decision.
2. **Disadvantages:** Next to topicality, the disadvantages are the most important issues in the round. Judges are looking for comparisons after the round-affirmative advantages in competition with negative disadvantages.

Make sure you review the section of disadvantages.

- a. Attack the links.
  - b. Disprove or turn the impacts.
  - c. Argue threshold or brink is not unique.
  - d. Prove disads won't happen.
  - e. Anticipate what the disads will be and have briefs ready to respond to these arguments.
3. **Affirmative Case Issues:** Probably the most important case issue will be solvency. However, there are some other issues you need to be able to defend.
    - a. **Inherency.** The negative will argue that the plan is already being done or will be done in the status quo. Sometimes the negative will press that the affirmative must show what the "core motive" is behind the inherency barrier. The bottom line is that over the years, inherency has become a somewhat mediocre argument. As long as the affirmative keeps extending the evidence that the SQ cannot solve the problem without the affirmative plan, and that the affirmative plan will not be passed in the status quo, the affirmative should be able to win that there is some unique advantage to be gained by voting for the affirmative.

Even if the status quo is likely to solve large portions of the affirmative harm, without a disadvantage, the affirmative plan is still desirable.
    - b. **Significance.** If any affirmative loses on the question of significance, then the affirmative was never really prepared to debate anyway! Negative teams rarely get by arguing that the quantifiable harm selected by the affirmative is not

significant. If an affirmative argues that 50,000 homeless people died of AIDS how can the negative determine that number has to be 150,000 in order to be significant? All an affirmative has to do is argue that the case is comparatively advantageous compared to the status quo. If there is more advantage with the affirmative position than the negative position, then the affirmative should win significance.

- c. Solvency. Really this issue is the starting point for comparing advantages to disadvantages. The negative might attack solvency three ways.

First, they might simply indict the affirmative evidence. Put good solvency cards in the IAC. Prepare to extend with additional evidence. Be able to extend the qualifications of your sources. Be prepared to read evidence indicating others believe the plan will solve.

Second, they might argue plan-meet-needs (PMNs). PMNs indicate that structural inadequacies prevent solving even if the plan is a good idea. Perhaps the personnel, equipment, expertise, and other resources vital to solving the problem are not available. Thus, the affirmative must not only show the plan is a good idea, but that the plan is sufficiently effective to attain some advantage.

Third, they might argue circumvention. Actors outside the bounds of control of the affirmative might act to block the plan. Frequently identifying who opposes the plan and why, will provide the negative with arguments for individuals who will obstruct the outcome of the plan. These are usually individuals who have a vested interest in keeping the status quo. The affirmative can answer this argument by proving that these individuals or groups do not have an interest in blocking the plan, or that they are unable to do so.

- 4. Counterplans. Sometimes the best way to beat a counterplan is to throw it back to the negative. In order for the counterplan to win it must meet three criteria: It should be nontopical, it must be competitive, and it must have an advantage which is greater than the affirmative plan. The affirmative can respond several ways. First, you can prepare solvency arguments against that particular counterplan. Second, you can argue that the counterplan does not compete—that you can do them both at the same time. Third, you can argue that your advantages are superior to the counterplan advantages. For more discussion on the issue of counterplans, review that section of the manual.

Most beginning debaters will lose the debate by dropping or not responding to arguments. Don't be afraid to offer answers to arguments you are unprepared for. That will cost you the debate. Just think clearly and you will come up with answers.





# Cutting Cards and Citing Evidence

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## Cutting Cards

There are several main things to remember as you begin the process of research.

1. Try to cut only cards that make arguments. There is definitely a place for informational cards, but they should be labeled as such so they're not used inappropriately in rounds.
2. Never, Ever cut one sentence cards.
3. Cards should be complete thoughts, and this will always mean complete sentences (cards should begin with a capital letter and end with a punctuation mark.)
4. Try to cut at least a paragraph for each card, so there is a context for the author's ideas.
5. Don't ever cut cards that aren't what the author advocates. This includes cards where the word after the card is **BUT**.

## Simple Guidelines for Evidence Citation

1. Evidence should always have full and complete citations. Just as articles should footnote their sources, debaters should make it possible for others to identify where evidence comes from. This includes the following:
  - a. The author
  - b. The author's qualifications
  - c. The publication
  - d. The date of the publication
  - e. The page number of the original quotation.
2. All evidence should be clearly cited on a brief. Cite lists which can be coded are acceptable, but **BEFORE THE BRIEF IS REPRODUCED FOR OTHERS**, the citation of every card should be clearly identified.

### Unacceptable:

Wade 99

### Acceptable:

Wade, Adjunct Education Professor, Emory U,  
Fall 99 (Melissa, Journal of Debate Love), p. 23

3. Number coded citation sheets are acceptable, **BUT DO NOT FAIL TO PUT THE COMPLETE CITATION ON THE BRIEF WHEN IT IS COMPLETED.**
4. The rules for citation don't change when citing the world wide web. There still must be an author, qualification, publication, date, and a **FULL WEB SITE ADDRESS**. Saying www or internet as a source is **NOT** acceptable. If you can't find the **FULL** cite for a source from the web, **DON'T USE THE EVIDENCE.**

An example web site is: [www.emory.udl/html](http://www.emory.udl/html)

# Guidelines for Briefing

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1. Titles and Tagging Briefs—it's important that the titles and tags on briefs reflect the true quality of the evidence. It is also crucial to other debaters that the briefs must be legible and easy to use for people who will be in time-constrained positions.

## A. Labels for Individual Cards

1. Important not to overstate the evidence or claim that it says things that it doesn't.
2. Important to not simply restate the card, but to turn it into a debate argument (for example, "High cost prevents renewable use" is better than "can't solve").
3. **Don't curse** on the blocks or the tags
4. **No symbols** on the briefs, lots of people might not understand what your symbols are, and it could hurt them in a debate.
5. **Try to write neatly.** It will help other people out a lot if they can read your tags.

## B. Format of Briefs

1. Put the school name (or institute name) and your name in the upper left corner of the page.
2. Under these labels, put the general argument area (for ex., Spending Disad)
3. Place the page number of the brief in the right corner (if you have three pages saying Clinton would be unpopular with the plan there is a page **1 of 3, 2 of 3, or 3 of 3**, etc.).
4. Don't put numbers by cards, unless it's the INC frontline, so numbers can be added in during a debate round. **By the tag of each card, put a ( ) for the team in the round to insert a number.**

2. Strategic Considerations— or how to make your work more useful

- A. For big arguments that will be used by the whole lab, we suggest using an index sheet to explain the argument and how to use the evidence in the file.
- B. For the most part, try and put the best arguments in the front of the file and the best cards at the beginning of the briefs, so that if someone needs to find the best cards and arguments, they are easily accessible under the time constraints of the round.
- C. Try to mix analytical arguments as well as cards on the briefs. This is FAR more effective than just reading lots of cards because it focuses the argumentation on crucial key points.
- D. Be aware that there might be contradictions or interactions with other cards on the briefs.
- E. Do not cut cards in half and continue them on the next page. This will only serve to confuse others trying to use your evidence and might confuse you in the pressure of a debate.

## 3. Taping Briefs

- A. Tape all of the corners of the cards down!!!!
- B. This includes the citation that should be taped to the card and then taped to the page on both corners.
- C. Use only clear tape, no glue sticks or any alternate method of sticking.

# A Sample Brief

Label your briefs with your team and school so you can identify them if they are lost or misplaced. You may also list other information, such as Aff or Neg or even which case they involve.

Make sure the title of the argument is written in large, dark, clear print. Someone else may have to read this, so write neatly. You should be able to identify this brief at a glance.

Make sure to include page numbers on your briefs. The number to the left of the slash is the page of this brief. The number to the right of the slash indicates the total number of pages of THIS PARTICULAR kind of brief.

This brief is written for a very specific argument, so it uses numbers for the arguments. When writing more generic briefs, leave spaces marked by parentheses so future debaters can fill in their own numbers

Use both analytical arguments and evidenced arguments on the same brief, alternating between the two. This makes it difficult for the other team to group your arguments.

H/L  
Emory

1/2

## Courts Counterplan Answers

- 1) Permute: do the plan and the counterplan at the same time. This solves the case and avoids the disadvantages.
- 2) CP fiats over future court decisions. It's a voting issue.
  - a) It fiats attitudes and solvency, which avoids the criticisms of the literature and means the affirmative could never win a DA to the CP, crushing our ability to debate.
  - b) INC strategy choices skew 2AC time and argument choice. The abuse has already occurred. This means you reject the negative, not just the CP.
- 3) Turn: CP must extend the Hill precedent, which doesn't solve and waters down Title VII:

Robin **Rogers**, JD Candidate @ UC Berkeley, **1990**, California LR, n. 120:

Even if Title VII, as presently formulated, were held to apply to uniformed members of the military, the use of the statute for claims of discrimination in the military would still be problematic. The courts would probably continue to defer to military policy when considering claims brought under the statute.

The Hill opinion clearly demonstrates this, concluding that the test for policy decisions is "whether the military was clearly arbitrary and erroneous, with a harmful effect present at the time the dispute reaches the court. Application of this test in numerous military cases could threaten to spill over into civilian Title VII litigation and seriously weaken the established standards.

- 4) No evidence that a case exists for the Supreme Court to call. Proves no mechanism for counterplan solvency
- 5) Overturning the combat exclusion in the Courts won't be enforced.

Pamela R. **Jones**, Managing Editor of the Cornell LR, **1993**, January, p. 298

If the court declares the combat exclusion rules and policies unconstitutional, enforcement problems are likely to emerge. Neither Congress, the President, nor the Armed Forces seem prepared to lift the combat exclusion rules completely. For example, even Representative Beverly Brown, who supports increasing opportunities for women in the military, rejects a "wholesale lifting of the combat exclusion rules."

Many debaters use bold letters or highlighters to indicate the parts of the cite that are most important in case time is of the essence.

When cutting cards, use underlining to indicate the part of the card that should be read in the round. This is a good way to make cards shorter and more powerful. NEVER physically remove part of a card. If you have to, break one card into several sections instead.

# Glossary: Boring Words You Need to Know

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**add-on:** n. An advantage of the affirmative plan usually presented in the 2nd Affirmative constructive speech and independent of whatever advantages were presented in the 1st affirmative constructive.

**advantage:** n. An advantage is a description used by the affirmative to explain what beneficial effects will result from its plan.

**affirmative:** n The team in a debate which supports the resolution. This team presents the affirmative case (see below).

**affirmative cases:** n. This is generally used to refer to the part of the affirmative position which demonstrates that there is a need for change because there is a serious problem (harms) which the present system cannot solve (inherency) but which is none the less, solvable (solvency). The affirmative's case provides a specific plan to solve the problem.

**affirmative plan:** n. The policy action advocated by the affirmative.

**agent (or Agent of Change):** n. The actor that the affirmative or the resolution calls for to act. The agent in the resolution is usually the United States federal government. Affirmatives can specify specific agents within the federal government, such as Congress or the President to implement their plan.

**agent counterplans:** n. A counterplan which argues that the plan you are implementing through one agent of change, should instead, be implemented by another agent of change.

**anarchy:** n. A counterplan which argues that the government should dissolve itself rather than carry on any resolitional action or other action. Some teams argue this action can be by the United States alone and others argue that all government should dissolve.

**a priori:** n. literally, prior to. Usually an argument which indicates that a particular issue should be resolved before all others. Frequently used to argue that procedural concerns such as topicality should be considered before substantive issues such as advantages.

**attitudinal inherency:** n. this type of inherency identifies an unwillingness of those in power in the present system to take corrective measures to solve the harm cited by the affirmative.

**bipartisanship:** n. This is a political disadvantage which argues that the affirmative plan will disrupt bipartisan working relations within the Congress making it more difficult to enact other important policies. The argument could also be made the opposite way. The negative could argue that the plan will spur bipartisan cooperation and therefore cause bad policies to be enacted. Also "Bipart" (see disadvantages and political disads).

**budget deficits:** n. A generic negative disadvantage which argues that the spending of government funds on a new program will break the political will which holds the budget freeze on line, impacting in massive economic disruption.

**burden of proof:** n. 1) The requirement that sufficient evidence or reasoning to prove an argument be presented 2) the requirement that the affirmative prove the stock issues.

**circumvention:** n. This is a type of argument which argues that certain actors will attempt to avoid the mandates of the plan. Because it argues that the plan will be avoided, it is a type of solvency argument which implies that the plan will not be able to solve the problem the case cites as the harm.

**citation:** n. Specific information on the source of evidence regarding publication, date of publication, page excerpt, and the author's qualification. Also known as "cite."

**clash:** vb. To respond directly to an opponent's argument.

**comparative advantage:** n. Arguing that the desirable benefits of the plan in contrast to the present system. For example, if the affirmative argues that their case simply decreases racism, but does not solve it completely, they are arguing that compared to the status quo, the plan makes things better.

**competitiveness:** n. 1) The quality of a policy which makes the policy a reason to reject another policy. 2) a situation where one policy is mutually exclusive with another policy or is more preferable alone than in conjunction with another policy. It is traditionally expected that a negative prove a counterplan to be a competitive alternative to the affirmative plan.

**conditional counterplan:** n. conditional counterplans are counterplans that the negative presents, but the negative can remove it as their advocacy at any time In the debate.

**constructives:** n. The first four individual speeches of the debate. Arguments are initiated in these speeches and extended in rebuttals. They consist of the first affirmative constructive (1AC), the first negative constructive (1NC), the second affirmative constructive (2AC), and the second negative constructive (2NC). These speeches are interrupted by cross-examination periods of each speaker.

**contentions:** n. 1) A major point advanced or maintained in a debate. 2) a subdivision of an affirmative case.

**context:** n. 1) The relationship of the evidence read in the date to the original source material. It is expected that evidence read in a debate will be consistent with the meaning of the evidence as it is written in the original source. 2) a standard for evaluating topicality arguments which

is used to determine if the definition offered in the debate is consistent with the meaning of the term in relationship to authors who write about the subject matter of the topic or, to determine if the definition offered in the debate is consistent with the meaning of the term in relationship to other terms in the resolution. adj. contextual.

**contradictions:** n. This is a type of fallacy in argument. It merely says that the two or more arguments presented by one team cannot be true because they disprove each other. Example: having one team present arguments that prove that U.S. hegemony is both good and bad.

**co-option:** n. the influence of outside parties hampering an agency's efforts to carry out its instructions.

**counterplan:** n. a counterplan is proposed by the negative as an alternative method of solving the same problem cited by the affirmative or as an alternative which goes beyond the affirmative's plan. It is generally thought that a counterplan should be competitive. That means that It should not be possible or desirable to adopt both the affirmative plan and the negative's counterplan. vb. to employ the negative strategy of presenting and defending a competitive program to solve the affirmative need or advantage.

**counterplan advantages:** n. benefits which result from the adoption of the counterplan.

**Critical Legal Studies (CLS):** n. a field of legal scholarship which argues that the United States legal system while formally appealing with its guarantees of equal rights and individual rights, remains, in fact a system which serves the elites and denies access to the poor.

**critique (also "kritik"):** n. an argument that the assumptions or language of an issue are the first consideration (or an "a priori issue") in a debate. The effects of a policy should be considered only after one has decided if the assumptions and/or language of an argument are philosophically or morally acceptable. Frequently, the critique argues that—since the plan is not truly enacted

as a result of the debate—the impact of the language, philosophy, or political strategy used in the round is more "real" and more important than any other argument in the round.

**cross-examination:** n. This is a three minute period which follows each of the constructive speeches in which a member of the opposing team directly questions the most recent speaker.

**cut evidence:** vb. a term used to describe the process of compiling evidence from books, magazines, articles, etc. This involves copying the portion of text that you desire to use citing, and tagging the text as evidence.

**debatability standard:** n. a topicality standard which argues that as long as the definition provides fair grounds for debate, it should be accepted.

**disadvantages:** n. A disadvantage, sometimes referred to with the shorthand phrases "DA" or "Disad," is an undesirable effect of a plan. A negative team runs a disad to show that adoption of the plan is going to cause more problems than it will solve. In order to prove a disadvantage, a negative team must prove several things. First, they must link it to the affirmative plan. Second, they must be able to prove it is unique to the affirmative plan, and third, they must prove that the impact of the disadvantage is bad enough to outweigh the affirmative advantages.

**discursive impact:** n. Derived from the word discourse, this argument usually says that the language used within the debate is more important than the issues debated. Discursive impacts are usually claimed by critiques.

**dispositional counterplan:** n. Dispositional counterplans are counterplans that the negative presents, that the negative can not abandon at anytime. The negative is forced to defend the counterplan if the affirmative chooses not to read any theory arguments or permutations against the negative. Dispositional counterplans are often compared to "conditional" counterplans.

**existential inherency:** n. This kind of inherency argues that if the affirmative can demonstrate a massive problem exists then the affirmative has met the burden of inherency by showing that the present system is not solving it.

**evidence:** n. quotations which tend to prove or provide grounds for belief; also, broadly, the reasoning which tends to prove.

**extending an argument:** v. Bringing an argument up again in speeches after which they were initially presented. This sometimes involves reading new evidence to further explain or support the initial argument. Arguments that are not extended are considered "dropped" and are not supposed to be considered by the judge when deciding the round.

**extra-topical:** adj. A portion of an affirmative plan that falls outside the resolution. Different from non-topical plans, which do not fall under the topic at all, extra-topical plans are plans that are partially topical, but also have a part that is non-topical.

**Feminism:** n. a generic negative argument which says that whatever policy or value presented by the affirmative entrenches the "mindset" of patriarchy. Patriarchy is a social system which relies upon authoritative power structures. The negative argues that this system of governance should be rejected. The argument is frequently used to prove that even granting feminists power is not good if the feminists also support the patriarchal system.

**field context:** n. a topicality standard that says it is better to have a definition which is derived from the writings of experts on the subject of the resolution.

**fiat:** n. Fiat is a term used to describe the process that allows us to debate an affirmative plan as if it were adopted. This four letter word is much disputed in debate theory as to what it actually means, what powers it gives the affirmative, and what powers the negative has to implement a counterplan. For a quick reference, it

would be best to think of it as a little spark of imagination which allows us to pretend a judge could adopt the affirmative plan (and perhaps the negative's counterplan) if he/she choose. **vb.** to implement a plan over any objection — a power granted to advocates of change.

**floating PIC (Plan-Inclusive Counterplan):** n. This is a counterplan that is not formally read by the negative, but is merely implied by the negative critique. Many critical arguments seem to imply that an alternative action to the plan would be taken either immediately or at some point in the future. It is called "floating" because the implicit nature of the counterplan makes it easy for the negative to alter the implied action, making it a moving target.

**flow:** **vb.** to take notes of the debate, argument by argument in a linear fashion. n. referring to a flow sheet.

**flow sheet:** n. paper used to keep track of the arguments in a debate.

**Foucault critique:** n. This critique, which is based on the writings of Michael Foucault (pronounced "foo-ko"), usually advocates individual resistance to regulation and criticizes the idea of government reform. Foucault was concerned that when society regulates what is and is not acceptable behavior people are locked into particular ways of thinking and acting. For example, laws define deviance and thus create groups of people who are considered "abnormal." He argued against the idea that power is held only by those at the top. Instead, he claimed that all people have power.

**generic arguments:** n. arguments, usually negative, that are general and apply to a wide range of affirmative cases or plans.

**generic disadvantage:** n. A disadvantage designed to link to most affirmative plans on the topic.

**grammatical context:** n. a topicality standard that argues that when searching for the best definition we should find one which is derived

from the relationship of words in a consistent grammatical form with other terms in the resolution.

**impact:** n. the good or bad results of an affirmative case, counterplan or disadvantages (see significance). n. the consequences of an argument, including theoretical arguments, which make the argument important in evaluating the debate.

**independent advantage:** n. an advantage that can justify adoption of a plan even if the other advantages may not be true.

**inherency:** n. the cause of a problem's existence, the proof that the problem will continue, and the barrier preventing current programs from solving a problem.

**intrinsicness:** **adj.** used to describe a type of argument in which the affirmative illegitimately adds an action onto their plan that was not originally advocated by the aff.

**jurisdiction:** n. This is an argument often used in topicality discussions that assumes the resolution provides limits on the judge's power. This argument states that if the plan is not topical, the judge has no power to fiat the plan and as such, a nontopical plan could not be voted for because the plan is outside the judge's authority.

**kritiks:** see critiques. Also known as "the K."

**link:** n. That component of a disadvantage which shows how it is caused by the Affirmative plan.

**masking:** n. an argument that says the affirmative plan leads everyone to believe the problem is being solved, when in fact the plan will fail to solve and prevent other solutions from being enacted. Frequently used as part of critique arguments such as CLS, CRT, and Foucault. (see CLS and critiques).

**mutual exclusivity:** n. one competitiveness standard that the counterplan and the affirmative plan cannot co-exist.

**negative block:** n. the 2nd negative constructive and the 1st negative rebuttal; the two negative speeches in the middle of the debate.

**net benefits:** n. A competitiveness standard stating that the counterplan alone is a superior policy to adoption of both the counterplan and the affirmative plan together.

**Objectivism:** n. based on the philosophy of author Ayn Rand, the argument says individual freedom is the most important value. All government regulations innately infringe on individuals and are therefore evil. Only complete freedom from government controls can allow the human race to achieve its full potential.

**performance:** n. a type of debate that abandons the concept of debate as policy-making and focuses on the activity's ability to cause change in our society. Performance debates usually do not include plans, and may incorporate music, videos, and other forms of expression into speeches.

**permutation:** n. a type of argument used by affirmatives to illustrate non-competitiveness of counterplans, a legitimate permutation includes all of the plan and all or part of the counterplan. Affirmatives argue that, despite the texts of the plan and the counterplan, if it is possible to imagine the coexistence of the two plans, then the negative has not illustrated why the resolution should not be adopted. (see competitiveness)

**philosophical competition:** n. a standard of competition for counterplans which argues that since the two plans under consideration have different philosophical approaches they are exclusive of one another.

**PIC:** see "plan-inclusive counterplan"

**plan-inclusive counterplan (PIC):** n. A counterplan that substantially replicates the plan mandates, with only minor changes. In this sense, the counterplan "includes," or contains, most of the actions taken by the plan.

**plan mandates:** n. the resolutional action specified in the affirmative plan.

**plan-meet-need (PMN):** n. an argument claiming that a plan does not solve the need. Usually a subdivided and structured argument presented in second negative constructive.

**plan-spike:** n. a part of a plan designed to aid the workability of the plan or diminish its disadvantages.

**policy-making:** n. a philosophy that debate rounds should be evaluated from the perspective of pseudo-legislators weighing the advantages and disadvantages of two conflicting policy systems.

**political disads:** n. (see disadvantages) these are arguments which indicate that the political consequences of passing the plan will lead to impacts which will outweigh the case.

**political capital:** n. the amount of good will a politician can muster to get policies enacted. In debate this argument says passing the plan will consume so much political capital that those enacting the plan will have to sacrifice other important issues on their political agenda. The capital expended passing the plan sacrifices the capital necessary to get other policies passed.

**political focus:** n. the ability of political leaders to concentrate on the particular issues. In debate, the argument says that passing the affirmative plan will require so much energy and time, that policymakers will be unable to get other more important issues passed.

**political popularity:** n. the approval rating of a politician. In debate, the argument considers the public approval of the plan. If the plan is unpopular, policymakers will lose credibility making it nearly impossible to pass other more important plans. If the plan is popular, it may boost the credibility of policymakers, making it easier to get other less desirable plans passed.



**postmodernism:** n. Although the various people who write "postmodern" theory don't really agree on what it means to be "postmodern," there are a couple of common elements of postmodernism. Postmodern authors often claim that we cannot know what is and is not true because truth is a product of culture. They often indict scientific reasoning, especially the argument that only science can tell us how to view the world. Many postmodern authors claim that policymakers focus too much on solutions, when they ought to be investigating the philosophical and linguistic nature of the problem instead. Critiques based on postmodern philosophy usually point out the ways in which the affirmative relies on faulty assumptions about truth.

**posthumanism:** n. see "postmodernism"

**preemption or preempt:** n. an argument designed to respond to another argument that has not been made, but is anticipated.

**presumption:** n. the assumption that a system should be adhered to unless there is a clear reason to change it.

**prep time:** n. the time allotted to each team for getting ready for their speeches once the debate has begun.

**proliferation (or "prolif"):** n. the acquisition of nuclear weapons by an increasing number of countries in the world. When either team talks about "proliferation," they are generally referring to the possibility of one or more countries getting access to nuclear weapons who do not currently have nukes. Sometimes, "prolif" is a generic disadvantage which claims that the expansion of nuclear weapons capability to more countries is increased or decreased by policies supported by the affirmative. The consequences under either condition are increased instability and terrorism thereby increasing the risks of nuclear war. slang; prolif good or prolif bad. It can also be argued that proliferation of nuclear weapons is good because nukes deter aggression and increase caution.

**reasonability:** n. a topicality standard which indicates that the affirmative only need offer a definition which is not excessively broad and would appear legitimate at first glance.

**rebuttal:** n. Any of the last four speeches in a debate. During rebuttals, new arguments are usually not allowed.

**resolution:** n. A proposition of fact, value, or policy which the affirmative is obligated to support; topic, a statement which focuses debate by dividing argument ground on any given issue.

**reify:** v. using language that makes "false" or "illusory" things seem real and/or legitimate. Some critics might say that advocating aid for minorities actually makes racism more legitimate because it "reifies" the idea of race. These critics argue that, because there is no biological basis for race, targeting people of specific races for help supports (or "reifies") the false notion of race, thus legitimizing racism.

**retrench:** v. to reinforce the present system. Usually occurring in discussions of critiques, the argument says that the effect of a policy is to reinforce the prevailing attitudes in the status quo. Thus, the problems which exist won't be solved and may worsen.

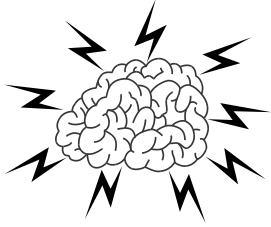
**risk analysis:** n. the theory and procedure of claiming that one hundred percent certainty is not needed to act and that the level of certainty that does exist is sufficient basis for policy decisions.

**sandbag:** vb. to delay in presenting the impact of an argument until a later speech.

**scenario:** n. a term used to describe the type of situation which might exist when the impact to an advantage or disadvantage would occur.

**shift:** vb. to alter in a later speech one's position on an issue.

**significance:** n. the measure, qualitative or quantitative, of the need claimed by the affirmative. Significance has diminished in importance as a



**WARNING:**  
**Learning too many  
debate terms can  
overload your fragile  
brain, causing it  
to melt like cheese**

stock issue in recent years because most topics now include substantial or significant in the resolutions.

**solvency:** n. the ability of the affirmative plan, or a counterplan, to solve the problems being discussed in the round

**spending tradeoff:** n. a generic disadvantage that argues that the cost of the plan will be taken from programs that could better use the money.

**spread:** vb. to introduce a large number of arguments in to the debate, usually by speaking at a very rapid rate. n. a description of the process of delivering many arguments.

**standards:** n. a set of criteria which allows the judge to evaluate the superiority of competing arguments. cf., topicality standards or competition standards.

**status quo:** n. the present system, the way things are now, the world as we know it exists now.

**stock issues:** n. those issues that the affirmative must prove, i.e., significance, inherency, solvency and topicality, in order to win a debate. n. a paradigm or perspective for evaluating rounds based on the notion that the affirmative has to meet the burdens of significance, inherency, solving and topicality.

**structure:** n. the outline of the arguments.

**subpoints:** n. a specific supporting part of an argumentative structure.

**topicality:** n. 1) the quality or condition of falling under the range of the resolution's possibilities. 2) an argument suggesting that the affirmative plan is not an example of the

resolution.

**topicality standards:** n. a set of criteria designed to aid the judge in evaluating the topicality argument.

**turn:** n. an argument that says the exact opposite of what the opposing team said is true in order to prove why you win. For example if the affirmative read a hegemony is good advantage, the negative can turn the advantage by arguing hegemony is bad.

**uniqueness:** n. that component of a disadvantage which illustrates that the disadvantage impact which the negative claims results only from the adoption of the affirmative plan. That is, the disadvantage impact would not occur absent the affirmative plan.

**voting issue:** n. an argument which justifies voting for the team that initiated the argument. For example, topicality, critiques, and counterplan competitiveness are frequently considered voting issues.

**world government (or WOMP):** a generic counterplan derived from the World Order Models Project (W.O.M.P.) commissioned to study the feasibility of a world government. The argument's underlying premise is that each action taken by a sovereign state (as called for by many debate resolutions) increases the impediments to achieving a new world order. The negative therefore argues a World Government should be established to accomplish the objectives of the affirmative and prevent wars between nations.