



# LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

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Dr. Seth Halvorson & Cherian Koshy

NATIONAL  
FORENSIC  
LEAGUE

SPEECH & DEBATE HONOR SOCIETY



*LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE*

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Dr. Halvorson and Mr. Koshy both debated for Apple Valley High School in Minnesota during the 1990s and were the two Minnesota State Champions from Apple Valley during that decade. Over the course of the last 15 years, both Dr. Halvorson and Mr. Koshy have spent summers traveling the country, teaching students about Lincoln-Douglas debate. Each summer, they work with hundreds of students who are interested in developing their skills and learning about LD debate. They also coach teams throughout the year, and the students they have coached have been immensely successful on the local, state, regional, and national levels, including impressive finishes at the Tournament of Champions and National Forensic League National Tournament. Over the course of the last 15 years, they have taught thousands of students how to debate, including many current coaches and judges in the activity. In 2006, after spending several summers together, they designed a series of instructional materials they believe will be useful for students, coaches, parents, and judges new to the activity of competitive debate. In 2008, the second edition of the text was published including updated material and information.

## ABOUT THIS TEXT

This text runs in tandem with a number of resources to teach you the ins and outs of Lincoln-Douglas debate as well as debate generally. We have created a classroom edition of this textbook to use as a modified format for in-class debates as well as a full curriculum to teach various debate forms with assessments, rubrics, lesson plans, and activities.

We acknowledge that there is no right way to debate and also that many different styles of debate exist. At the same time, we believe that a primer is necessary to provide new students, coaches, teams, and judges with an understanding of how debate works. We hope that this will serve a starting point for your investigation into the world of debate but that you don't limit yourself to this text. As such, please do not consider this a rulebook for LD debate. Instead, this represents a wide variety of views that encapsulates most community norms about debate from current debaters, coaches, and judges. This text is designed for students who are entirely new to the activity and serves as a reference for students with limited competitive debate experience. In future editions and texts, students will learn how to transition to advanced debating.

In addition, if you are new to the activity, we hope that you will take advantage of the appendix material to start exploring the world of debate. To start your search, we suggest that you contact the National Forensic League ([www.nationalforensicleague.org](http://www.nationalforensicleague.org)), which is the national organization that administers the activity. They can provide you with contact information in your state for debate coaches and tournaments that are happy to answer questions and assist you. Every state in the nation has an NFL district, and in some cases several, so rest assured that wherever you are, you will find opportunities to debate. There is also a state organization that governs high school debate. Try asking your principal if they know how you can start attending tournaments. We would also be happy to help you get started in the activity and can try to put you in touch with someone we know in your area that could help. If you have questions, please email us.



# UNIT 1

## *Introduction to LD Debate*

**W**elcome to the wonderful world of debate! While debate may seem complicated and overwhelming at first, try to remember that everyone feels that way when starting any new activity. No one is a naturally gifted football player, or knows the rules of chess when they first sit down at the board. Rest assured that after reading the following pages you will have the tools necessary to succeed at this activity, which we believe is both academically and intellectually rewarding as well as a whole bunch of fun!

### WHAT IS DEBATE?

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Debate, and specifically, Lincoln-Douglas debate, commonly referred to as LD, is a

competitive speaking activity that involves two debaters arguing for and against a resolution that is selected by the National Forensic



League. LD topics change bi-monthly beginning with the September-October topic. Members of the League vote in advance for the resolutions they would like to debate in the upcoming year. Each resolution is defended by one person, the affirmative, and rejected by another person, the negative. Each debater is responsible for advocating for his or her side of the resolution in front of a judge, who decides which side of the resolution they will vote for based on the arguments presented in the debate round.

## HOW DOES DEBATE WORK?

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In each round of competition, one debater is assigned the affirmative position and another debater is assigned the negative. Throughout the course of any tournament, you can expect to debate both the affirmative and negative many times. In each round, you will be assigned a room, an opponent, and a judge. When you arrive at the room, you will be expected to present a case defending your side of the resolution and to answer arguments made by your opponent. Based on the strength of your arguments, you will be awarded with either a win or a loss. At some tournaments, the cumulative wins and losses will enable you to participate in elimination rounds such as a quarterfinal, semifinal, and a final round debate. Typically, the tournament champion is determined by the person with the greatest number of wins and fewest losses at a tournament

regardless of whether elimination rounds are held. Many tournaments award trophies for the best speakers as well as those who won the most debates.

Since we've all seen football games and chess matches, we have a reasonable idea of what happens in a match or competition. When it comes to debate, it's a little less clear. The following analogy will clarify everything you need to know about debate and should give you a sense of how to begin preparing for your first competition.

In any competitive debate situation, the most important concept is forced choice. This means that the judge is required to select between two mutually exclusive propositions. For example, when you're standing in front of a vending machine, you are forced to choose between buying a soda and keeping your dollar. You can only choose one of those options; you cannot select both of the options nor can you select neither option. In the same way, all debate resolutions present forced choices to debaters that they must argue. For example, in the resolution, Resolved: civil disobedience in a democracy is morally justified, the affirmative is required to prove that civil disobedience is the right thing to do while the negative is required to prove that civil disobedience is not the right thing to do. In most circumstances, you can mentally add the word "not" into the resolution to get a better idea of what the negative is required to defend.



## BURDENS

No question of values can be determined entirely true or false. This is why the resolution is debatable. Therefore neither debater should be held to a standard of absolute proof. No debater can realistically be expected to prove complete validity or invalidity of the resolution. The better debater is the one who, on the whole, proves his/her side of the resolution more valid as a general principle.

- Burden of proof: Each debater has the equal burden to prove the validity of his/her side of the resolution as a general principle. As an LD resolution

is a statement of value, there is no presumption towards either side.

- Burden of clash: Each debater has an equal burden to clash with his/her opponent's position. Neither debater should be rewarded for presenting a speech completely unrelated to the arguments of his/her opponent.
- Resolutational burden: The debaters are equally obligated to focus the debate on the central questions of the resolution, not whether the resolution itself is worthy of debate. Because the affirmative must uphold the resolution,

the negative must also argue the resolution as presented.

Additionally, specific elements of arguments or case positions may create further burdens for a particular debater. If one debater places a burden on himself or herself, it must be met in order to win the debate. If one debater places a burden on another, it must either be met or the debater must argue, and win, why they do not need to meet the burden to win the debate.

### *The Basketball Analogy*

To illustrate the notion of forced choice, let's investigate a non-debate example. Assume for a moment that you are a college basketball coach and you have two groups of people in your gym that have come out for the team. On one side of the gym, you have a group of very tall players though they also happen to be very slow (think Yao Ming). On the other side of the gym, you have a group of short players that are also very fast (think Earl Boykins). You are required to select one group or the other to play for your team so that you will have a team entirely comprised of tall and slow players or a team entirely comprised of short and fast players. How would you make your decision?

The first question to ask yourself is what is your goal as the college's basketball coach? For most college programs, their goal is to reach the NCAA Final Four and the collegiate national championship. While there may be other important tournaments and rivalries, the

NCAA Championship is the most important for Division I teams.



FINAL FOUR

*Figure 1.1*

The next question to ask yourself as a basketball coach is how will you achieve that goal? What will ensure that you make it to the NCAA Final Four? While there are many factors that influence whether a team will make it through the grueling tournament, including coaching, strategies, and training (not to mention a little bit of luck and prayer), the most basic way to get to the Final Four is to outscore your opponents in each of the games you play. If you score more points than your opponent, you will always win the game and advance to the next round.

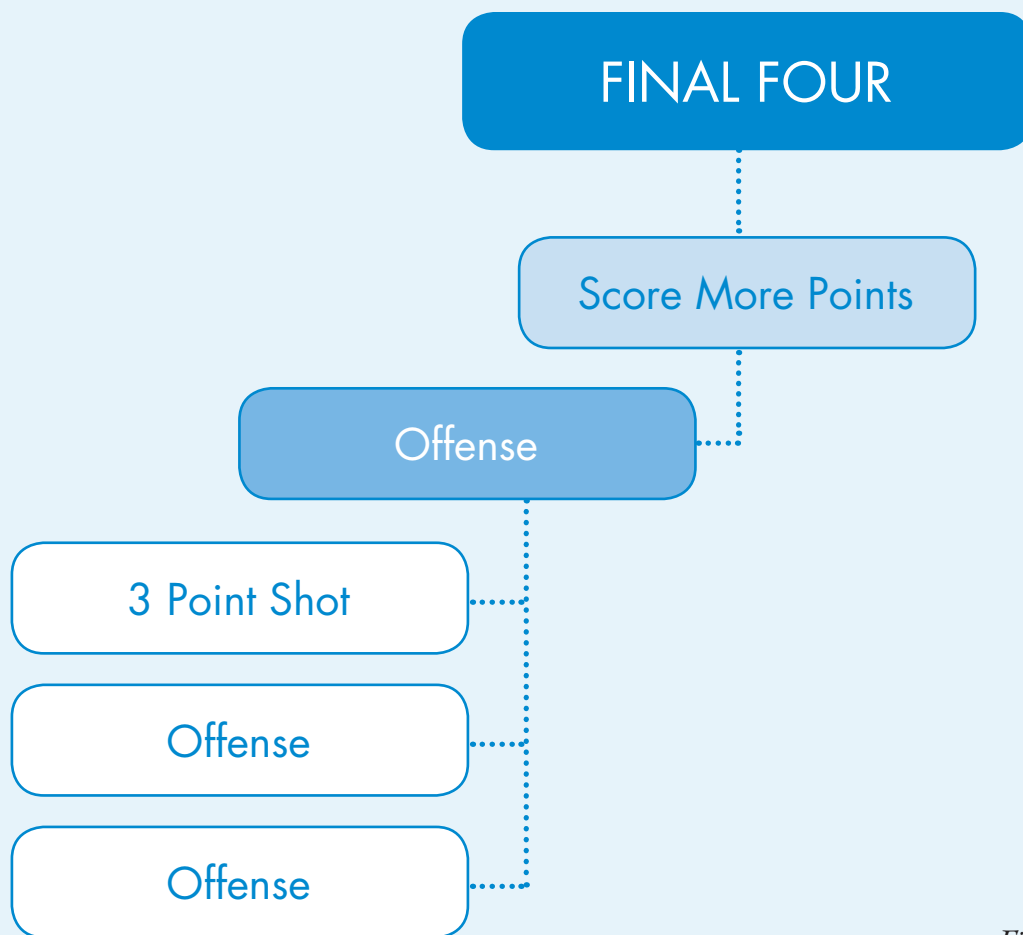


FINAL FOUR

Score More Points

*Figure 1.2*

Now, as a coach, your question should be: which team (either tall/slow or short/fast) will be more successful at scoring points and



*Figure 1.3*

therefore reach the Final Four? In any basketball game, there are both offensive ways to score points and defensive ways to prevent your opponent from scoring points.

There are three offensive ways to score points: the 3-point shot (anything outside the arc), the 2-point shot (the field goal, anything inside the arc), and the 1-point shot (the free throw). Each type of player (tall/slow or short/fast) is likely to be more adept at each particular shot. For example and for the sake of the

analogy, the free throw shot is an unguarded shot so it's likely that both teams would be equally good if they practiced their free throw. The tall/slow team is probably more adept at the 2-point shot because they are closer to the hoop and are more apt to muscle people around in close quarters. The short/fast team is probably better adept at the 3-point shot because they are able to get open more quickly and thus more often. Each team has advantages and each team has disadvantages.

*WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?*

*You might argue that because the short/fast team is scoring shots of higher value (the 3-point shot) that we should select them. However, the tall/slow players might respond that the 3-point shot is a less likely shot in basketball (typically fewer than 30% of the shots in any game), so while the short/fast people are making shots of higher value, the tall/slow team is making more shots of lesser value.*

*This is what's known as **weighing**.*

Complicating our discussion are the defensive aspects of the game. There are three defensive ways to prevent your opponents from

scoring points in any basketball game: stealing the ball, blocking a shot, and rebounding the ball. As was the case before, we could suggest that each group (tall/slow or short/fast) might be more or less adept at each. Here the comparison is a little bit easier. Undoubtedly, the short but fast players would be more skillful at stealing the ball. Imagine a five-foot five tall player like Boykins simply grabbing a ball from a seven-foot six player whose dribble is about four feet from the floor. The tall and slow players would be unlikely to steal the ball because they could not reach down as far. Likewise, the tall players would have an easy

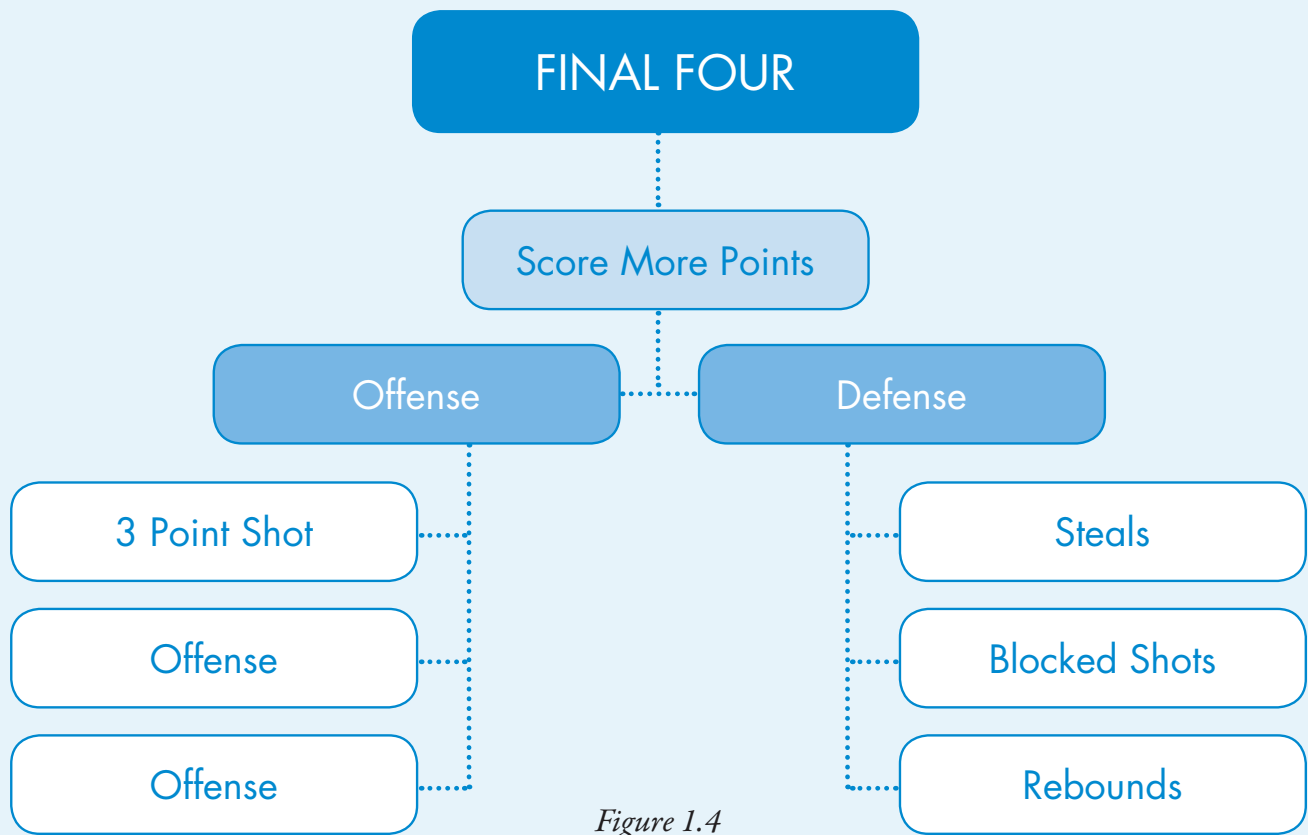


Figure 1.4

time blocking the shots of the shorter players. In the case of rebounds, both sides may be more or less adept at offensive and defensive rebounds so we might surmise that both groups are equal in this regard.

As a college basketball coach, we've received a lot of information about both sides of our players. Some are more adept at some offensive and defensive skills while others are adept at other skills. Which team should we select?

You shouldn't have an easy answer; that's why we debate! There are good arguments for each side and those arguments can be compared with the opposing arguments to

persuade a judge that your position is the correct one. In this example, you should be able to make several arguments to defend the tall/slow team and several arguments to defend the short/fast team. Try it out! You can include both offensive reasons they would succeed and defensive reasons why they would succeed.

Since very few of us will be basketball coaches, it's important to see how this relates to LD debate. Compare Figure 1.4 to Figure 1.5. This should give you an idea of what a value premise (the goal) and a criterion (the method of achieving that goal) are and how the arguments relate to those concepts.

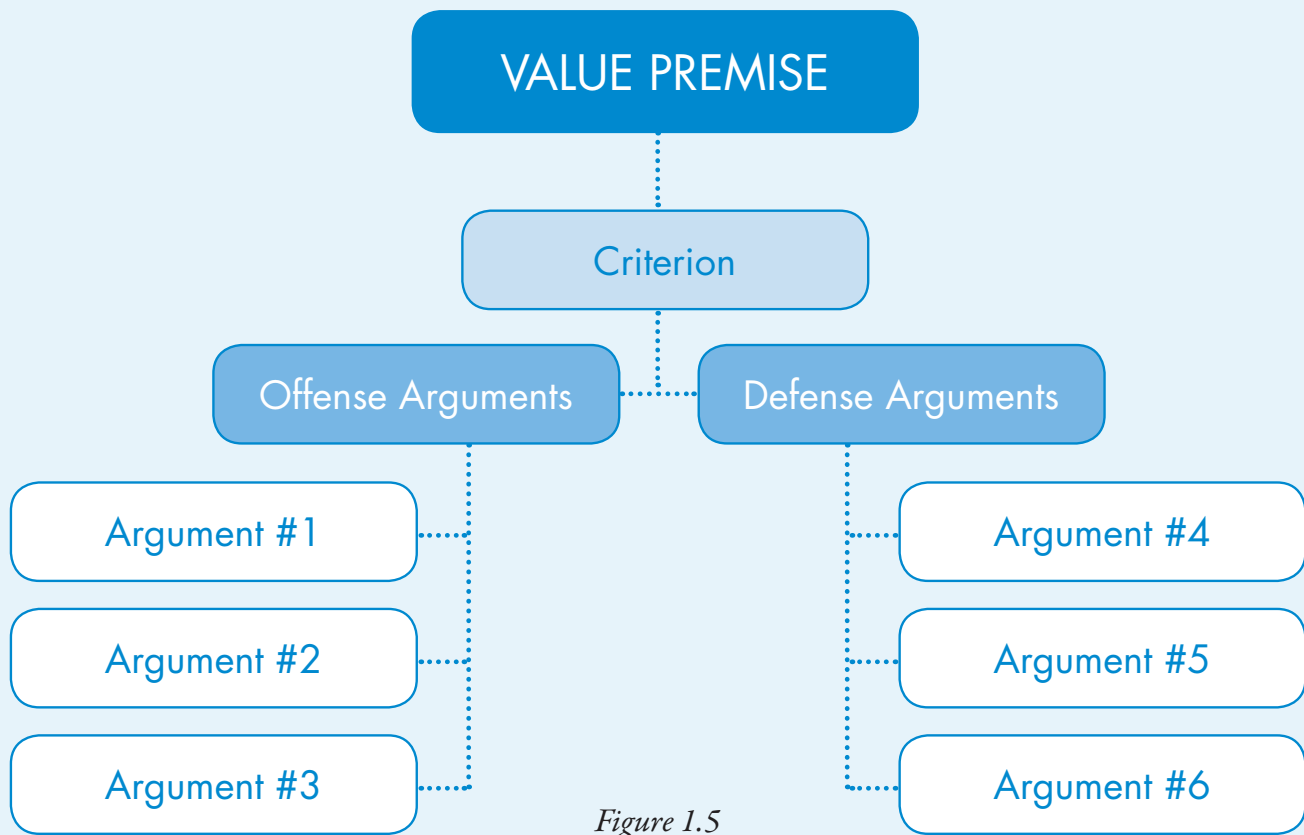


Figure 1.5



# UNIT 2

## *How do I write a case?*

Everyone has written a paper for English class that follows the five-part model: introduction, first main point, second main point, third main point, and conclusion. A debate case is very similar. In your introduction, you'll want to use an attention getter (usually a quotation or story related to the resolution) and then state the resolution exactly how it is worded. Often, people will use the phrase "I affirm the resolution, Resolved: civil disobedience in a democracy is morally justified," or "I negate the resolution, "Resolved: civil disobedience in a democracy is morally justified." Notice that you don't change the resolution when you negate, you simply change your viewpoint. In your introduction, you'll also want to define the terms of the resolution. Take a look at what words or phrases in the resolution might need some clarification. You and your opponent should be debating the same thing. So take a look through some dictionaries and define the words or phrases that are most





important. In this resolution, “civil disobedience” should be defined as a phrase and “morally justified” should be defined as a phrase. If you defined the terms “civil” and “disobedience” separately, you wouldn’t end up with a good understanding of civil disobedience. Don’t define any terms that aren’t in the resolution. Definitions should be fair and as objective as possible. Negatives are permitted to counter-define, or offer definitions as well. However, they must provide a rationale for why the counter-definition is preferable.

Also in your introduction, you’ll want to state your value premise and criterion, what they mean, and why you selected them as they relate to the resolution. In our civil disobedience example, you might say:

“The highest value for this debate is mo-

rality since the resolution questions whether civil disobedience can be justified on moral grounds. Democracies trust individuals to make moral decisions so the criterion for morality is individual conscience.

As political philosopher John Rawls writes

in a Theory of Justice, “even though people normally seek advice and counsel and accept the injunctions of those in authority when these seem reasonable to them, they are always accountable for their deed. We cannot divest ourselves of our responsibility and transfer the burden of blame to others.”

The next step is to construct your arguments. A great way to start is to come up with about four arguments that relate to each other and especially to your criterion and value premise. If you begin with the arguments you like, you can figure out the relationship between them and construct your criterion and value premise based on the arguments. Alternatively, you can start with your value premise and criterion, however we find that students often get stuck trying to figure out how to start writing with this approach. Nonetheless, you should do what works for you. Coming up with arguments is always the hardest and most fun part of debate. A great way to start is to hit the library and start reading about the resolution and understanding where the conflict in the resolution occurs. The literature on the resolution will be a great resource for not only your arguments but also for evidence that you can add to your case. Books, articles, and the Internet will be great places to start. Remember that not everything on the Internet is valuable or credible information. Look for sources that you trust and that have credibility. Books and peer-reviewed academic journals are better than Facebook or Tumblr!

In writing out your arguments, most debat-

ers subscribe to a modified Toulmin model of argumentation. In this model, an argument begins with a claim: the statement of the argument you are making. The claim can be as simple as, “civil disobedience checks government abuse.” That statement doesn’t have any reasoning behind it or explain why civil disobedience checks government abuse, which would be the next logical step in the argument. Generally, an affirmative case has two main arguments, called contentions. At times, a contention includes

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**In your introduction, you’ll want to state your value premise and criterion, what they mean, and why you selected them as they relate to the resolution.**

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sub-points or distinct but related arguments that prove the validity of the larger argument of the contention. This is the second step of the argument, the warrant. Assume that someone is standing behind you and every time you make a claim, he shouts out: WHY? Your answer to that question is your warrant. Your warrant depends on the type of the argument you are making. Claims about the real world require warrants that describe the real world. If we return to our example resolution of civil disobedience one argument could be that civil disobedience is justified because it checks government

abuse. We would need some evidence about civil disobedience being used against a bad law, from an authoritative source, to prove that the use of civil disobedience does affect government abuses. If your argument doesn't describe the real world, you could provide a more theoretical warrant for your claim. In addition to providing your own reasoning for a warrant, you can also use scholarly authors as evidence to show that your argument is true. This is where your research will come in handy. See if

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## The negative case should prove the opposite of the resolution valid.

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your authors make similar arguments and cite them in support of your claim. Finally, you'll need to impact your argument or explain why the argument matters. You will always want this part of your argument to relate to your criterion or standard. Demonstrate how the truth of your argument meets or achieves your criterion and therefore how you achieve your value premise. In the basketball analogy, this was very obvious: if I make a whole bunch of three-point shots, I'm more likely to score more points, and thus get to the Final Four.

Your affirmative case (also called the affirmative constructive or the AC) should be six minutes long when read aloud.

Once you've written your affirmative case, you should start writing your negative case using the exact same model. You can rely on your research but you can also take advantage of the case you've just written. How would you respond to the affirmative arguments you've just written? The negative case should prove the opposite of the resolution valid. In our example, you would need to prove that civil disobedience is not justified. One argument to support this view might be that civil disobedience does not check government abuses. Again, you would need to warrant this argument with logical and authoritative proof as well as show the bearing of this argument to your criterion or standard.

Your negative case (also called the negative constructive or NC) should be about three to three and a half minutes long when read aloud at the most. You can add definitions to your negative case but you would not read them as part of your case unless the affirmative failed to define the term and that definition was essential. Rather, you would read them as responses to the affirmative case and provide a reason why your definition is preferable to the one provided by the affirmative. If you read a definition as the negative without providing a rationale it is not considered part of the debate. The speech is divided in two parts because the negative is also required to respond to the affirmative arguments in their first speech to begin the process of the debate. You'll want to leave yourself enough time to accomplish this task after presenting your case.

## WHAT IS A LOGICAL ARGUMENT?

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Logic is the ground on which the whole system of argument stands. We all have run into illogical arguments, whether they are from politicians, parents, and people, but what makes an argument logical?

We have noted that an argument includes a claim, warrant(s) and an impact. Arguments are more than a series of propositions. A proposition is a sentence that is either true or false. So, the proposition, “Apple Valley, MN is west of New York City” can be shown to be correct or incorrect. This particular proposition is an empirical proposition, which means we can get some empirical, or factual, evidence, and test the truth or falsehood of the proposition. Propositions and sentences are joined together with logical connectors. Think of logical connectors as the “logic glue” that holds terms together and describes the proposition. If you can identify the primary ways to connect propositions and sentences, not only will you be able to respond to your opponent’s arguments by showing that the connection is false, you will also be able to make your arguments much stronger. Good debaters can tell the difference between inductive and deductive arguments.

It is important to note that value propositions can never be proved either true or false. They entirely depend on the agent, the action, and the context in which the values

conflict. All values conflict and thus require prioritizing. Say for example that Seth values his Diet Coke. It is very important to him to have his Diet Coke but he may not desire a Diet Coke first thing in the morning. It is fair to say that there are times when he values his Diet Coke more and times when he values it less. Seth also values his money and that naturally conflicts with his ability to obtain his Diet Coke. If Diet Coke were freely available, he would always drink it but if it cost \$100 a can, he would definitely drink it less often because his money is more important. Seth prioritizes his money and his Diet Coke differently based on different circumstances. In one instance, he may be holding a Diet Pepsi so he is unwilling to spend as little as 50¢ to have a Diet Coke. However, if he is insanely parched and dehydrated, he may pay even more than \$100 to have just one can of Diet Coke. In general though, Seth prioritizes his Diet Coke over his money when it costs a reasonable amount. In this way, we can suggest that in a resolution such as “Seth ought to prioritize his money over Diet Coke,” we could provide good reasons why he should reasonably affirm the resolution. The statement is more valid than invalid as a general principle.

This is an admittedly silly example of how we might assess value conflicts. Think about some other value conflicts and how you might establish that an agent should prioritize a value.

Table 1.1

Symbolic Connective	Name	Meaning
~	Negation	Not, it is not the case, etc.
&	Conjunction	and, but, however, also
v	Disjunction	or (inclusive) and/or
>	Conditional	if, then, only if, given that
=	Biconditional	if and only if (equivalency)

## INDUCTIVE LOGIC

Inductive arguments are arguments that are predictive, or where the premises of an argument support the conclusion of an argument, but do not support the conclusion fully and definitively. A famous example of the shortcomings of inductive reasoning is: “All Swans are White.” We arrive at that conclusion because in the past, all of the swans we have run into have been white. The swans that hang around the park are white. The pictures of swans in books are white. Many of us have read *Trumpet of the Swan* by E.B. White when we were kids and Louis was a white swan. Basically, if we experience swan, we also experi-

ence white. That must mean that all swans are white. So far, so good, right? Not exactly. If we go to Australia, we discover that they not only have swans, but they are black. This observation disproves our statement. In general, inductive logic proves the general arguments from specific, or particular, observations or circumstances.

## DEDUCTIVE LOGIC

Deductive reasoning is where the rubber meets the road, when it comes to debate at least. In a deductive argument, if the premises are true then the conclusion of the argument must be true. While we often assume that de-

ductive reasoning is preferable to inductive reasoning when it comes to debate, it's important to remember that deductive logic can also be faulty. So you should spend as much time as possible making your premises true, through analysis and evidence.

In general, deductive logic suggests that if certain premises are true, a specific conclusion is true. An example of a valid deductive argument looks like this:

**Socrates is a man.**

**All men are mortal.**

**Therefore, Socrates is mortal.**

In the same method, though, we could create an example of an invalid deductive argument and it might look like these:

**God is Love.**

**Love is blind.**

**Ray Charles was blind.**

**Therefore, Ray Charles was God.**

**All traitors despise the US government.**

**Democrats despise the US government.**

**Therefore, all Democrats are traitors.**

The example of Ray Charles is very instructive of where exceeding the "rule of three" when it comes to premises, often results in faulty logic. Two premises, which lead to a conclusion, are good insurance against faulty logic. However, don't get too confident with the three propositions, as we've noted here with our example of Democrats. This is an

example of faulty logic because the premises fail to establish commonality between membership in the Democratic Party and being a traitor. This is the famous fallacy of the undistributed middle.

We should mention a few other logical fallacies. One key fallacy that debaters make all the time has to do with correlation and causation: *cum hoc ergo propter hoc* (correlation not cause), which is also closely related to *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, literally, "after this therefore because of this."

Consider this argument about climate change, made by our friends at the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster:

"You may be interested to know that global warming, earthquakes, hurricanes, and other natural disasters are a direct effect of the shrinking numbers of Pirates since the 1800s ... . As you can see, there is a statistically significant inverse relationship between pirates and global temperature."

Since the 19th century, global temperatures have risen and (remember our logical connectors now), the number of pirates has declined. So, does it then follow that global warming is due to the decline in the number of pirates? Uh ... no ... .

The *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy suggests that because an event followed another that the first event caused the second. This relates to another argument that you as a debater should be aware of, the alternative causality argument. These are arguments that try

to show that there is an alternative cause to the problem or issue the argument tries to address. There are a number of logical fallacies that are informal—meaning you have to look into the subtext of the argument to see if there is a fallacy or not—that are worth mentioning.

The other fallacy that is all over the place in debate rounds, and political debate generally, is the slippery slope fallacy. This fallacy assumes that one step necessarily will lead to another. Take for example the argument often made by opponents of gun control. “If you ban assault rifles, the next thing to go will be the hunting rifles, and then honest law-abiding hunters will not be able to enjoy the outdoors.” Now, you might be thinking that the real fallacy in that argument centers on the idea of enjoying the outdoors—because really, if you enjoy something, do you need to kill it and tie it to the hood of your SUV? Actually, the fallacy refers to the initial step of a causal chain of events necessarily precipitating another step. In the slippery slope, there is no way to stop short of the final conclusion. It is fallacious, because restraint could apply to the chain of events, and thus, the conclusion does not necessarily follow.

Begging the question, or the fallacy of circular reasoning, is another fallacy to put on your list. Take the following example:

**Assume that when Scott Wunn is speaking, he never lies. Scott Wunn is speaking. Therefore, Scott Wunn is telling the truth.**

The argument begs the question, and is circular, because the argument assumes what it is trying to prove. In short, pay attention to how the logical connections work in your argument, as well as your opponent’s argument.

## WHAT IS THE VALUE PREMISE?

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This is a structural element of a LD case that identifies what you believe the goal of the resolution should be and why you’ve selected your value premise. This is also sometimes called a value or a core value. Regardless of what it is called, it represents exactly same thing: what value does the resolution care about? When debating our earlier example of the resolution about civil disobedience, many people used the value premise of justice. They selected justice because they argued that the resolution asked what a justified action would be in a democracy. Your value premise should always be fair. A value premise is fair when it is a goal that is achievable by both sides. That is to say that you’d never want a value premise of “height” in our basketball analogy because then the tall/slow players would always win. Likewise, you’d never want a value premise of *conscience* on the civil disobedience resolution.

## WHAT IS THE CRITERION?

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The criterion (plural: criteria) is also called the value criterion or the standard. The criterion

should act like a litmus test on the resolution. If you prove that your side better meets your criterion, and thus your value premise, you should win the debate. Take a look at our basketball analogy: if we prove that our team will score more points than we'd get to the Final Four. Your criterion can come in the form of a phrase or a sentence. Many people use a criterion of "the protection of rights" to suggest that if they protect more rights, they should win the debate. You will need to investigate which criterion is right for your case. Again, your criterion should be unbiased and supported with evidence. In the analogy, both sides are capable of scoring more points so each side can access the criterion. In our example, the relationship between the value premise and the criterion is pretty obvious but in your cases, you will need to explain the relationship between the resolution and the value premise as well as between the value premise and the criterion. Under no circumstances should you just state your value premise and criterion without explaining the logical connection between the two. Your judges will need to understand your rationale in order to evaluate your arguments.

## TYPES OF CRITERIA

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While the criterion can take many forms, they will usually take the form of either a statement or a concept. Some view the criterion, incorrectly, as the definition of the value premise. This antiquated version of the criterion has

been all but entirely discredited and eliminated from competitive debate rounds. The modern criterion is a method of framing the round to provide the judge with a way to make their decision, or how to view the arguments in the debate. Put simply, the criterion tells the judge which arguments are the most important in the round.

When the criterion is a statement, it usually involves a rule that the agent of action must follow. Let's take an example of the Sept/Oct 2006 resolution, Resolved: A just government should provide health care to its citizens. The agent of action is a just government. A possible statement criterion for the affirmative might be that, "a just government must ensure the welfare of its poorest citizens." You would need to explain why this is a rule, or maxim for just governments and that would constitute your criterion, or framework, analysis. A statement, or rule criterion, can also take advantage of assumption we all agree on such as, "it's wrong to kill innocent people," or "it's wrong to cause undue harm to innocents." In all of these examples, you'll notice that we tend to immediately agree with the statement or rule. You will always need to explain the rationale for your criterion by suggesting that this rule is the most important rule for the agent in the resolution and for determining whether to affirm or negate the resolution.

A second type of criterion is the concept criterion. More often than not, the concept criterion is actually a statement criterion writ-



ten poorly. Take for example the criterion of “protection of individual rights,” where the debater is trying to suggest that the highest goal of a government is to protect individual rights. The debater is still responsible for explaining why the criterion is appropriate to the value premise and the resolution. In our basketball analogy, we used a concept criterion, scoring more points, to describe how the affirmative and negative would obtain the value premise. You might notice that in many of the sample cases, the debaters used concept criteria but explained them as rules as well.

In general, there’s no reason to prefer one type of criterion to another unless judges in your area are used to one type or the other. However, you should always prefer a specific criterion to a vague one because the more specifically you outline how a judge can make their decision, the easier it is for him or her to evaluate your arguments as well as your opponent’s arguments. You should spend a great deal of time deciding on your criterion, wording it, and warranting it, as it will determine the outcome of most of your rounds. The better explained your criterion is and the more you link to it, the more likely you are to win debates.

## HOW TO DECIDE WHICH CRITERION IS RIGHT FOR YOU

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Any criterion must relate to many aspects of the debate: the resolution, the agent of action, the action being taken, the side of the

resolution you are defending, and the arguments made in your case. In choosing your own criterion, take a look at the arguments you’ve written on the topic. Try to determine what unifying theme or concept relates all of your arguments together. This will start you on the right track to finding the correct criterion. In the following table, we have taken a few sample criteria that might help you get started in the process of deciding which criterion is right for your case. You will need to assess whether the criterion properly evaluates the conflict in the resolution you are debating. For example, if you are trying to determine what criterion is appropriate in the basketball analogy, it seems relatively obvious that “scoring more points,” is the correct choice. Whether you are debating a resolution on health care, international relations, an individual’s use of violent force, or high school administrations, you’ll need to specifically outline what would be an appropriate criterion from the perspective of that context.

Notice that one criterion we haven’t suggested here is “protection of individual rights,” which you will notice is a ubiquitous criterion among debaters. The reason for avoiding this criterion is because any time a government makes a decision, it trades one set of rights for some people for another set of rights for others. This means that both the affirmative and the negative will be protecting rights. The question that is actually important is which rights are more in need of protection in a giv-

Table 1.2

Agent	Action	Explanation	Possible Criteria
Government	Limitation of rights	<p>The resolution asks you to choose to limit one person or group of people’s rights for a social benefit. Examples of these types of resolutions and cases are included in the sample cases.</p>	<p><b>Equality/Equal Treatment:</b> This criterion suggests that the government should attempt to allocate the burdens and benefits of citizenship equally among its membership so that one group isn’t more disadvantaged than any other group.</p>
			<p><b>Preventing government abuse/preserving checks:</b> Since rights are used to prevent the government from acquiring too much power over the individual, this criterion suggests that the highest priority should be ensuring that government is prevented from obtaining the power to abuse its citizens.</p>
	Provision of benefits	<p>These resolutions question whether it is appropriate for government to provide or withhold certain benefits. The health care and capital punishment resolutions are examples of these resolutions.</p>	<p><b>Benefitting the least advantaged:</b> A derivation of John Rawls’ argument, this criterion suggests that a just government must provide for the poorest or least-well-off in society.</p>
			<p><b>Preventing government abuse:</b> Again, this criterion claims that government may only provide or withhold benefits if it does not result in government abuse that would be worse for everyone.</p>

en conflict. A criterion of “protection of individual rights” doesn’t resolve that issue for us.

Remember, these are just examples. You’ll want to think about how the agent of action in the resolution you’re debating evaluates decisions and why it would prioritize one claim over another. The most important aspect to understand is that some arguments are more important than others. You need to tell the judge why one set of arguments is more important than another set of arguments.

## WHAT IS EVIDENCE?

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Evidence is the heart of sound argument. Evidence can take many forms and debaters often refer to it as cards. The best forms of evidence in debate will be an argument—of sorts. A good piece of evidence will have a claim, a warrant, (again, a few reasons why the claim is true), and perhaps a statement of significance of the claim, or an impact.

Why is evidence important? Great question. Evidence can (and should!) serve as the warrant for your own arguments. Evidence is used to prove your point, and with some time in the library, you can find great evidence to support your affirmative and negative arguments. This might sound odd, but actually, library research can be really fun and you and your fellow teammates and coach should try to go to a good library as often as you can. As a debater, you should learn the library inside and out, and if you have access to a college or

university library, all the better. Large library collections hold specialized journals and topic-specific books that can help you support your arguments, and even more importantly, point you in the direction of finding new arguments.

When you find a piece of evidence or card you want to use as a warrant for your argument, a couple rules of thumb apply:

Each piece of evidence needs a full source citation, or “cite.” A citation is a sentence that includes the important bibliographic information so that you, or another debater, can track down the original source of the passage. A good source citation for a book or a journal will look like this.

Last name of author, first name of author, YEAR IN WHICH THE EVIDENCE WAS WRITTEN. (The qualifications of the author) The Title of the Book From Which it Came, (City of publishing house, The name of the publishing house, the copyright date), and the page number.

Here is an example of a source cite for a fictional book:

Halvorson, Seth 2012 *Formative Justice*, (Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy and Political Science, Columbia University), (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 297.

Often, pieces of evidence are taken from academic or law journals and newspapers. Here is another example:

Halvorson, Seth 2012 “Formative Justice: A Reply to my Critics.” *Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol. 12, No.3, (November, 2010), p. 65.

Why do debaters go to such trouble making sure they have all this information? What’s the big deal? Because evidence is so important in warranting our claims, the authenticity of evidence is extremely important. In fact, making up evidence is about as bad as athletes taking performance-enhancing drugs is in sports. Another good rule of thumb for evidence is that a card should be longer than a sentence, and approximately as long a normally sized paragraph. Remember, you want to be able to use the evidence in the round to support your arguments, and not have to spend all the time in the debate reading one card.

These guidelines shouldn’t turn you off from using cards in a round or in a case. They are intended to let you know how to properly use evidence. It’s the same as knowing what a regulation height for a hoop is in basketball. In fact, it is a really good idea to apply cards as warrants for your arguments against your opponent’s case.

The qualifications of the source of the evidence are important. Just like you wouldn’t trust a brain surgeon to speak authoritatively on the topic of global warming, or your sister for that matter (unless she is a climatologist), you should always ask about the qualifications of the author, the extent of the research that

went into the study that they did, what they concluded from their study, and so on.

One final word about cards: they are important for the warrant of your argument, but in the end, they are not a substitute for an argument. Striking a balance between evidence and logical analysis is important in persuading your judge that your argument is sound.

## WHAT ARE BLOCKS?

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Blocks are basically a set of evidence and arguments against common arguments. As you prepare, you might notice that many people make the same arguments to defend one side of the resolution or another. In your post-tournament preparation, it is always wise to write out your responses to common arguments so that you will save preparation time in the round by knowing exactly what to say. You should also time your blocks, as well as each individual answer, so that you know exactly how much time it takes you to say your response(s). Blocks always list the argument being answered at the top and typically include the person who created the block as well as the resolution. The block should approach the argument being answered from different perspectives just in case the particular opponent argues it slightly differently. In the following example, a block was prepared against democracy arguments on the topic: civil disobedience in a democracy is morally justified. Many affirmatives, including the sample case in this

text, suggest that civil disobedience is a check on government power therefore enhancing democracy. Many negatives blocked this argument to have quick and immediate answers to this common argument.

AT: Civil Disobedience Enhances Democratic Institutions

1. Civil disobedience is undemocratic because it permits a small, righteous group to trump the will of society.

Fredrik Bendz, Professor of Philosophy at Uppsala University, Sweden, 1997 "Civil Disobedience: Introduction." Online. <<http://www.update.uu.se/~f-bendz/philo/disobey.htm>>

"Disobedience is a forceful way of having society do things your way. Even a small group of citizens can, with only a little effort, cause great destruction on the infrastructure of a country. The problem with this is that a small terror group without any mandate from the rest of the population may consider themselves to be the righteous ones. Some Anarchists even think that they are acting in the best interest of society, even though the people sympathize neither with their ends nor their means. These people seem to think that they are somehow superior, and that the others don't know their own best. This is a kind of elitist thinking that I cannot accept."

2. Democracy means that individuals must recognize when the majority will is different than their own personal good.

F.C. DeCoste, Professor of Law, University of Alberta, April, 2002 "Redeeming the Rule of Law: Constitutional Justice: A Liberal Theory of the Rule of Law, T.R.S. Allan." *Alberta Law Review*. 39 *Alberta L. Rev.* 1004

"That rules and policies must be 'shown' to be justified in turn entails government by consent for it is the citizen that is the addressee of this demonstration. "The law seeks the citizen's acceptance of its demands as morally justified: he is invited to acknowledge that obedience is the appropriate response in light of his obligation to further the legitimate needs of the common good." In consequence, "the rule of law is ultimately an ideal of government by consent of the governed, in which the law invokes the assent of the individual by appeal to a morally accepted view of the common good."

3. Civil disobedience is not guarded by the constitution. There are no checks.

Susan Tiefenbrun, Associate Professor Of Law At Thomas Jefferson School Of Law In San Diego, California, 2003 "Article: Civil Disobedience And The U.S. Constitution." *Southwestern University Law Review*. 32 *Sw. U. L. Rev.* 677

“However, there are occasions when a person may feel morally justified in resorting to impermissible methods of dissent, such as a direct disobedience of a law. The use of impermissible means of dissent is an act of civil disobedience which is done intentionally and for moral purposes, and the disobedient, believing there is no other alternative to accomplish the moral aim, expects to be punished for the unlawful act, irrespective of the noble motivation. United States Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas insisted that a punishable offense will not, and should not, be excused unless the law which is violated (such as a law segregating a public library) is unconstitutional or invalid. If the right to protest or to assemble peaceably is exercised for the purpose of violating valid laws that

are reasonably designed to avoid interference with others, the Constitution’s guarantees will not shield the protester.”

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## Many negatives blocked this argument to have quick and immediate answers to this common argument

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Notice that in this block, three pieces of evidence are prepared that answer the exact argument made in the sample case. Blocks may also contain analytical answers, or answers in your own words. This is particularly useful because the debater can eliminate unnecessary words and phrases to make their response as concise as possible.



# UNIT 3

## *During The Debate Round*

### WHAT IS PREPARATION TIME?

In each round, you are allotted at least four minutes of preparation time. At some tournaments this will vary and you may have up to five minutes. Check the tournament information packet to determine how much preparation time will be given at the tournament. Standard practice, and the official national standard, is to allot four minutes per debater, per round. Preparation time, also known as “prep time,” is kind of like a timeout where you can think about the arguments you want

to make, write those arguments down, and/or organize your thoughts and your materials. You can use as much of your preparation time as you would like before each speech. Generally, judges will call out how much prep time you’ve used in thirty-second chunks. You’ll want to ask your judge how they’ll indicate that to you or if you’ll be keeping track of your own prep time. More often than not, you’ll want to use about half of your preparation time, or two minutes, before your first rebuttal and the last half of your preparation time



before your second rebuttal. Of course, you could split up your time any number of ways but you always want to remember to save time for preparing that second rebuttal because that is typically where the round is won or lost.

To maximize the time you have to answer arguments, try to improve your flowing skills so that you can write answers to arguments as your opponent is speaking. We discuss flowing in more detail later. That way, you'll be able to use your prep time to really think about arguments and their connections to the value premise, criterion, resolution, as well as compare arguments. You can also take the time to find evidence that you might use to respond to your opponent's arguments during this time.

Remember, while your opponent is using their preparation time, you should also be preparing. While you can't be certain of what they are about to say, you can take advantage of his or her four minutes by getting materials together or planning your next speech. Think back to the questions he or she asked you in cross-ex, they can serve as clues to their position.

## WHAT IS CROSS-EXAMINATION?

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Just like in a courtroom, debaters are permitted three minutes after each constructive to ask questions of each other regarding their cases and positions. After the affirmative case is read, the negative debater will rise and face the judge (rather than the opponent) and ask

a series of questions that the affirmative will answer. You should think about some questions that you could ask any affirmative. For example, on civil disobedience, you might ask whether all actions of civil disobedience are non-violent and whether violent acts of civil disobedience are justified? As well, you should tailor your cross-examination to the affirmative case. Ask about the logical structure and conclusions of their arguments. Are they really proving their arguments to be true or are they simply saying they are true? Use the why test from your casing work against the affirmative case. Are they warranting their arguments? Where are the leaps in logic? Where does the argument falter? Are there counter-examples to their claim? Your goal in cross-examination is to expose the logical flaws in your opponent's argumentation, point out contradictions, and eliminate any arguments that are irrelevant to the resolution. You can also use cross-examination to have them repeat arguments that you didn't understand the first time or you weren't able to write down.

After the negative constructive (and rebuttal portion of their speech, which is a total of seven minutes), the affirmative will rise and face the judge to ask questions of the negative. Follow the same model above by having a few prepared questions and a few specific questions, after you have heard your opponent's case.

Maintaining eye contact with the judge is crucial. Many judges may not make direct eye



contact with you, but, even if they are looking at their notes or writing down information, they still know whether you are making eye contact with them, your opponent, or no one. Many debaters avoid direct eye contact because looking at the same person for a sustained period of time is awkward. Get over that feeling; you need to connect with the judge to persuade him to accept your arguments, and making eye contact is an important way of doing so. If you have an audience, you don't have to focus solely on the judge; you can break eye contact with the judge to interact with the audience periodically.

Eye contact is one way in which a debater can demonstrate that she is a comfortable speaker. Inexperienced speakers tend to look at walls, their opponent, or their paper. This demonstrates a lack of control over the presentation. While you may need to glance at your notes occasionally, don't concentrate on them. Instead, put eye contact to good use by engaging the audience and particularly the judge.

Gestures are the next factor that makes for effective cross-examination. Since debaters stand next to each other during this time, you can easily fall into one of two traps. You

may not gesture enough (meaning your arms are glued to your sides) and end up looking wooden or lacking in confidence. Or, you may gesture too much and inadvertently hit your opponent and have to apologize. If you do, you'll break the flow of the cross-examination. Stand at least a foot or two apart from your opponent so you don't accidentally hit each other. Gestures are useful because they emphasize main points and serve as a non-verbal transition. Students who are experienced at

**Many debaters throw away cross-examination by asking questions that simplify arguments rather than showcasing delivery techniques.**

using hand gestures can effectively indicate a shift in ideas. Some students, however, overuse hand gestures. Overusing hand gestures can have a serious impact: they no longer serve a purpose.

Many debaters throw away cross-examination by asking questions that simplify arguments rather than showcasing delivery techniques. While clarifying arguments is an important part of cross-examination, it is not and should not be the only goal. Excellent debaters will use cross-examination to showcase their personality, trap their opponent, lay the groundwork for future speeches, and

demonstrate outstanding speaking skills. This seems like a large task to undertake in only three minutes—it is! That's why you need to practice your cross-examination skills. Good cross-examinations gain the judge's attention and keep them interested through the entire speech time.

## ASKING QUESTIONS

Excellent debaters will consider cross-examination time as extra speech time because, if utilized correctly, it sets up future speeches. While judges pay attention to cross-examination periods and may remember a particular concession, it is essential that you reiterate concessions and answers made in cross-examination during your speech.

You should plan for cross-examination to go well for you. Preparation begins with short, clear, and concise questions. For example, on a topic whether there is a moral obligation to help people in need, a student might ask, "When on an airplane, why do the flight attendants ask passengers to put on their own oxygen mask before assisting others?" or "Why are lifeguards instructed to put themselves in between the victim and an oncoming wave?" These questions incorporate examples where most people have some familiarity. Most travelers have heard the all too familiar instructions from flight attendants. However, these questions are not restricted to personal knowledge about airplanes or lifeguarding. Instead, they ask the opponent to think criti-

cally about why these instructions are given to people. Even if the opponent does not answer the question exactly as the debater anticipated, they have still gotten these general examples in the judge's head as the debater begins a rebuttal. Then, referencing these ideas becomes even easier during the rebuttal.

Plan for your plan to fail. While preparation is key to cross-examination, it is also the sign of a good critical thinker when she can abandon her strategy. Listen carefully to the debate case that is being read. As your opponent is talking, think of questions to ask. Using your opponent's rhetoric is also helpful when crafting question such as their contention sentence or a particular line from a piece of evidence. This requires good note taking skills and an excellent memory. You should form questions by listening to the arguments from your opponent's case and seeing where there are:

- Lack of warrants or explanations
- Lack of credentials for authors or sources
- Gaps in logic
- Lack of evidence
- Failing to prove the topic true or false
- Contradictions

You might have a hard time developing cross-examination questions. To solve this problem, it is important to practice and prepare for cross-examination.

Remember that not all cross-examination questions will go as planned. However, this planning process gives debaters a bit more security when asking questions. They know which ideas to go back to when an answer from their opponent confuses them. In addition, you can think through goals for cross-examination time. What do you want your opponent to admit? What would help your case? What would lend some support to an argument you already have? Concessions in cross-examination help to support a well-warranted case. Once your opponent makes a concession, remember to make a note. In prep time, it is important to best determine how to incorporate the concession into the speech.

## ANSWERING QUESTIONS:

Asking questions is only half of the job. The other half is answering questions that your opponent poses when they are asking the questions. In this situation, you want to avoid conceding something important but also avoid seeming evasive. Let's take a look at some tips for how to answer questions.

- Develop concise and complete answers: debaters sometimes seek to avoid anything that may appear to be a concession in a round. However, this objective sometimes makes debaters look even worse than if they had just answered the question truthfully. It is important to take time to formulate an

answer (a few seconds is not a big deal) and provide a complete answer.

- Change examples if they do not meet your needs. Some cross-examination questions are illustrated through examples that you need to explain in the context of the debate. For example, we gave the example earlier of a flight attendant giving instructions to passengers. Rather than suggest that the situations are similar, you should change the example instead of trying to find a way to answer it that would work within your position. In this situation, the you might say, “An oxygen mask isn’t quite analogous to what we are talking about. Instead, imagine a person saving for a trip. He could use that money to give away to needy people or save the money for himself.” You must also justify why the shift in examples is necessary. You can easily prepare for changing examples by having an arsenal of them that prove either side of the resolution true. Examples are typically insufficient to prove an argument true, so they should never be the sole method of proving a point. However, examples are a good way of clarifying issues on the topic so that a judge can relate to your arguments better. Sometimes judges who are unfamiliar with the topic identify with examples better than authoritative evidence such as a study or a philosopher.
- Provide examples for arguments. Answer questions using relevant examples that explain issues. These examples can relate to something unrelated to the topic (as our flight attendant instructions from earlier) or they can be examples that are directly related to the topic. For example, students debating the civil disobedience topic may choose to use the Civil Rights Movement to explain certain arguments. Using names and details is a great way to help a judge gain greater understanding of the issues in a round.
- Ask for clarification if questions are confusing. Knowing when to use this tactic is important. You should use it only when a question is legitimately confusing rather than when you want to buy more time. Judges know the difference. If a question is confusing, ask the opponent to reword the question using different terms. Often, debaters may try to deliberately confuse their opponent in order to receive a concession on the topic. Rather than agreeing to something that is unclear, ask for clarification. Even after multiple attempts, you may still be confused by the question. If the judge is looking confused as well, then reaffirm that it

is unclear. Reading the judge is crucial. If the judge looks as if she understands your opponent, try to answer the questions. In this situation, you may opt to re-explain your argument rather than ask for further clarification.

- Don't show fear. When answering questions you might be afraid of being caught off guard. You may feel as though you don't know how to answer a question or might worry that you might admit to something devastating. It is important to be honest and provide detailed answers during the cross-examination. It will be rare that you fail to identify a huge concession before you make it. If you realize that you misspoke, clarify or correct your comments immediately. If it takes until the speech, try to explain to your judge what you really meant to say.

Admittedly, these skills only come with practice. So, it is important to practice cross-examination just as much as any debater would practice rebuttals or crystallization.

- Think about questions before answering. You might be afraid to take the time to think about questions before they answer them. Many believe it is a sign of weakness if they have to think! However, thinking about questions is especially important if the question seems tricky or confusing. Rather than blurting out an answer, think before you speak. Take a few seconds to organize your answer.

Debates are usually not won and lost during cross-examination. However, good cross-examination periods engage both debaters and the judge.



# UNIT 4

## *Refutation*

### HOW DO I RESPOND TO AN ARGUMENT?

#### **STEP ONE: BRIEFLY RESTATE YOUR OPPONENT'S ARGUMENT**

The first step in responding to an argument is to providing a geographic marker for your argument while you restate your opponent's argument. This is done so that the judge and your opponent know which argument you are responding to and where it is in the debate. Some debates have mul-

tiple arguments, and as a result, clear signposting is essential. One model for restating your opponent's argument is, "In her first contention, my opponent argues that health care is a precondition for political participation." Notice that it is unnecessary for you to re-explain the entirety of their argument. Rather, a brief explanation is enough. However, it is absolutely essential that you locate the argument for the judge by describing where in the debate the argument occurred.



## STEP TWO: STATE YOUR RESPONSE(S)

The second step is to state your response (or responses) to the affirmative's argument. This can involve counter-claiming (worst), nit-picking, or pimping, the argument (bad), mitigating the argument (ok), taking out the argument (good), or turning the argument (best). These are the four main types of arguments made in debate rounds. The following table assesses the relative strength of responses to the argument, "capital punishment deters future crime." Notice that offensive responses are always better than defensive responses.

## STEP THREE: RELATE THE RESPONSE TO THE CRITERION

The third step is really important. Like most important things, at first this can be difficult to understand. After you are finished making responses to your opponent's argument, you should relate your arguments to the criterion. Now, depending on your refutation strategy, you might connect the impact of your argument, or the conclusion of the argument, to the affirmative standard. On the other hand, you might connect or analyze the impact of your argument to the negative standard. You might also connect the impact of your argument to both the affirmative and negative standards. When impacting defensive answers, you will always be suggesting that the debater cannot achieve their criterion. When impacting offensive answers, you will always be suggesting that

you achieve their criterion better than they can.

If you are confused, don't worry. The idea is rather simple. Remember the basketball analogy; all you're doing is explaining to the judge why a blocked shot or a two-point shot will result in scoring more points for your group of players rather than the other group of players. Because the criterion or the standard is the tool that debaters use to evaluate an argument's significance to the debate, you will want to explain how your response connects with the criterion.

## STEP FOUR: MOVE ON TO THE NEXT ARGUMENT YOUR OPPONENT MAKES, AND REPEAT THE ABOVE SEQUENCE.

As a negative debater, you should respond to all of the arguments that the affirmative has made in his or her case in the order they presented them. Generally, you should begin with the value premise and criterion by responding directly to the affirmative logic. You should then answer the first argument in the first contention. After you are finished responding to an argument, then move on to the next sub-point, or the next contention. Try to keep track of your remaining time, so you will be able to respond to all of the arguments the affirmative has made. If it appears that time will not permit you to address every argument made by your opponent, select those arguments you believe are the most crucial to attack because they are essential to your opponent's case.

Table 1.3

	Type of Argument	How it is Used	Argument Result
Defensive arguments	Counterclaim	“Capital punishment does not deter crime.”	None.
	Pimp	“This argument has no warrant.” “This argument has no impact.” “This argument doesn’t link.”	No result unless dropped by opponent.
	Mitigate	“Evidence for and against deterrence exists. Since it is inconclusive, we cannot be certain of the deterrent effect.”	Capital punishment does not deter crime in all cases but does in some.
	Take-out	“Conclusive evidence suggests that capital punishment does not have a deterrent effect because criminals are not rational so they don’t think about the consequences of their actions.”	Capital punishment does not deter crime.
Offensive argument	Turn Note: This is a link-turn.	“Evidence suggests that when murderers are witnessed they kill any remaining witnesses because they would already receive the highest punishment. Capital punishment creates an incentive to finish the job.”	Capital punishment makes crime more likely.

## ANSWERING THE VALUE PREMISE & CRITERION

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In most debates, you will discover that you and your opponent disagree on the value premises or criteria for the debate. In the Basketball Analogy, this happens when someone argues that you are the football coach or the golf coach. Notice that the arguments are entirely different when the sport changes. A field goal in basketball is

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**You will need to identify what the difference is between your value premise and criterion structure and the structure your opponent is using**

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much different from a field goal in football. As well, consider how the arguments change if the goal of the resolution isn't the NCAA Final Four but rather the Masters in golf. The most noticeable change is the criterion: in basketball you win by scoring more points but in golf, you win by scoring fewer points! Few debaters understand that if there is disagreement about the value premise, the criterion and all of the arguments are affected. The value premise disagreement must be resolved in order to determine which crite-

tion is appropriate for that value premise. Likewise, if there is disagreement over the criterion, that also must be resolved before anyone can win one of the arguments. For example, if the debaters agree that the goal is the NCAA Final Four but one debater suggests that good coaching will get the team to succeed but the other debater suggest that great training facilities will help the team win, the arguments supporting those criteria differ greatly. This is a fairly reasonable disagreement because it is very difficult to find that one correct criterion for a resolution. However, it is not uncommon for some debaters to select absurd criteria for the debate. In our example, it would be the same as someone suggesting that the best way to get to the NCAA Final Four would be to have cute cheerleaders. While it is possible to make arguments for why those girls might be helpful—they are very talented and do help the team—they are probably a very tangential factor to getting to the Final Four.

When you are involved in a real round, it will rarely involve arguments about basketball coaches, golf strokes, or cheerleaders. Instead, you will need to identify what the difference is between your value premise and criterion structure and the structure your opponent is using. Ask yourself, or your opponent in cross-ex, how the structure links together and how it relates to the agent in the resolution as well as the action being taken in the resolution. If you have properly

answered those questions, you should have little trouble explaining why your opponent's standard is flawed.

It is very important to note that answers to the value premise and criterion are about appropriateness. It is unnecessary, and unwise, to make answers on this level by suggesting that your opponent cannot meet the criterion or value premise. Those are arguments better and more appropriately made against the case. You should reserve answers for the criterion and value premise that attack the relationship between the value premise and the agent of action in the resolution, the value premise and the criterion, the criterion and the action being taken in the resolution, and either the value premise or criterion and any other terms in the resolution. This takes some practice but you will save a considerable amount of time and energy by avoiding the arguments that suggest your opponent can't meet their criterion or value premise. It is also rarely the case that the value premise is an objectively bad value. It was once vogue to find evidence to suggest why value premise could be misused. However, this practice has been abandoned in favor of questioning the appropriateness of the value premise to the resolution. Recall our discussion earlier about how values are always in conflict with one another. To suggest that a value premise is "bad" assumes a particular set of circumstances and a particular way of prioritizing values relative to each other.

## ASSUMPTIONS, ARGUMENTS, AND REFUTATION

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### WHAT IS AN ASSUMPTION?

All arguments have assumptions. In fact, if you are critically analyzing an argument sufficiently, chances are you are trying to tackle the assumptions of the argument. An assumption is something that is presumed to be true, something independent of the argument, and is required for the argument to be true. Assumption comes from the Latin *ad* & *sumere*. Basically it means, "to take something for granted." We take a lot for granted in arguments, not just in the world of debate, but in the real world as well. Good debaters are those that critically assess the assumptions on which an argument, a position, a case, or a worldview depends. The best debaters invalidate the assumptions behind an argument through analysis as well as evidence and can also support the assumptions of their position if interrogated by the opponent. You should always question the assumptions of your opponent's arguments. But questioning is not enough, you need to demonstrate that the stated or unstated assumptions are false. You should also critically dissect the assumptions of your own arguments and case positions. The more you investigate the assumptions of an argument, the better you will be at defending an argument and challenging other arguments. This critical stance takes practice, but

with some effort you can become very good at identifying the assumptions of an argument.

Assumptions can be difficult to deal with in debate (and life!) because they are often unconscious. They largely occur in the background of an argument, and thus are not explicitly stated. Assumptions are required to make “everything hang together.” Sometimes this process of scrutiny is uncomfortable— as we dig down into the foundations of our arguments, values, and views on the world we might find that an unstated assumption that we depended on is unfounded or unwarranted. If you have ever tried to build a house of cards or played Jenga you know that if you take too many of the bottom cards or pieces out, the whole structure collapses. The same principle applies to arguments. If the argument is something that have believed in, or need to believe in for whatever reason, our perspective on the world can change. Think back to the time when you first heard the truth about Santa Claus. That can be a little rough, but it also can be exciting. The world is different, and we have grown because of our critical inquiry into an argument.

We will take a look at one argument and try to identify the assumptions on which it stands. But before we talk about the tools you can use to pinpoint assumptions, and what you can do in debate rounds once you spot them, there are a few other things that need to be mentioned.

## EVERY ARGUMENT HAS ASSUMPTIONS

Just because an argument takes something for granted, or has a set of implicit assumptions, that doesn't necessarily mean that the argument is wrong, or faulty. It simply means the argument has some assumptions. An argument may rely on many assumptions. The more unstated assumptions an argument relies on to be true, the more the argument is questionable or wobbly. So, the natural solution to this problem would be warrant, though evidence and analysis, the unstated assumptions on which we depend for our arguments to be strong. Another solution would be to warrant the assumptions of your arguments so that you will win the day.

## HOW-TO: IDENTIFY THE UNSTATED ASSUMPTIONS OF AN ARGUMENT

Ask yourself what needs to be true, outside of the argument, for the following argument to be true? The trick is to disprove the assumption on which an argument depends. If you can do that, you topple the house of cards. Let's look at an example. Try and identify the assumptions on which the following argument depends. To pick out an assumption, ask yourself: “What has to be true, for the argument to be true?” Isolate what needs to be true for the argument to be true.

**If I am tall, then I am good at basketball.  
I am 6'2”.**

**Therefore, I am good at basketball.**

First, I would in fact have to be tall. That assumption has to be true for the argument to be true. If “tall” is not 6’ 2”, but rather, 7’ or more, then is the assumption that I am “tall” actually correct? Further, I may be tall, tall enough to be thought to be good at basketball, but what if I am not athletically inclined? I could be tall but have absolutely no hand-eye coordination. So you can see that there is a lot that an argument “stands on” in order to be true. The real question is whether the falsity of one unstated assumption of an argument destroys the truth of the argument. Put differently, if one assumption of an argument is false, then must it be the case that the whole argument false? This may be the case, but then again, maybe not. The job of the debater is to explain why a false assumption is or is not enough to show the argument false. I might be 6’ 2”, and that might that might count as a strike against me as a good basketball player, but, then again, I also might be an excellent three-point shooter.

A lot of work goes into supporting arguments and you should do your best to identify the shaky assumptions in your own positions and especially your opponent’s. Some assumptions are more reasonable than others. This is why evidence is especially important. The better your analysis and evidence the stronger your argument will be.

Let’s take a look at one debate argument and explore the unstated assumptions behind an argument on the topic: “Resolved: A just govern-

ment should provide health care to its citizens.” Let us also look at the negative side of the resolution for a moment. What unstated assumptions could the affirmative prove to be false so that he or she could take out or turn the argument?

Here is a synopsis of the negative side: The value premise is justice, and the criterion is freedom of choice. The argument is that a just government would not provide health care to its citizens because the free market and voluntary health insurance is a better means to provide health care.

Daniel P. Kessler, Wall Street Journal, May 04, 2004

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## The better your analysis and evidence the stronger your argument will be.

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America’s health-care policy stands at the crossroads. Either we are going to continue the slow march toward a government-driven system, or we are going to choose a free-market solution that puts consumers in charge. The governmental system ultimately will lead to less choice and a stifling of innovation. The free-market solution will enable America to solve its health-care cost problem and capture the promise of 21st-century medicine; a promise of new cures for diseases and longer lives made possible by the mapping of the human genome, and nanotechnology.

Table 1.4

Assumption	Counter-Attack
The free market actually puts consumers in charge.	The free market puts business in charge. In fact, the market privileges only those that have the money to play the game.
There would be no choice in a governmental system.	Government encourages choice. In fact, many government-administered programs have extensive consumer choice.
Governmental systems stifle innovation.	The government sponsors innovation. Most current innovations are sponsored by the federal government and federal funding.
Technological advances decrease costs of health care.	Technological advances have been outstanding in the last few decades but health care costs have continued to rise.
Health care is appropriately understood within a market model.	Efficiency is not a standard for justice. While a market model may be more effective at distributing commodities such as education and national security, a market approach would be absurd.
Consumers can make reasonable decisions when it comes to health care.	While many consumers are savvy about their health care decisions, many people aren't capable of navigating all of the health care options available to them. Further the people who need healthcare more are the least-likely to be market-savvy (i.e., the poor, the elderly, and children).

In the end, if you can identify and also falsify the assumption of an argument you will be able to find a way to respond, and perhaps turn an argument. Notice that even the assumptions have assumptions and that your responses have assumptions. At some level, there are assumptions that we all take for granted, or that we agree to assume to make life easier. Think about how absurd life would be if we constantly questioning every possible assumption. This textbook makes hundreds of assumptions including

the fact that the authors' sisters genuinely love and care for us. What assumptions can you identify from the text in general, from its structure, from this chapter, from this sentence?

Undoubtedly questioning assumptions can become infinitely regressive, which is to say that we could constantly question assumptions and the assumptions behind those assumptions and the assumptions behind those assumptions and the assumptions behind those assumptions and so on.





# UNIT 5

## *Rebuttal Speeches*

### THE FIRST NEGATIVE REBUTTAL

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**A**fter the cross-examination of the affirmative by the negative, the negative will have the opportunity to present his or her case. The first negative rebuttal, typically called the NR, or the 1NR has two components and is seven minutes in length. The negative debater presents his or her case on their side of the resolution, or in the case of our initial example of a resolution, and arguments as to why civil disobedience is not justified. The negative case should include a value premise

and criterion and typically has one to two main arguments, called contentions. With a combination of logical analysis, evidence, and good organization, the best negative cases are typically three to three and a half minutes in length when read a loud.

After presenting the negative case, there is still more to do and more fun to be had. Since the speech is seven minutes in length, and the negative case typically takes about half of that time to present, the rest of the time (three to four minutes) is devoted to answering the

affirmative case and the arguments presented by the affirmative. More often than not, negative debaters will address the affirmative value premise or criterion by showing its logical deficiencies. Recalling our example of the choice between tall/slow or short/fast basketball players, the use of a fair and logical standard of evaluation is crucial. If the affirmative's criterion does not logically connect to the value premise, you should point that out. For example, if the affirmative's value premise, or goal, is winning the NCAA, yet they have the criterion of "cute cheerleaders," they might be using an inappropriate method to evaluate whether or not a team has what it takes to win the national championship.

After making a few arguments against the value premise and the criterion, the negative should directly respond to each of the affirmative's case arguments. Always answer arguments in the order they were presented. This makes it easier for your judge to understand what you are responding to because you are following the same order as your opponent. If you start answering arguments in another order, you are likely to confuse your opponent and your judge, as well as lose the debate. The affirmative should be constructing their case very similarly to how you did. So, there's a value premise, criterion, and a few major arguments. You'll want to make sure that you respond to each part. At the very minimum then, you should have at least five answers to the affirmative case. The better you get at de-

bate, the more answers you'll be able to make. If you choose to make more than one response to a particular point, make sure that you number them so that a judge can quickly and easily write down your answers. For example, "my first response is that cute cheerleaders are not related to the NCAA national championship but scoring more points is related to winning the championship because it an objective measure of which team is more skilled at the sport. My second response is that cute cheerleaders will make any team less likely to win a national championship because they may be very distracting!"

## THE FIRST AFFIRMATIVE REBUTTAL

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After the negative finishes their case and rebuttal to your case, you will rise and face the judge for cross-examination. Remember, this is your three minutes to ask any questions of the negative that involve their case or their answers to your case. Follow the instructions earlier for a great cross-examination session.

After cross-examination, you will probably need some preparation time to collect your thoughts and finish writing your answers to the negative. Don't forget that you'll need plenty of prep time before the 2AR. You should reserve some of your time for that.

After your prep-time, your first affirmative rebuttal, also known as the 1AR, should be much like the first negative rebuttal, but you're obviously defending the other side. Typically,

you'll want to start with the negative case and answer each of the arguments they present in their case. This includes the value premise, criterion, and their contentions. Again, at a minimum, you'll want to be making at least five answers. However, make sure you watch your time in this speech because you only have four minutes to address both the negative and the affirmative cases and responses.

When you're finished with the negative case, indicate to the judge that you want to start talking about the responses made to the affirmative case. Most people accomplish this by saying something like, "Now, let's examine the affirmative case."

Remember, you should answer arguments in the order they were presented. Starting with the negative case in the 1AR makes a lot of sense, and when you begin defending the affirmative case, you will want to continue answering arguments in the order the negative made them. So, if your opponent's first answer was against the value premise, you will want to start there. If his or her first answer is against the criterion, they have not addressed the value premise and you'll want to say something about that. Any arguments that aren't answered by your opponent are called drops, which is kind of like dropping the ball. If an opponent drops your value premise or criterion, you would not automatically win the round. In the basketball analogy, just proving that we're playing basketball and that we need to score more points to win the NCAA

Final Four doesn't tell us whether to prefer a group of tall, slow players or a group of short, fast players.

If an opponent doesn't address an argument, that does not confer truth to the argument but rather gives you an opportunity to try to convince the judge that it is an important argument for them to consider. Some debaters will suggest that when an argument is unaddressed the opponent has conceded to that argument. However, in academic debate, which has time limits, it is not possible for debaters to address every possible argument made by either side. Instead, debaters choose

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**If an opponent doesn't address an argument, that does not confer truth to the argument but rather gives you an opportunity to try to convince the judge that it is an important argument for them to consider.**

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the most important arguments to address and explain why unaddressed arguments are superfluous or critical depending on the situation.

If you and your opponent have different value premises or criteria, his or her failure to address your value premise or criterion means that the judge can use your approach. You will still want to explain why it is the better val-



ue premise and criterion, but you can spend a little less time there. If your opponent doesn't address one of your arguments, you can extend the argument and relate it to your criterion as one reason why you prove your side to be true. For example, if your opponent drops your argument as to why tall, slow players would be better at making two-point shots you would say something like this:

“My opponent fails to respond to my argument about how tall, slow players are more adept at two-point shots. Since two-point shots are most of the shots taken in any basketball game, this proves how tall, slow players will

score more points than short, fast players and thus make it to the NCAA Final Four.”

Notice that the argument is weighed and impacted to the criterion of scoring more points as well as the value premise of the NCAA Final Four. This needs to be done for each dropped argument for the argument to matter in the debate round.

If your opponent does answer your arguments, you will want to answer their arguments. This does not mean repeating your original argument but rather, establishing why the answer is flawed or why it doesn't answer your original argument. In addition,

you will need to extend arguments that you think are still valid. This means that you inform the judge that your opponent did not sufficiently disprove your argument and that your argument still proves your side is valid. Extended arguments will also need to be tied to your criterion and value premise in order to be useful in the debate. For example, if you have an argument about how basketball players like to eat cheese and your opponent drops that argument, extending the argument isn't very useful to you prove your side to be valid since it doesn't relate to scoring more points or reaching the NCAA Final Four.

Remember that the obligations of the negative rebuttal also apply to you. These include: responding to arguments in the order they were presented, numbering your answers if you have multiple arguments, and answering all of the arguments presented by your opponent. If you drop an argument in your affirmative rebuttal, including a negative case argument or a response that they made against your case, they can extend their original argument and connect it to the criterion, to potentially win the debate.

In general, the more arguments you can connect to the criterion in the affirmative rebuttal, the better.

## THE SECOND NEGATIVE REBUTTAL

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The second negative rebuttal, also called the 2NR, is the chance for you to respond to arguments made against your case and against

the responses to your responses to the affirmative case. The same basic model of refutation in the 1AR to arguments applies from above but in the 2NR, for example, you need to be careful not to make any new arguments. If you've already dropped an argument in the 1AR, say the last argument of the affirmative, you cannot bring up any arguments in this speech to answer those arguments. New answers can only happen in the first rebuttal speeches because it is your first opportunity to answer the argument. A new argument is not good debate etiquette because your opponent does not have a fair chance to respond to your argument. For example, think about how you would feel if your opponent made an entirely new argument in their second affirmative rebuttal? You don't have a 3NR to attack their argument and then the affirmative would always win debates. So, for fairness sake, you should not make new arguments in your second rebuttals. New arguments are bad form but more importantly, many ballots tell judges to explicitly disregard new arguments when deciding the round.

In general, you'll want to start your second negative rebuttal on the affirmative case. Re-establish your answers to the affirmative case (in order, of course) by pointing out why the affirmative answers fail to disprove your original answer and why their original argument is still flawed. In this speech in particular, you will want to make an effort to compare your arguments to your opponent's arguments with

reference to the criterion. Remember our discussion of weighing in the basketball analogy: this is your last opportunity to explain the validity of your arguments in reference to your opponent's and why you are winning the debate. You will want to attempt to accomplish this for both the affirmative and negative case. When you're finished reestablishing your arguments against the affirmative, you should return to your negative case (in order, of course) and answer the attacks against your case, extend and impact any arguments that were unaddressed, and generally reestablish why the judge should vote against the resolution.

In addition to the line-by-line, or point-by-point approach, you will also want to identify which main arguments or issues that prove the negative should win the round. We call these voting issues (or crystallization) because these are the arguments that you would like the judge to use in making their decision.

In order to make a decision, a judge needs to know a few things in very specific order:

1. If there is disagreement over the value premise and criterion, which value premise and criterion is the most appropriate for the resolution? Remember from our basketball analogy that if one side is talking about golf and you're talking about basketball, the arguments are not comparable. You need to explain to the judge why your value premise and criterion are the

appropriate value premise and criterion for the resolution. However, at this stage, it's also a good idea to talk about any arguments that you have against their case that are offensive and would win you your opponent's criterion or value premise. Just in case your judge chooses to use your opponent's value premise and criterion, you still have a way to win.

2. Which arguments are you winning that connect to, or impact, your criterion? Identify your strongest arguments that are still valid in the debate. Generally identifying winning arguments takes two forms. First, because your opponent didn't attack them or second, because you've defeated their attacks. You need to show the judge through your analysis why those arguments prove why you are achieving the criterion better than your opponent.
3. Is your opponent winning arguments that achieve your criterion? This is their escape-hatch in the second affirmative rebuttal that they can use to win. You should attack those arguments as well as compare the arguments you are winning to the arguments they are winning and explain why your arguments outweigh your opponent's arguments.

Finally, try to put yourself in the affirmative's position for a moment and think about

which arguments you would use to design your rebuttal. What would you talk about? If you can identify some of those arguments in your preparation time, you should make sure to address them in your negative rebuttal so that your opponent is less credible when your opponent discusses the arguments you've already defeated. This is called preempting an argument.

There are different stylistic approaches to this rebuttal. Some judges prefer that you give your voting issues at the end of your speech. Some judges prefer that you give your voting issues as you go through the arguments, or down the flow. In either case, you will be doing the exact same thing. The only difference is when you say the words "voting issue." If you have a sense that your judge prefers the end-of-the-speech approach, try to save yourself about two minutes at the end of this rebuttal to cover your voting issues and really try to persuade your judge that they should negate the resolution. If you're giving the voting issues as you go, make certain that you get to all of the voting issues you want to give and that you are really doing a good job of making sure your arguments achieve your criterion and value premise.

In general, you should aim for about three voting issues. Selecting more than three voting issues often gets confusing and each issue gets less developed or explained because you only have six minutes for the entire rebuttal.

## THE SECOND AFFIRMATIVE REBUTTAL AND CRYSTALLIZATION

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So by now you have responded to your opponent's arguments, and your opponent has responded to your responses, and you have responded to their responses. Now what? Is that the end of the round? There is one more element to a successful final rebuttal speech and that element is crystallization.

Crystals are clear, and crystallization is clearing up the arguments of the debate so that the judge can make a decision. When we stop and think for a moment, debaters really need to put all the individual arguments together for the judge. Debate rounds have many diverse arguments and some of them are more important than other arguments,

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**You should aim for about three voting issues. Selecting more than three voting issues often gets confusing and each issue gets less developed or explained because you only have six minutes for the entire rebuttal.**

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i.e., offense vs. defense, or arguments that are logically prior to another argument, etc. The judge needs some coherent way to put them all together to be able to decide who won the



debate. “Putting it all together for the judge” is called crystallization. Crystallization is the most important part of your last speech.

Voting issues should be arguments, not general ideas. At first glance, you might think that there isn’t a difference between arguments and ideas, but really, there is a distinction between the two. The distinction is important. An argument is a claim, with a warrant or two, and a connection or impact back to the criterion. A general idea is like a topic, or a concept, or something of the sort. You will want to choose your voting issues with some care and also select issues that you are “winning.” A voting issue is not: “the values.”

The voting issues you select should be clearly connected to the criteria, (either affirmative, negative or both). Explain to the judge how the arguments relate with other arguments in the round, or weigh the arguments for the judge. Remember our basketball analogy? Why is the three point shot better than the two point shot? In selecting your voting issues you should pick the arguments that are you are winning, or need to win, for you to

win the debate round. Generally speaking, you will want to select 2-3 voting issues.

When you are affirmative, and the negative has done his or her job well by outlining some voting issues, your 2AR should respond to the negative voting issues and offer some of your own. When you are negative, you should select voting issues that advance your position and tip the balance in your direction. Hopefully, you will also be able to leave the affirmative with nothing to say in their last speech, because your issue selection was terrific. If the round has been clear and you have had direct clash with your opponent’s position, your voting issues will be similar, but conclude differently. While that may rarely happen, when it does, it is ideal because the focus makes the judge’s job much easier. In general, try to remember that you are trying to persuade your judge to vote for your side of the resolution. This means that you will need to be constantly talking about the terms in the resolution whether they are civil disobedience, capital punishment, eminent domain, or health care.

# UNIT 6

## *Go with the flow: taking notes and tracking arguments*

**D**ebaters often use verbal short hand for a lot of debate concepts such as “warrant” instead of “the reasons why a claim is true,” “value premise,” instead of “the goal that the debater is trying to achieve,” impact, extension, turn, and many others. How can you keep track of all this stuff? Debaters have developed a system of note taking, or written shorthand, to record what was said in a debate and keep track of things as they occur in a debate round. These notes, or shorthand outlines of what was said in a debate, is called the flow.

The flow is really important for debaters and the judge. The flow is a record of the arguments made in a debate. The flow portrays

the development of arguments from the first speech to the last. When done well, the flow captures all the arguments made and missed



on both the negative and affirmative sides. In short, the flow can help debaters and the judge remember what is going on and what went on in a particular round. The flow demonstrates how arguments interrelate with one another, to the criterion, as well as the voting issues in the round.

Successful debaters and judges use the flow to record arguments. While flowing is a skill that improves with practice, here are a few rules of thumb to assist you in flowing a debate round.

First, you will want to use a single side of a piece of paper for each side in the debate. So

when you are going to flow a round, get out two pieces of paper, (legal pads work really well for this because they are longer than regular 8.5x11" paper). At first, to visually help you organize the sides, you might even want to try writing affirmative arguments in one color ink, and negative arguments in another color ink. Some students determine after a few attempts at flowing that constantly switching pens wastes time. However, if you are likely to be confused by which arguments are yours and which arguments are your opponent's, stick with two colors.

Use abbreviations for words and terms that

you use often, so you don't have to spend all your time writing down a word. For example, C.G. for common good, J for justice, = for equality, ! for impact, and so on.

You should devise your own system of abbreviations and symbols. A list of possible symbols is included in the appendix. Remember, whatever system of abbreviation you use, make sure you are consistent. You need to be able to read your flow during the round. One of the worst things that could happen to you in a debate is for you to get up for your rebuttal and not be able to read your flow. When in doubt, write down enough so you know your opponent's arguments. You will also want to keep your flows after the round so you can go back home and practice with them. After a tournament, it is always a good idea to go back over your flows and see which arguments you had difficulty responding to, and research answers to those arguments or ask someone to help you with them. You should also see if there are common responses made to your case. Are there any arguments you can put in your case for the next tournament that would help you deal with those arguments in the future? Finally, many debaters share what they've heard argued on the topic so that everyone can become better prepared on the arguments. If you decide to do this, you will want to keep as detailed of a flow as possible. Specifically, if your opponent reads evidence in their case, you will want to try to get down the author's name and anything else they read

about the citation so you can look it up when you get home or share arguments with your friends and teammates.

Second, avoid the trap of focusing on writing everything down and not listening critically to your opponent's position. With some practice, you will be able to write down your

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## The flow demonstrates how arguments interrelate with one another, to the criterion, as well as the voting issues in the round.

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opponent's argument and immediately write down your responses to that argument so you can save your prep time for more important things. To save some time, and prevent carpal tunnel syndrome, try eliminating the vowels of words you write down. For example, if your opponent makes the argument that civil disobedience functions as a reciprocal check against society, you might write:

CD = rcprcl chk vs soc

Third, pre-flow your case position on the left margin of the paper before you enter your debate round. You will know what side you are on, so don't waste your judge's time by pre-flowing your case once you arrive. Margins are very important in flowing. Since there will be responses to your case, and you'll make

responses to those responses, and possibly, your opponent will make responses to those responses, you will need space on your page to write them all down. Some people like to draw lines to create columns for each speech. If this helps, feel free to do it. At the top of your two sheets of paper would look like something like this:

Fourth, when your opponent responds to your case, write down their responses near your argument.

For example, let's look back to our civil disobedience resolution. Let's say that the affirmative value premise is morality, and the criterion is individual conscience. Let's also say that the negative argued that the affirmative couldn't justify civil disobedience by looking at one individual but rather had to look to justify it for everyone in society as a general principle. Your flow could look like this:

Figure X>X

Notice that there is no response to the argument that the negative made against the affirmative criterion. If you were negative, you would want to point that out, as well as extend

your argument and show the judge why it is important to the debate!

In short, flowing comes with practice. Watching rounds is always a good idea. If you watch the other debaters on your team or even elimination rounds that you are not participating in, you should always be flowing. In most cases, they've done something that a bunch of judges thought was good so you should be trying to see whether you can take some of their ideas and arguments, and adapt them into your own. As a caveat, however, just because something is winning does NOT make it good to emulate. Talk to coaches and judges to see what practices are best to repeat and which ones you should avoid. While most debaters in elimination rounds are great role models, some might not be and their style may not work for you or the judges you will encounter. Be smart about what choices you make. Regardless, flowing rounds will always be helpful. Talk to varsity debaters about how they learned to flow. Flow as many rounds as you can, and when you are taking notes in class, try using abbreviations and symbols to set your system straight.

# UNIT 7

## *Delivery*

**H**ow you speak and present is oftentimes as important, if not more important, than the content of the presentation. In constructing speeches, inexperienced debaters frequently place too much emphasis on the substance of what they have to say. They think that the content will carry the speech. But content is only one element of good speaking. Audiences, and therefore judges, often tune out speeches full of good ideas because the speaker failed to engage and hold their attention. There are a variety of factors that constitute good delivery especially in debate. While there is no perfect recipe, let's focus on a few key ideas that will get you started on the right foot.

### VOCAL VARIETY

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Vocal variety refers to the change in your vocal tone while you are speaking. Vocal variety

keeps the judge and the audience connected to your speech throughout the presentation. No one wants to listen to monotonous de-

livery and most people don't do it naturally. However, when we read something, especially aloud, we tend not to communicate the same way we do when we are in a conversation. Take a moment to listen to your classmates, your teacher, or your parents by paying attention, just for a moment to the vocal variety they exhibit. Having vocal variety involves many facets, including varying pitch, rate, and emphasis. Once you have finalized your debate cases, you should analyze it for vocal variety and practice it using variations in pitch, rate, and emphasis.

## PITCH

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Pitch is an important part of speaking clearly and effectively. Experiment with the highs and lows of your voice to hear how you sound when you are discussing a particular idea. Pitch often demonstrates emotion. For example, speakers usually tell humorous anecdotes using a higher pitch, while they present dramatic stories using a lower pitch. So, you should use pitch to guide the audience as to how they should be feeling about the information you are presenting. If you are talking about something serious such as how civil disobedience was used to fight oppression, you are probably talking in a lower register of your voice.

You can resolve pitch problems by experimenting with the highs and lows of register. Think of speaking a scale. Begin by saying the syllable "la" at your highest pitch and then

work your way down to your lowest, finding where you are most comfortable. Some people are comfortable with a wide range, others with a much smaller range. Have someone listen to you to help you determine where your midrange is and where your upper and lower thresholds should be when you are delivering a case or giving a rebuttal.

## RATE

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Rate means how quickly or how slowly you speak. Most of the time, you'll be using a normal conversational tone that anyone would understand. If you're reading this paragraph in your head, this is about the speed that you will speak it aloud. This is a normal pace at which most people speak and at which most people will understand you.

Obviously, some people speak faster than others and some speak slower. As a debater, you should aim for somewhere in the middle so that you can appeal to any judge. Speaking too quickly or too slowly creates problems for your judges. Some debaters speak very quickly so that they can get as many arguments in a speech as possible, but in so doing they may sacrifice a judge and/or an opponent's understanding of the argument. While it is less of a problem to see debaters speak too slowly, this is also a problem. Judges are used to hearing people speak at a conversational rate so speaking below this threshold will make them impatient and potentially bored.



Hopefully it's very clear that in a timed event such a debate, you must make every word count whether it is in a case or a rebuttal. To do so you should pay careful attention to how you are presenting each particular word or sentence. One way to accomplish this is by going through your case and identifying in advance which words you want said at a high pitch and which are said at a lower pitch, where you will go faster or slower, and what words or concepts you will emphasize. You can mark up your cases however you wish. For example, if you use a computer you can color-code high and low pitch. Or you can mark up a script us-

ing underlining for words or phrases that need to be emphasized.

Regardless of which method you choose, mark up the script as you read the piece out loud. Don't try to do this while reading silently.

## EYE CONTACT

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Eye contact is a crucial aspect of effective delivery, helping you connect with the audience. It helps the judge feel the emotions and passion that you want them to feel. Yet debaters often have trouble using eye contact effective-



ly. Below are a few tips for developing excellent eye contact:

**Make it deliberate:** Eye contact should be purposeful. Determine beforehand when you want to make direct eye contact with the audience. Since you are often reading your case, you may want to have specific places where you look up from your text to make deliberate eye contact. In rebuttals, this is often easier because you are speaking extemporaneously but don't forget to deliberately make eye contact with your judge.

**Make it useful:** Use eye contact to see how judges are responding to your speech. Even when judges don't want to, they tend to make facial expressions (nodding their head one direction or another, smiling, frowning, etc). Use this feedback. A word of caution, however: judges may make involuntarily facial expressions that don't indicate how they feel about your arguments. You should not let a judge's facial expressions throw you off but try to pay attention and accommodate if you can by explaining an argument in different terms or spending more time discussing your reasoning.

## BODY LANGUAGE

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Body language can either significantly add to or detract from your presentation. Unconscious gestures such as crossing your hands or feet or slouching can signal that you are insecure or passive. Tidying yourself or playing with pens or items of jewelry tends to distract audiences and judges. In fact, unless you are

careful, you may be remembered for being the 'fidgety one' instead of the one with the great ideas. In contrast, being in control of one's body language indicates that you are fully equipped to deal with the pressures of the competitive environment.

Your stance, movement, gestures, and facial expressions all play important roles in delivering an effective speech.

## STANCE

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Debaters often underestimate how much their posture conveys to an audience. If you have excellent posture, your audience will perceive you as knowledgeable, open, and engaging. Conversely, if you fail to carry yourself well by slouching, leaning, or shifting your weight, you appear less experienced, less confident, less trustworthy, or less capable.

The formula for excellent posture is fairly simple. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and your chin parallel to the ground. Place your hands loosely at your sides; shoulders should be relaxed but also straight. Your weight should be evenly balanced between your legs to avoid leaning or shifting. You should feel like you are standing straight if there is less curvature to your spine. If you don't feel that slight tension in your back, you may be slouching.

Your hands should hang loosely at your side. Your palms should rest against the side of the speaker's leg unless they are using their arms to actively make a deliberate gesture.

Frequently, debaters believe that if their arms are out of the way, then they are less distracting to judges and audience members. The opposite is actually true. You should never place your hands behind your back or crossing them in front of your torso. It's also rare that your hands would touch each other because you are reading or holding notes but certainly pay attention to what your hands are doing even when they are at your sides.

## MOVEMENT

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While there is no rule against walking during a debate round, moving is often distracting for the judge because they are looking up and down throughout your speech as they are taking notes. So, when they look up at you, you might not be in the same place that you were before and then it takes time and mental effort for them to adjust. By staying stationary, you also avoid having to walk with your cases or notes in a precarious balancing act. Nothing would be worse than dropping your papers mid-speech. The reason you see other students using movement in their speeches is because it is a memorized performance and judges are writing much less than they would in a debate round.

## GESTURES

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Hand gestures are an important component of your presentation; they are just as meaningful

as words or movement. They can be extremely beneficial in emphasizing points, or they can be incredibly distracting if you use them mindlessly or improperly. Aim to make them natural and relaxed, enhancing the words of the speech.

When speaking with one another, we naturally use hand gestures to enhance what we are saying. During competition, however, debaters have a tendency to over plan each gesture, making them too mechanical. They can become distracting and give the judges and audiences the impression that there is no thought or meaning behind them.

Gestures should be an extension of your body. Always gesture in the center of your body, or the Gesture Zone. Gesturing above your head or below your waist is distracting because it requires the audience to look away from your face. This actually creates a disconnection between you and your words.

You can find your gesture zone by first placing your hands at your sides. Next, turn your wrists up and lift your arms until the elbow and arm create a ninety-degree angle, an "L" at your elbow. With palms down, move your hands back and forth to get a feel for where the low end of your gestures should be located. Most likely, judges and audience members won't see movements below this level.

Next, turn your wrists so that both palms face inward. Lift and lower your hands to feel the sides of the gesture zone. To determine the width of each gesture, move your arms back

and forth while holding your forearms parallel to the ground. Pay particular attention to how far your arms extend. This is where your longest gesture should reach during a performance. Finally, place your arms at chest level; this is the top of the gesture zone. Gestures above this area have a tendency to appear over the top or exaggerated.

Experiment with the hand movements that best meet the language and requirements of your speech. But don't plan them out or format them to the words of your speech or you will look unnatural.

Occasionally you might use the same gesture every time, but in most cases, this appears contrived and robotic.

## FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

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Facial expressions are yet another way you use nonverbal communication in your presentation. They are the key to showing the audience how they should feel about what you are saying. Expressions demonstrate basic and more complex emotions such as anger, happiness or sadness and involve the audience in the speech itself. You can use many parts of your face—

eyes, even eyebrows—to demonstrate emotion. A furrowed brow or a look of concern can indicate that the issues you are discussing are, in fact, important, and ought to be attended to by all members of the audience. Your mouth can be extremely expressive. Frowning or staying tight-lipped can convey stress, frustration, anxiety, or anger. Obviously, smiling makes listeners feel happy or at ease but be careful not to smile at inappropriate periods. Former President George W. Bush made this mistake during a presidential debate when he smiled while talking about the death penalty. While most people don't believe he was actually happy about enforcing the death penalty, smiling appeared inappropriate. Facial expressions can be particularly important during cross-examination since they influence judges' perceptions of both the questioner and the respondent. In these situations, a confident air and a smile can help convince audience members that you are a truly assured speaker. Facial expressions matter because they convey to the judge what the speaker herself thinks about what she's saying. A speaker who uses effective facial expressions has the potential to sway a judge who is not taking diligent notes.

# UNIT 8

## *Sample Affirmative Case*

The following example case was written by Veronica Toledo, Apple Valley HS (MN), on the January/February topic of 2006, Resolved: the use of the state's power of eminent domain to promote private enterprise is unjust. Put simply, the resolution asked whether the government could remove people from their homes and businesses if there was a better economic use for their land. In affirming the resolution, Veronica suggests that eminent domain unfairly effects poor people and is thus unjust. At the 2006 Tournament of Champions, Veronica was the 4<sup>th</sup> speaker and placed 6<sup>th</sup> overall. She was also the NFL National runner-up in Expository Speaking at the 2006 National Tournament.

In her introduction, Veronica tells the story of Mr. Andrew Archie to personalize the resolution for the judge and give context to the conflict.

She also states the resolution.

Here, she provides a definition of eminent domain from Black's Law Dictionary to contextualize the term.

Veronica suggests that since the resolution uses the term "just" in relationship to the state, the appropriate value premise is a just government.

Evidence that explains and clarifies your value premise is always a great idea. With this evidence, Veronica is suggesting that people tend to agree about what should constitute justice. And she notes that equality is an important component of justice. Notice that the evidence has a complete source citation so that anyone can track down the evidence that she is reading. This should be true for all of your evidence.

You may have noticed that portions of her evidence are underlined while other portions are

For half a century, unrestrained governments have taken private property not for "public uses"—such as for bridges or schools—as permitted by the Constitution, but for private businesses in the name of "economic development." Private homes and businesses have been bulldozed, replaced by newer businesses and homes owned not by the public, but by private, politically powerful individuals and corporations. Andrew Archie, a man in his late 60's who was diabetic and in poor health, fought against the condemnation of the home he had lived in since his childhood, to transfer it at a bargain-basement price to another private party: Nissan, to build a car dealership. In defense of people like Mr. Archie, I affirm the resolution: Resolved: The use of the state's power of eminent domain to promote private enterprise is unjust.

For clarity I offer the following definitions:

Eminent domain: the power of the state to take private property for public use by the state, municipalities, and private persons or corporations authorized to exercise functions of public character. The power is limited to taking for a public purpose and prohibits the exercise of the power of eminent domain without just compensation to the owners of the property which is taken (Black's Law 4<sup>th</sup> Ed)

The context of the resolution asks us to evaluate the justness of a specific state action. Therefore, I value a just government.

Professor of Economics, T Nicolaus Tideman explains the concept of justice:

T. Nicolaus Tideman [Professor of Economics at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, "Takings, Moral Evolution, and Justice" Columbia Law Review, vol 88, no 8, December 1988 pg. 1715]

To the extent that it is accessible to human understanding, "justice" can be defined as the consensus that people reach about who should be disappointed when expectations are incompatible. This definition makes justice not absolute, but relative to the group that reaches a consensus and to the presuppositions of their discourse. To be communicable and usable,

not. Time constraints require some quotations to be shortened. It is standard practice to underline portions of excerpts that you will read instead of deleting those words. This way, her opponent and judge can be assured that she is not removing any words that change the conclusion of the author.

In this segment, Veronica outlines her criterion. She suggests that if one group is treated differently for no good reason, the government is acting unjustly. Notice the example of slavery to support her claim.

A thesis statement, just like in an essay, encapsulates your main argument (or position) into one sentence. Notice how Veronica's thesis includes the resolutive terms, her value premise, and criterion.

This is her first major argument or contention. She uses alliteration to hammer home her argument. In this case, she refers to the legal synonym involved with eminent domain, a "taking."

She begins with a claim that poor land is inexpensive.

To warrant her argument, she uses a well-known author on the subject of eminent domain, Jane Jacobs.

You may notice that this evidence also brings up additional reasons why eminent domain or takings harm the poor: they have little lobbying power.

proposals for dealing with issues must not be as amorphous as, "Maximize total utility." The most important foundation of any theory of justice is a recognition of equality.

In order to determine whether a just government exists, we must assess whether it arbitrarily or capriciously treats people differently. Therefore, my criterion is equal treatment. Put simply, government actions can not disproportionately harm one portion of the population to advantage another segment or the society as a whole. This is validated by our moral intolerance to slavery. Even if the action benefits others or the entire economy, it subordinates one group to another and thus violates the first obligation of a just government: equal treatment.

My thesis is that eminent domain for the purpose of economic development is unjust because it violates equal treatment by enslaving the poorest citizens.

First, in principle, takings target the poor and powerless. Intuitively, it is easier for the state to take land from impoverished areas where the value of the land is low so the state can cheaply acquire the land and turn a higher profit.

In her December 2004 amicus curiae brief filed with the Clerk of the Supreme Court, Number 04-108 and available online ([http://www.ij.org/pdf\\_folder/private\\_property/kelo/jacobs05.pdf](http://www.ij.org/pdf_folder/private_property/kelo/jacobs05.pdf)) in the case of Kelo vs. New London, urban policy scholar, Jane Jacobs, argues why eminent domain for private enterprise treats poor people unequally and unjustly.

The properties of poor and politically weak owners are more likely targeted for condemnation than those of wealthy and influential ones. The Poletown neighborhood, for example, may have been targeted in part because its people were "largely lower-income and elderly" and many "assumed that these people would not have the resources or the know-how to fight back." Relatively affluent citizens and major corporations have far greater political influence than the poor do. Thus it is not surprising that the poor often chosen for condemnation that benefit wealthy cor-

porations and developers. Affluent corporate and developer interests are “repeat players” in the eminent domain system who have the resources and expertise to lobby effectively in support of their objectives. Poor and lower middle class property owners, by contrast, have little ability or incentive to develop similar lobbying power.

Second, in practice, when the condemnation is classist, the disadvantaged are disenfranchised.

The use of the state’s power of eminent domain is used to principally attack the poor and remove them from the locality. A segment of the population is not permitted to vote when they are displaced from their homes.

Jacobs continues:

African-American and other minority property owners are also particularly likely to be targeted by economic development condemnations. Between 1949 and 1963, sixty-three percent of all families displaced by urban renewal condemnations were non-white. Racial and class bias have continued to infect more recent condemnations as well. As one study finds: In essence, the power and internal pressures [of the condemnation process] create a mandate to gentrify selected areas, resulting in a de facto concentration of poverty elsewhere, preferably outside the decision makers’ jurisdiction. Numerous past experiences indicate that the process has been driven by racial animosity as well as by bias against the poor. The net result is that a neighborhood of poor people is replaced by office towers, luxury hotels, or retail centers. The former low-income residents, displaced by the bulldozer or an equally effective increase in rents, must relocate into another area they can – perhaps – afford. The entire process can be viewed as a strategy of poverty concentration and geographical containment to protect the property values – and entertainment choices – of downtown elites.

The results are clear: This continually consolidates the poor into similar areas creating urban slums, ghettos, and blight. Resulting from urban renewal policies in the 1950s and 60s, this creates a need for new takings

This is Veronica’s second main argument or contention. Again, she uses alliteration to impress upon the judge the problems with eminent domain. Here she uses another legal synonym for eminent domain, condemnation.

Her claim here is that poor citizens are grouped together and they are unable to organize to change the law.

When using an author you have already cited, it is permissible to simply read their name.

In this evidence, Ms. Jacobs uses a historical example to describe eminent domain uses in the past. Veronica selected this evidence to give historical context to her argument.

In this part of the evidence, she suggests that gentrification is what pushes people out of one area into another, specifically into a place where the politician that ousted them does not need to fear a political backlash.

Notice the use of phrases here such as “entertainment choices” and “downtown elites.” These create clear pictures in the judge’s mind about what we are actually valuing.

Here she clearly impacts her argument by suggesting that eminent domain creates areas of poverty. She also connects the

historical example from earlier to suggest that run-down areas from the past would be targeted today. This evidence and impact was very important in Veronica's first affirmative rebuttal because it suggests that because poor people live in run-down areas and the test for whether eminent domain is permissible is if the area is run-down, poor people can never challenge the taking in court.

In her third main argument or contention. In this segment, she uses alliteration and metaphor to suggest that eminent domain is a criminal action.

In her claim, she also integrates her evidence to make the argument seamless. Here she suggests that an incentive to remove poor citizens exists.

In this part of the evidence she selects, she ties together the real-world examples and the theoretical reasoning of her argument that cities are attempting to attract wealthier citizens.

Here she explains that lowering costs to business makes it more likely that businesses will come to town and that's why governments are encouraged to use eminent domain.

This is yet another reason why governments have an incentive to target poorer citizens. In debate, we call this an independent warrant.

now. Since poor people tend to live in blighted areas, it is impossible for them to challenge the takings in court when it uses the standard of blight.

Finally, eminent domain creates a continual cycle of crimes against the poor.

Paul Boudreaux writes that the use of eminent domain creates a race to the bottom in which governments are constantly encouraged to attract wealthy businesses and citizens.

Paul Boudreaux [Assistant Professor, Stetson University College of Law, Eminent Domain, Property Rights, and the Solution of Representation Reinforcement, 83 Denv. U.L. Rev. 1, 2005 pg. 18]

Laws adopted ostensibly to help the public are in reality the masked use of government to help one group at the expense of others—be it business interests who are helped by regulation of their competitors or outdoor enthusiasts aided by laws restricting private development in parklands. n112 From another perspective, political scientist Paul Kantor has argued persuasively that many local governments are no longer in charge of their destinies. n113 Stung by movement of wealth and jobs to favored suburbs, many American cities have become desperate to retain and attract businesses and tax bases. As localities vie for business, governments become victims of a ruthless “market” in which the demand—the number of competing localities—greatly exceeds the supply of attractive and job-creating companies. n114 To lower the cost of doing business in their communities, cities are encouraged to take steps such as [\*19] giving tax breaks, curbing regulations, and lowering the cost of land through creative use of eminent domain. n115

In recent years, governments have moved beyond using their powers merely to attract business. Localities also understand that attracting wealthy residents is financially beneficial for the local budgets. n116 Not only do wealthier citizens usually pay more in property taxes, they also typically demand fewer government services—they tend to have fewer children who need public schools, they tend to get involved with crime less of-



The last line of the evidence powerfully concludes her point: governments will jettison, or evict, their poor citizens to attract rich ones.

Finally, Veronica chooses to make one last argument as a strategic decision. In many of her affirmative debates, she noticed that negatives would argue that eminent domain was necessary for economic growth and vitality of a community. In order to save herself time in the first affirmative rebuttal, she chose to add this argument to the end of her case, which proves that there are many ways to attract businesses without targeting poor people.

This evidence suggests alternatives to eminent domain that exist without removing citizens from their homes.

Notice that this evidence is both offensive and defensive.

It is defensive because it can be used to suggest that eminent domain is not necessary to achieve economic growth or promote private enterprise.

It is offensive because she can argue later that because other options exist and eminent domain targets the poor, it would be unjust for a government to select the harmful option.

ten, and they tend to need fewer government health services and emergency assistance. n117 As a result, today's local governments are encouraged not only to use eminent domain to shape the climate for business, but also to try to shape the composition of their citizenry. Encouraging wealthier citizens is, of course, nothing new for local governments. Since the early days of zoning, localities have used their land use power for “exclusionary zoning,” which discourages the poor, through techniques such as restricting apartment construction and requiring that new houses must sit on large, and thus expensive, lots. n118 Eminent domain raises the stakes by giving government the disturbing ability to jettison existing poorer citizens from the community.

While eminent domain is primarily intended for economic development, there are less intrusive means of doing so. Other methods of promoting private enterprise exist that are as successful as well as more just than eminent domain.

John Norquist (President of the Congress for New Urbanism, Amicus Curae Brief filed for *Kelo v. New London*, page 13, 2005) argues, “Other common and effective government incentives [to promote private enterprise] are zoning and density allowances to attract corporate relocation and to increase the economic feasibility of the desired development. This regulatory form of incentive can be further augmented by fast-track regulatory processes for desired types of development, including one-stop permitting programs where a staff person is assigned specifically to shepherd targeted types of projects efficiently through the administrative process.

Waivers and rebates of fees are also substantial regulator incentives. Direct financial assistance is common in the form of property tax abatements, bond financing, low interest loans, infrastructure improvements, or utility rate incentives. The list of examples could go on and on and it illustrates the “let’s make a deal” ability of local government to work with a developer to make the economics of a desired project work.

The public sector therefore has many tools at its disposal to foster redevelopment and economic development. Land assembly is just one of

Finally, Veronica concludes quickly with reference to the resolution and her position.

them, and there are many techniques to facilitate land assembly without resort to eminent domain, including contribution of surplus government property, land exchanges or swaps between the public and private sectors, and relocation assistance from the public sector for owners or spaces users in the property slotted for development.”

Because other modes of promoting economic development that are less intrusive than eminent domain exist, eminent domain is unjust because it ignores the possibilities of alternatives that do not harm the poor unequally.



# UNIT 9

## *Sample Negative Case*

The following example case was written by Elizabeth Mullins, Sacred Heart HS (MA), on the NFL Nationals topic of 2006, Resolved: in matters of military intelligence, the ends justify the means. Put simply, the resolution asked whether the government could use questionable methods in order to obtain military intelligence. In negating the resolution, Liz suggests that the use of these questionable means actually disrespects people. At the 2006 NFL National Tournament, Elizabeth placed second.

Elizabeth selects a broad quotation to begin her negative case. She foreshadows her position by choosing some evidence that equates the affirmative position with crime.

Liz provides us with a reason why she has selected her value premise of 'respect for human worth' that relates to the dilemma of the resolution.

She also links her criterion to the value premise and gives us a very specific way to evaluate her arguments.

Notice that both of these young ladies chose to use a thesis at very different tournaments. This is a very helpful advanced strategy to encapsulate your main point for the judge.

Liz anticipates her opponent's arguments in the first contention by suggesting that an ends-based approach will go too far.

She uses a few examples here to explain her point.

Here, she provides evidence for her argument that the government can concoct any rationale to limit rights and the more likely that those measures will get out of control.

“Yet ends, we all know, do not justify any means, both because ends are contingent and uncertain, and because there are other ends in the world besides the ones we have most recently chosen. I have only tried to suggest that such choices ought to be worrying and that they have their moral limits: there come moments when the sheer criminality of the means adopted by one side or another overwhelms and annuls all righteous intentions.”

Because I agree with Richard Wasserstrom [War and Morality, 1970, pg. 61], I negate.

Since national security only matters if we recognize the reason we keep people alive, my **value** is **respect for human worth**, which means recognizing the basic capacities that differentiate humans from objects.

As this requires limiting what others can do to individuals, my **criterion** is **preserving checks on state power**. Preserving checks on state power means placing concrete limits on what the state may do to individuals.

My **thesis** is that prioritizing the intelligence collection's ends over its means lets the state commit whatever rights violations it deems fit, denigrating respect for worth.

My **first contention** is that because there is no clear limit for what “collecting military intelligence” entails, affirming makes it impossible to check violations of human worth.

Any moral system must recognize that individuals have rights. This doesn't mean rights are absolute; we can restrict the person who yells “fire!” in a crowded theater because she poses a clear and present danger to others, and we can limit the liberty of convicted criminals because we've given them due process. In contrast, when we authorize the state to collect military intelligence, we remove these kinds of limits on state action: the government need not provide a benefit back to the person harmed, nor find an objective reason to restrict his rights. Professor Oren Gross confirms, [“Are Torture Warrants Warranted? Pragmatic Absolutism and Official Disobedience, *Minnesota Law Review*, 88 *Minn. L. Rev.* 1481, June 2004, pg. 1509-10] “The clearer the distinction and division between “us”

She also suggests again that the affirmative can't guarantee that valuable security interests will be achieved.

Notice that Liz associates the affirmative with harmful means as she makes her argument for escalation.

Her argument here is that once we show our cards, we can't bluff again. This means we need to find new ways of getting information.

This evidence suggests that not only will measures escalate but also that it will undermine security interests.

Liz also quickly concludes by putting one last phrase in the judge's mind: "anything goes." This is an excellent way to describe the affirmative and can be used in later rebuttals.

and "them" and the greater the threat "they" pose to "us," the greater is our willingness to accept use of more radical measures by the government against "them." We allow for more repressive measures when we believe that those will not be turned against us in the future." Moreover, the ends the affirmative claims are speculative, since the information may prove useless. Violations of worth for such marginal or non-existent benefits are unjustified.

My **second contention** is that the use of harmful means to collect intelligence is uncheckable because it necessarily escalates, disrespecting worth.

Once the means nations have previously used become public knowledge, they are required to use new means so they can remain unpredictable and continue their intelligence collection. For example, if other nations know that Pakistan has planted spies in the past, the country may try other means, like blackmailing other countries to hand over intelligence by torturing their citizens. Gross confirms (pg. 1505): "Even in the post-September 11 world, terrorism's most critical threat to democratic regimes lies in provoking the target nations to overreact and employ authoritarian measures, such as interrogational torture. In turn, such overreaction may weaken further moral restraints against using force, discredit the government domestically and internationally, or alienate segments of the population from the government, thereby making it even harder to wage the fight against terrorism successfully."

When nations operate under an "anything goes" mindset, they believe that so long as they obtain some information, the means are inconsequential. Since such a system makes it impossible to check the state and respect worth, I negate.



# UNIT 10

## *The Debate Round: A Timeline*



What's it called?	How long is it?	What's going on?
<b>Affirmative Case</b> Also called: 1AC, AC	Six minutes	The debater outlines reasons for why the resolution is valid as a general principle including a value premise, criterion, and arguments or contentions.
<b>Cross examination</b> Also called: CX or the cross	Three minutes	The negative stands and faces the judge. They ask a series of questions of the affirmative. This includes clarification questions and exposing the logical flaws in the affirmative case.
<b>Preparation time</b> Also called: prep time or down time	Four minutes total but about half is used here at the discretion of the negative	The negative is preparing his or her attacks against the affirmative case. He or she may be writing answers or organizing evidence etc.
<b>Negative Constructive and Rebuttal</b> Also called: INC, NC, NC/NR	Seven minutes total but about half is spent in case construction and the other half spent attacking the affirmative. (at the discretion of the negative)	The debater outlines reasons for why the resolution is invalid as a general principle including a value premise, criterion, and arguments or contentions. Following his or her constructive, the negative replies to the affirmative arguments in the order they were presented exposing the logical flaws of the argument, and why the case fails to prove the resolution as a general principle.
<b>Cross examination</b>	Three minutes	The affirmative rises and faces the judge. He or she asks a series of questions of the negative. This includes clarification questions and exposing the logical flaws in the negative case and the answers made to the affirmative case.
<b>Preparation Time</b>	Four minutes total. Often, about half is used here at the discretion of the affirmative	The negative is preparing his or her attacks against the affirmative case. The time can be used to write answers or organize evidence etc.
<b>First Affirmative Rebuttal</b> Also called: 1AR or AR	Four minutes total but about half is spent answering the negative case and half is spent responding to attacks against the affirmative case. (at the discretion of the affirmative)	Typically, the affirmative will begin with the negative case and answer the arguments made in the order they were presented. After attempting to answer every argument made by the negative, the affirmative will return to his or her case and respond to attacks made by the negative. In general, it is a good idea to spend about two minutes on each side. This allows adequate attention to each component of the debate.

What's it called?	How long is it?	What's going on?
<p><b>Preparation Time</b></p>	<p>The remaining balance of the negative debater's preparation time is used. For example, if one minute was used prior to the negative constructive, three minutes remain now.</p>	<p>This time is used to take a look at all of the arguments made in the round thus far, and assess which arguments will win the debate for the negative. The time is usually spent thinking about the relationship between arguments, writing arguments, and organizing materials.</p>
<p><b>The Second Negative Rebuttal</b>  <b>Also called: the 2NR, the NR, or the 1NR</b>            Note: there is some discrepancy over whether the negative constructive should also be called a rebuttal. For the ease of explanation and clarity, we call this the second rebuttal but you can call it whatever you like. The speech does not change.</p>	<p>Six minutes</p>	<p>The negative will typically begin by replying to the attacks made against the affirmative case. Recall that the affirmative has had a chance to support these arguments so the negative will be responding to specific affirmative attacks and demonstrating that the answers did not disprove the response or that the original argument is still flawed. After dealing with all of the arguments made against the affirmative case, the negative will return to his or her case and rebuild the negative position in light of the attacks from the affirmative rebuttal. The negative will suggest why the affirmative answers do not disprove the negative arguments and why they continue to prove the falsity of the resolution. The negative debater is NOT permitted to make any answers to arguments he or she did not already answer. The negative debater will also suggest some issues that the judge might consider in making their decision or "voting issues." They should be arguments related to the resolution and the value premises or criteria in the debate.</p>
<p><b>Preparation Time</b></p>	<p>The remaining balance of the affirmative debater's preparation time is used. For example, if two minutes were used prior to the affirmative rebuttal, two minutes remain now.</p>	<p>This time is used to take a look at all of the arguments made in the round thus far and assess which arguments will win the debate for the affirmative. The time is usually spent thinking about the relationship between arguments, writing arguments, and organizing materials.</p>

What's it called?	How long is it?	What's going on?
<p><b>Second Affirmative Rebuttal</b>  <b>Also called: 2AR</b></p>	<p>Three minutes</p>	<p>The affirmative has a slight advantage in that no more negative speeches may be made. Therefore, he or she is able to put together the strongest defense of the affirmative position possible by accounting for all of the existing negative attacks. In general, the entire affirmative's second rebuttal is devoted to voting issues as described above for the negative's second rebuttal. This is because there are only three minutes allotted for the speech. The debater should begin with a discussion of the value premises and criteria in the debate and how the selected voting issues they have selected relate to the value premises and criteria, as well as why those arguments suggest that the judge should vote affirmative.</p>

# UNIT 11

## *Practice Suggestions and Drills for Debaters*

Type	Name	Materials	Description
Delivery Drills	Markup	A case Different color pens	After you've finished with your final draft of cases, take out a few different colored pens and go through the printed copy. With one color pen, mark where you will take pauses. Typically, this should occur at commas and periods. With another colored pen, underline words or phrases you will want to stress as you're speaking. WHY? This helps to ensure that your cases aren't monotonous and you have a visual reminder of where to pause or stress words.
	Pen in Mouth	A case (or rebuttal) A pen (the thinner the better)	Take a thin pen (Bic pens work well) and place it in your mouth lengthwise so that the pen protrudes from both sides of your mouth. Try to put it as far back without choking. Begin reading your case or rebuttal as you normally would. It will sound pretty funny but continue reading with the pen in your mouth three times. WHY? This improves your enunciation and articulation. Afterwards, take the pen out of your mouth and deliver your case. You'll notice that you naturally open your mouth wider.
	Videotaping	Cases or rebuttals Video camera and videotape	Videotaping is a great way to see yourself as your judges see you. Videotape your case and your rebuttals. A fun way to see if you repeat the same gestures or have any subtle mannerisms, try hitting fast-forward while the tape is playing.

Type	Name	Materials	Description
Rebuttal Skills	Rebuttal Redos	A flow from a past round A timer	The simplest of all rebuttal drills, the redo requires the student to take a rebuttal they have already performed and prepare the rebuttal again. In general, the student is given anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours to think about answers and find evidence. The student then either performs the rebuttal for an instructor or for themselves. In either case, the rebuttal is said aloud in the allotted time for the rebuttal. Every rebuttal can (and should) be redone. In each speech, the debater should attempt to be more concise and more offensive. Better answers and the use of evidence should always be encouraged.
	1-2-3	A flow of any constructive	The debater, in sequence, should do three drills designed to test the assumptions behind the case. The first drill requires the debater to take the case and construct one argument challenging the fundamental assumption of the case. This may take some time but it will encourage debaters to consider the case position as a whole. After making that argument, the debater should proceed to the second drill. In this drill, the debater should make two arguments to each of the major parts of the case (the value premise, criterion, and each of the contentions). The object is to make it impossible for the opponent to recover from your attacks so while there are only going to be a total of about 8-10 answers, they should be the best answers possible. Finally, the debater should deliver a rebuttal where the goal is to make three responses to every argument made by the opponent. The object here is to improve conciseness as well as a line-by-line approach to the rebuttal. The instructor or debater should pay attention to each argument in the constructive and attempt to answer every possible argument.  WHY? The combination of all of these skills is what makes for a successful rebuttal. Practice attacking the assumption of the case, focusing on a few offensive answers, as well as attack as many arguments as possible. This drill should emphasize a balance between all approaches.

Type	Name	Materials	Description
Rebuttal skills	Losing time	A flow of a past rebuttal A timer	In this form of a rebuttal redo, the debater is allotted 3 minutes to complete a 1AR. They should begin by eliminating all defensive arguments and should eliminate any unnecessary phrases. The debater should be reminded that they are not permitted to simply go faster. After the debater successfully completes the 3 minute version, they must complete the same rebuttal in 2 minutes. Again, the goal is not for the debater to go faster but rather to eliminate unnecessary phrases and words and make the most offensive answers possible. In debate, the term for this is word economy. WHY? This identifies, for the debater, the extent of the unnecessary words and phrases that they use and actually suggests that they can go slower in the 1AR and be very successful. The more often this drill is performed, the more successful the debater will be on the affirmative.
	Start over	A flow of a past rebuttal	Each time the debater uses a verbal crutch such as “like,” “um,” “at the point,” or any other useless phrase, the debater is required to start the rebuttal over. Another option is to make the debater start over if the debater uses a defensive response rather than an offensive response.
	Overload	One case and many debaters	One person reads their case and another is required to give a rebuttal to it. The next debater must also give a rebuttal to the case but is not permitted to use any of the answers used before. Continue this process until stumped. Include the reader of the case. They should know where the flaws are! WHY? This will assist not only with coming up with a diversity of arguments but also the case reader’s construction. They can accommodate the responses into the case and make sure he or she has answers.

Type	Name	Materials	Description
Cross-examination skills	Supreme Court	A case and fellow debaters	<p>During oral arguments before the Supreme Court, lawyers are required to field questions while presenting his or her case. Following this model, one debater reads a case and other students are permitted to ask questions of the reader. The debater reading the case should answer the question and return seamlessly to the case. An instructor should be present to decide whether follow up questions are permitted and to ensure that everyone has a chance to ask questions.</p> <p>WHY? The reader improves their case by fielding questions and integrating stronger case arguments into their case. The reader also improves their cross-examination skills by staying in control and focused while attacked. The questioners improve their cross-examination skills by attacking the logical chain of argument as it is presented and questioning warrants specifically.</p>
	Overload	A case and fellow debaters	<p>In this variation of the above rebuttal drill, the debater reads a case and afterwards is cross-examined by the first opponent for five minutes. The second opponent may again cross-examine for five minutes but can not ask any of the same questions (or question the same aspect of the case) as the previous questioner.</p> <p>WHY? The debater being questioned will have a great idea of all of the possible ways someone might see his or her case position. The questioners develop a diversity of cross-examination strategies.</p>



Type	Name	Materials	Description
Cross-examination skills	V.I.R.U.S. <i>Courtesy Daniel Yaverbaum</i>	A case and an opponent	<p>The acronym stands for <u>v</u>alue <u>i</u>ndependent of <u>r</u>esolution <u>u</u>ntil <u>s</u>crawled and was devised by Mr. Yaverbaum over ten years ago. In this drill, the questioner asks the case reader why their value premise is valuable; why it's good. Taking their answer, the questioner asks why that concept is valuable or good. This process continues until the case reader contradicts themselves and in about 90% of cases this will occur. Take the following example where an negative on the capital punishment topic uses the value premise of justice and argues that capital punishment does not deter crime:</p> <p>Q: Why is justice valuable? A: Because it ensures individual rights.  Q: Why are individual rights valuable? A: Because they respect autonomy.  Q: Why is autonomy valuable? A: Because all people are rational agents and must be respected for their ability to make choices.  Q: So if all people are rational and your argument against my case is that criminals are not deterred because they are irrational, doesn't that contradict? A: Doh! WHY? Try it out, in most cases there are principles and assumptions behind each value premise that contradict the assumptions of other arguments made in the round.</p>
	Unlimited Cross	An argument, case, etc. and an opponent	<p>In this variation of the "overload" drill, the debater reads a case and the opponent is given an unlimited amount of time to cross-examine the reader. It's a good idea to write down great strategies as you go because there's a good chance that you forget the questions or set of questions that led you to a useful conclusion.</p> <p>WHY? The limited time for cross examination requires debaters to focus on particular issues rather than investigating all possible options. This drill designs prepared questions that would be devastating to an opponent. It also promotes a greater understanding of the arguments and how they relate.</p>

Type	Name	Materials	Description
Miscellaneous Drills	Prepping cases	Opponents' cases	<p>There are many ways of approaching this drill. In one case, the debaters will reflow their opponents' cases from the last tournament in as much detail as possible. All of the flows will be collated and shared with the team. Students will be assigned the task of preparing rebuttal strategies and cross-examination strategies against each of the cases. At the next practice session, the group shares what they have come up with. Identifying common arguments will permit easy blocking assignments and creation.</p> <p>WHY? This drill encourages debaters to collaborate on their work as well as prepare as many possible answers to arguments that they may see in upcoming rounds.</p> <p><b><i>NOTE: Occasionally viewed by some as unethical, the authors believe this is an indispensable method of instruction. If you disagree, please use other drills.</i></b></p>
	Recover	Two debaters and an instructor	<p>The two debaters begin the round as normal. During the NR, without advance warning, the instructor calls time at their discretion. The negative debater drops the bottom of the affirmative case. This will require not permitting the debaters to time themselves. The affirmative will then take advantage of the opponent's error and extend the drop. The instructor should then call time again so that the affirmative drops the bottom of the negative's case.</p> <p>WHY? The debaters focus on how to extend arguments and compare dropped arguments. Inevitably, all debaters will drop arguments. The goal of this exercise is to teach debaters how to cope with that mistake.</p>

Type	Name	Materials	Description
Miscellaneous Drills	Debate backwards	A timer, paper, pen, and basic understanding of the topic.	<p>This drill asks students to begin by preparing and delivering their ideal 2AR. Three minutes of the most powerful and compelling reasons to affirm the resolution. The debater could presume that the negative dropped everything or just assume that he or she is winning any argument. This should be the best 2AR possible. After delivering the speech to the wall or to the instructor, the debater takes a few minutes of prep, the debater should give a 2NR in 4 minutes that entirely preempts the 2AR. This means, the 2NR should approach the speech knowing exactly what the 2AR is going to say and attempt to make the 2AR just given, impossible. After a few minutes of prep, the debater should do the same for what would be the 1AR in 4 minutes, which preempts (or makes impossible) the 2NR just given. One important consideration: the debater is not permitted to repeat arguments. They must challenge the assumptions and make arguments that would make the 1AR impossible. It is also important to note that they are not constrained by any case positions.</p> <p>WHY? This drill is perhaps the most instructive of all the drills presented here. By going through the drill, debaters can identify the assumptions behind arguments and reformat (or format) their cases to improve the quality of arguments. As well, the debater can preempt arguments in the case as well as in the rebuttal, making for stronger speeches.</p>

# APPENDIX A

## *Glossary of commonly used debate terminology*

The following glossary includes definitions of over 120 terms that you may hear in debate rounds or from other debaters. We have not provided these definitions to suggest or prefer any specific type of debate but rather to give you definitions of the terms so that you are aware of what the words mean if or when you hear them. You should always consult with a coach or mentor in the activity when selecting what types of arguments and strategies you decide to use. Where relevant, these definitions conform to the most recently updated NFL Guidelines.

<b>A priori</b>	The phrase literally means, “Without appeal to experience,” and is usually applied to knowledge. The statement, “a bachelor is an unmarried man,” is an a priori statement because it is a definition. Debaters use this phrase, incorrectly, to suggest that an argument is a first consideration in the debate.
<b>Advocacy</b>	The position that the affirmative or negative case defends. One’s advocacy is tied to not just the resolution, but also the arguments made by the debater in the round. See also, advocacy shift.
<b>Advocacy shift</b> <b>Also called: shifting advocacy</b>	When a debater alters their position from the constructive in a rebuttal, it constitutes an advocacy shift and is impermissible. The position offered in the constructive must be advocated until the end of the debate. See also, moving target.
<b>Affirmative</b>	The side of the debate that defends the resolution.
<b>Agent of action</b>	The power indicated or inferred by the resolution to carry out resolitional action. In LD resolutions, the agent of action is typically individuals, society, or the government.
<b>AT</b> <b>Also called: A2</b>	Short-hand for “answers to”
<b>Awards ceremony</b>	An assembly where students are recognized for their performance.
<b>Ballot</b>	The written record of the decision in the round. The ballot includes both the debaters’ names, a place for their speaker points, and a place for the decision. What the ballot means or represents is a question in many advanced debates.
<b>Big picture</b>	A rebuttal strategy that approaches the round from the major ideas and emphasizes a thematic view of each position. The ‘big picture’ approach is often distinguished from the line-by-line approach.
<b>Block</b>	Multiple prepared responses to an argument, generally with evidence. See p.23
<b>Blow up</b>	When one debater makes a big deal out of an argument by spending a lot of time on it.
<b>Bracket</b>	The group of debaters with the same preliminary round record. In elimination rounds, the bracket shows which debaters will face each other as the elimination rounds progress (i.e. the winners of the top two brackets in quarterfinals face each other in semifinals).
<b>Break</b> <b>Also called: clear, or clearing</b>	To become eligible for elimination rounds. In order to break, the debater must have one of the top preliminary round records. It is called “break” because you break through or advance to the next level.
<b>Brief</b>	A prepared argument with evidence and arguments already structured on the page. See also, block.

**Bubble round** The round that determines whether a debater will advance to elimination debates. For example, in a seven round tournament, a student debating in the seventh round with a 4-2 record must win in order to be considered for elimination rounds. Their round could be a bubble round.

**Burden** No question of values can be determined entirely true or false. This is why the resolution is debatable. Therefore neither debater should be held to a standard of absolute proof. No debater can realistically be expected to prove complete validity or invalidity of the resolution. The better debater is the one who, on the whole, proves his/her side of the resolution more valid as a general principle.

- **Burden of proof:** Each debater has the equal burden to prove the validity of his/her side of the resolution as a general principle. As an LD resolution is a statement of value, there is no presumption towards either side.
- **Burden of clash:** Each debater has an equal burden to clash with his/her opponent's position. Neither debater should be rewarded for presenting a speech completely unrelated to the arguments of his/her opponent.
- **Resolutional burden:** The debaters are equally obligated to focus the debate on the central questions of the resolution, not whether the resolution itself is worthy of debate. Because the affirmative must uphold the resolution, the negative must also argue the resolution as presented.

Additionally, specific elements of arguments or case positions may create further burdens for a particular debater. If one debater places a burden on themselves, it must be met in order to win the debate. If one debater places a burden on another, it must either be met or the debater must argue (and win) why they do not need to meet the burden to win the debate.

**Case-turn** A case-turn attacks the fundamental assumption of the affirmative or negative case and argues that the case either concludes in a different result or would actually be harmful rather than beneficial.

**Claim** A statement, or the first step of an argument. The “what” of an argument. See p. 12.

**Comparative advantage** When two arguments relate to each other, debaters may suggest why their argument is more beneficial than their opponent's argument.

**Concede** To agree, a conceded argument is one that is explicitly agreed to by the opponent or is implicitly agreed to by virtue of being dropped.  
**Also called:** concession

**Conditional** Debaters suggest that their argument is “conditional” in that they can avoid that argument or issue whenever they wish or when certain conditions are met. Conditional affirmatives are cases that only affirm the resolution when certain conditions are present. As in a conditional statement, a conditional position follows an “if-then” format.  
**Also called:** conditionality

**Contention** Main arguments in a constructive speech, often divided into sub-points, A, B, C, etc, for clarity.

**Contradiction** Two arguments are incompatible with each other, or there is a perceived conceptual tension between two ideas. Debaters should avoid contradicting themselves.

**Counterplan** A term borrowed from policy debate, it refers to “better solution” than the affirmative case that is offered by the negative. It is like a “little affirmative case” and should have specific advocacy and solve the problem the affirmative suggests as well as be competitive and mutually exclusive with the affirmative case. This presumes the affirmative has a plan. See also, mutually exclusive

**Criterion** In general, each debater will present a value criterion (a standard) which the debater will use to:

- explain how the value should be protected, respected, maximized, advanced, or achieved.
- measure whether a given side or argument protects, respects, maximizes, advances, or achieves the value.
- evaluate the relevance and importance of an argument in the context of the round.
- The relationship between the value premise and the criterion should be clearly articulated.
- During the debate, the debaters may argue the validity or priority of the two value structures. They may accept their opponent’s value structure, prove the superiority of their own value structure, or synthesize the two.

**Critical theory** In the humanities and social sciences, critical theory is a general term for new theoretical developments (roughly since the 1960s) in a variety of fields, informed by structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstruction, Marxist theory, and several other areas of thought. It encompasses many related developments in literary theory (which is often a rough synonym) and cultural studies, aesthetics, theoretical sociology and social theory, continental philosophy more generally. For more information see, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical\\_theory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_theory)

**Cross-apply, cross-application** Making an argument at one place in the debate and then applying that same argument somewhere else in the debate.

**Cross-examination** One debater asks questions, another answers, about the debate which is taking place. Cross-examination should be used by the debater to clarify, challenge and/or advance concepts in the round.

**Crystallization** Selection of voting issues and weighing the round for the judge. See p.39 See also, voting issues.

<b>Cut evidence</b>	To copy a portion of a book, magazine, or hearing onto a note card or brief (via photocopying, handwriting, or typing).
<b>Defense</b>	Arguments which prove why the judge should vote against your opponent. See also, offense.
<b>Disadvantage</b>	In debate, a disadvantage is any problem that results because of the implementation of the affirmative or negative case. The disadvantage must be unique or suggest that the case causes the disadvantage to occur when it otherwise wouldn't.
<b>Discursive impact</b>	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 kritiks.
<b>Double turn</b>	It is a classic debate mistake for a debater to argue both link and impact turns against the same argument. Since both of these arguments independently turn the argument, the two in conjunction work against the debater who is making both types of turns. Example: If the link turn was that the affirmative solves a problem and an impact turn was that problem is actually a benefit. Thus, the affirmative says that they stop a good thing from happening.
<b>Drop, Dropped</b>	An argument not responded to by a debater.
<b>Elimination rounds</b> <b>Also called elims and break rounds</b>	Single-elimination debate rounds generally held at large tournaments. For example, a quarterfinal, semifinal, or final round.
<b>Empirically denied</b>	The statement made by the opponent is not true in the real world. Put another way, our experience suggests otherwise.
<b>Evidence</b> <b>Also called: cards or quotes</b>	Authoritative quoted material entered into the debate to support the argument being made. It is used to provide the warrant for a claim. Evidence can be empirical, about the real world, or theoretical, more of a philosophical position on a core question or concept. Evidence, or cards, requires a full source cite. See p. 21.
<b>Extend, Extending</b>	Re-explaining an argument that was made in a prior speech. You may not extend an argument without responding to your opponent's attacks to that argument, unless it was dropped.
<b>Fiat</b>	The assumption that in order to decide the desirability of an alternative future, we first have to imagine that it exists. Thus, debaters are not required to show that their case "will" be adopted but that it "should" be adopted.
<b>Final round</b>	The elimination round that occurs between the top two debaters in a tournament.



<b>First Affirmative Constructive</b> <b>Also called: AC or IAC</b>	The first speech of the debate round. The affirmative presents his or her case position defending the resolution. The speech is 6 minutes in length.
<b>First Negative Constructive</b> <b>Also called: NC or INC</b>	The first speech of the debater defending the negative side of the resolution. This speech is 7 minutes in length. Divided into two parts, the first 3.5 minutes of the speech presents the negative case, and the second half, (3.5 minutes) argues against the affirmative case, or the AC. However, there are no rules regarding precise time allocation in this speech. There is some controversy in the community whether to call this speech a rebuttal.
<b>Flip</b>	See turn
<b>Flow</b> <b>Also called: flow sheet</b>	The record of the round, the notes that judges and debaters take.
<b>Flow judge</b>	An experienced judge who takes extensive notes during the debate.
<b>Flow sharing</b>	A common practice of collusion between teammates or colleagues at tournaments to share information regarding what competitors are arguing so both teams can prepare in advance.
<b>Forced choice</b>	A situation in which one must make a choice and choosing to not make a choice is not an option. Forced choice is essential to competitive debate.
<b>Ground</b>	Usually used to refer to the positions debaters must defend as affirmative or negative, as in “argumentative ground.” Each team needs to have some “ground” to defend in order for the debate to be a fair contest. Thus, interpretations of the topic which leave the debater no “ground” to defend should be rejected because they are unfair.
<b>Group</b>	A rebuttal tactic to combine arguments that share a common premise or underlying assumption. This strategy is particularly important when an opponent makes many arguments.
<b>High-High (pairing)</b>	A method of pairing preliminary rounds where the top debater faces the next highest debater in their bracket. This is a not a standard practice.
<b>High-Low (pairing)</b>	A method of pairing preliminary rounds where the top debater faces the bottom debater in a bracket.
<b>Impact (noun)</b>	The conclusion or result of an argument. The “why it matters” of an argument. See p.12
<b>Impact (verb)</b>	Connecting the conclusion of an argument to the criterion or framework. See p. 12

**Impact turn** An impact turn is a specific type of turn that suggests that the impact argued by one debater to be detrimental was actually positive. Example: If the negative argued the universal health care would *cause* the economy to collapse, resulting in war, the affirmative could impact turn by arguing that economic decline would actually dampen desire to go to war. See also, link turn and double turn.

**Issue selection** A strategy designed to prioritize arguments when time does not permit addressing every argument made by an opponent. Arguments are prioritized based on how important they are to the debater's case or the burdens in the debate.

**Judge** The person or persons who decide whether the affirmative or negative has won the debate.

**Kick**  
**Also called: punt** A debater may kick an argument or eliminate it from consideration if there are no offensive answers against it such as a turn. Kicking the argument nullifies it in the debate and is used to save time in rebuttals.

**Kritik** A type of argument, generally a case that attacks the fundamental assumptions of the resolution, or of the opponent's case, by saying that the assumptions embodied by the opponent are false or reprehensible. This is generally not standard practice. For more information, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kritik>

**Lay judge** A term for a judge that is not experienced in the format of debate, its nuances, and may or may not take notes, or flow. In general, a lay judge is inexperienced at judging debates.

**Line-by-line** Point by point refutation of an argument with multiple responses. Often distinguished from a "big picture" approach.

**Link**  
**Also called: internal link** The logical connection that occurs between two parts of an argument

**Link turn** A link turn is a specific type of turn that suggests that the claim does not connect to the impact but rather the claim connects to another impact that would prove the opposite side of the resolution. Example: If the negative argued the universal health care would destroy the economy, the affirmative would link turn this argument by arguing that the universal health care would *help* the economy. See also, impact turn and double turn.

**Low point win** Typically, the winner of a debate is assigned higher points. In some cases and at some tournaments, judges are permitted to assign a low point win where the winner of the debate has lower points than the loser in the debate. This typically happens when the debater who wins is either a poor speaker or was less persuasive yet won the arguments in the round more conclusively.

<b>Mitigate or mitigation</b>	To diminish or reduce the severity of the argument. This is the weakest form of attack because it accepts that the argument is true but suggests that the impact is not as bad as claimed.
<b>Moving target</b>	A debater who argues a position that does not suggest a particular advocacy but rather argues from a broad perspective, which permits him or her to shift between different advocacies as he or she sees fit.
<b>Mutually-exclusive</b>	Arguments or world views that are distinct and can not be accepted together. Two arguments are mutually exclusive if they can not co-exist. For example, in policy debate, a plan and a counterplan must be mutually exclusive.
<b>Negation Theory</b>	Negation theory posits that the negative debater does not have a burden of proof but rather, only to disprove the affirmative, the negative can advocate many different approaches to attacking the affirmative including possibly contradictory approaches. Negatives must be wary of a double turn when using this strategy.
<b>Negative</b>	The side of the debate that attacks, or argues against the resolution.
<b>Negative obligation</b>	Negative obligations denote a state's obligation to refrain from activities which would create barriers or undermine the enjoyment of a fundamental right.
<b>Net-benefit</b> <b>Also called: net beneficial</b>	An argument is net beneficial if, when compared to it's response, one debater can claim that the argument has an edge over his or her opponent's argument.
<b>New arguments</b>	Any response to a dropped argument is considered a new response. Failing to address an argument the first time an opportunity exists, renders an argument dropped and by default, true. Judges are instructed to disregard new arguments introduced in the rebuttals. This does not include the introduction of new evidence in support of points already advanced or the answering of arguments introduced by opponents.
<b>Non-unique</b>	The suggestion that an argument is non-unique means that it is true for both the affirmative and negative. If an argument is non-unique it does not affect the debate. Non-unique answers are defensive answers.
<b>Observation</b>	An observation is correctly used to further clarify the terms in the resolution, the ground permitted by the resolution, or an assumption of the resolution that provides for fair and reasonable debate.
<b>Octofinals</b>	The elimination round between the top 16 debaters in a tournament.

<b>Off-case</b>	Properly used, the term means any arguments that are independent of both the affirmative and negative case arguments. Occasionally, debaters will refer to arguments made against the affirmative case to be off-case.
<b>Offense</b>	Arguments which prove why the judge should vote for you. See also, defense.
<b>Overview</b>	An argument made against a set of arguments or an entire case. Overviews usually attack underlying assumptions of the case. Overviews occur before a set of arguments or at the top of a case.
<b>Pairings</b> <b>Also called:</b> <b>schematics, schems,</b> <b>schedules</b>	The schedule that identifies who will affirm, who will negate, which room they will be debating in, and who the judge will be for each round.
<b>Paradigm</b>	A judge's philosophy or view of debate. Generally, a judge's way of deciding a debate. Many paradigms are available at <a href="http://www.thendca.org">http://www.thendca.org</a>
<b>Permutation</b> <b>Also called: perm and permute</b>	A permutation means that both the affirmative and negative arguments can co-exist and is a test of competitiveness. Permutations occur most often with counterplans and kritik. If the affirmative can permute, or do both the counterplan or kritik, they are not competitive.
<b>Pimp or pimping</b>	The word pimp is used in the medical profession to describe, pejoratively, when an attending physician asks medical students or residents difficult questions. In debate, the term pimp is used to describe nit-picky questions or responses to an argument. The pimp does not have any merit, it is usually used to distract the opponent or skew their time. See also, time suck.
<b>Position</b>	The overall theme or thesis of the debater's argument.
<b>Positive obligation</b>	Positive obligations denote a state's obligation to engage in an activity to secure the effective enjoyment of a fundamental right, as opposed to the classical negative obligation to merely abstain from rights violations.

**Post-modernism**  
**Also called: po-mo**

Postmodernism is a term applied to a wide-ranging set of developments in critical theory, philosophy, architecture, art, literature, and culture, which are generally characterized as either emerging from, in reaction to, or superseding, modernism. In a debate sense, if Descartes is seen as the father of modernism, then postmodernism is a variety of cultural positions which reject major features of Cartesian (or allegedly Cartesian) modern thought. Hence, views which, for example, stress the priority of the social to the individual; which reject the universalizing tendencies of philosophy; which prize irony over knowledge; and which give the irrational equal footing with the rational in our decision procedures all fall under the postmodern umbrella. In debate, this term refers to an area of thought that may form the philosophical basis for arguments. For more information, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postmodernism>

**Preempt or preempting**  
**Also called: spike**

An argument designed to respond to an anticipated argument before it is made. For example, an affirmative case could preempt possible negative attacks or case arguments. These are defensive arguments designed to ease the rebuttal burden.

**Preflow**

Each debater writes an outline of their case arguments on the left most margin of their paper in advance of the round in preparation for the debate. Preflows should always be done before the student walks into the room. The preflow may be as detailed or skeletal as the debate wishes.

**Preparation time**  
**Also called: prep time or down time**

The time before rebuttal speeches where debaters can prepare his or her attacks. The norm is not to use prep-time before cross-examination.

**Quarterfinals**

The elimination round between the top eight debaters in a tournament.

**Rebuttal**

Speeches in a debate round that argue against an opponent's position and defend one's own position from attacks. 1AR, NR or 2NR, 2AR.

**Refutation**

See rebuttal

**Resolution**

The sentence that states the topic or issue that is to be debated. To find out what the current resolution is for LD, see <http://www.nflonline.org>

**Scouting**

When one school has multiple debaters at a tournament, they may send "flow scouts" to watch other competitors' debates in order to see what they are arguing and prepare in advance. This is often done during elimination debates to prepare for the next round. See also, flow sharing.

**Seed**  
**Also called: seeding**

The ranking of the debater relative to other debaters at the tournament. For example, the best debater in prelims is called the top or first seed.

<b>Semifinals</b>	The elimination round between the top four debaters in a tournament.
<b>Sever</b>	To sever means to exclude a portion of an argument or a position. A debater might sever part of their case making the term synonymous with kicking or punting the argument. A sever attack suggests that an argument is not true in all cases but rather, only in some cases. Sever attacks are poor strategy because it concedes the basis of the argument to be true.
<b>Signposting</b>	Identifying to the judge where you are on the flow. Signposting is critical for the judge to understand which arguments the debaters are referencing.
<b>Solvency</b>	Typically an argument made in policy debates, this term refers to the way a debater fixes the problems that he or she suggests in his or her arguments.
<b>Solvency mechanism</b>	The specific method suggested by the debater to fix the problem they outline.
<b>Source cite</b>	Bibliographic information of a piece of evidence or card. See p. 21-2, for examples.
<b>Speaker award</b>	An award given to debaters with the highest number of speaker points at the tournament. This is calculated independently of the debater's record.
<b>Speaker points</b>	A scale of numerical points assigned to each debater based on their overall performance in the round. Judges vary on what they use to assign speaker points but typically include the overall presentation by the debater, their speaking style and quality, their strategy in the debate, and how well the debater performed in reference to an ideal performance.
<b>Spew</b>	When a debater reads arguments very quickly in an attempt to overwhelm the opponent with too many arguments. See also, spread.
<b>Spike</b>	See preempt
<b>Split-decision</b>	A circumstance when a panel of judges differs on who won the debate round. Generally, a situation where in a panel of three judges, two judges vote for one debater, and the third votes for the other debater. The winner of the most ballots wins the round.
<b>Spread</b>	Making many, many arguments in an attempt to prevent the other debater from answering them all.
<b>Standard</b>	The framework, or occasionally used to describe the criterion and the value premise together, or just the criterion.
<b>Sub-point</b>	A supporting argument to a larger, main argument main in a contention.
<b>Sweepstakes</b>	A team award given to schools with many successful debaters based on a criterion determined by the tournament.

<b>Tabulation Room</b> <b>Also called: tab room</b>	The place at a tournament where debate rounds are paired and tournament administration occurs. Ballots are often picked up and returned here.
<b>Take-out</b>	An argument that nullifies, or cancels another argument. See pg. 27.
<b>Theory</b>	Any class of arguments that refers to the way the round functions. Always a consideration of fairness and education, theory arguments include topicality and conditionality. All theory arguments are evaluated prior to case arguments.
<b>Time allocation</b>	The amount of time that is spent on each argument or case in a rebuttal. Poor time allocation occurs when a debaters spends far too much time on any one argument or arguments that will not determine the outcome of the debate.
<b>Time skew</b>	Because each rebuttal speech is shorter than the constructive, debaters are often forced to focus on some arguments at the expense of others. Time skew is used to describe an imbalance in the time allocated to any particular argument. See also, time suck
<b>Time suck</b>	An argument used to force an opponent to misallocate their time. The offending debater, the one who deploys the time suck, has little intention of using the particular argument to win the debate. Rather, he or she hopes that the opponent will drop something else crucial to the debate by focusing on the time suck. See also, pimp and time skew.
<b>Topicality</b>	Typically an argument made in policy debates, topicality questions whether the affirmative case supports the resolution. For more information, see <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Topicality">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Topicality</a>
<b>Turn</b> <b>Also called: flip, turn around</b>	A turn is when an argument that was initially made to support an action is shown to adversely affect that action. See also, link turn & impact turn See p. 27.
<b>Underview</b>	An argument made against of set of arguments or an entire case below those arguments or at the bottom of a case. Occasionally, an underview will be independent of the arguments made by the opponent.
<b>Uniqueness</b>	Uniqueness means that the argument is essential and is caused by the action suggested by the debater.
<b>Value premise</b>	A value is an ideal held by individuals, societies, governments, etc. that serves as the highest goal to be protected, respected, maximized, advanced, or achieved. In general, the debater will establish a value which focuses the central questions of the resolution and will serve as a foundation for argumentation. The value premise must specifically relate to the agent of action in the resolution.

**Voting issues**  
**Also called: voters** Suggestions to the judge as to what they should consider in making their decision. Voting issues should be main arguments or aspects of clash that must be related to the value premise and/or criterion. Typically, two to three voting issues are presented. See also, crystallization.

**Warrant** Evidence or analysis that is used to support a claim. The “why” of an argument. See p.12

**Weigh or weighing** A comparison of arguments relative to the criterion. Weighing can take many forms but generally involves suggesting why one argument should be considered before another in the decision making calculus of the judge.

**Word economy** The term describes the use of the fewest words possible to explain a concept or argument. Due to time limits in each speech, particularly the 1AR, word economy is an important skill.





# APPENDIX B

## *Common Flowing Abbreviations*

In each debate, a good flow is critical to success. To become a better debater, you must be skilled at flowing and that takes practice as well as having a set of abbreviations that works for you. Remember that only you have to read your flow and any system that works for you is great. This table contains many possible symbols and what they refer to but feel free to make up your own. They should be a starting point for your own flowing language.

## GENERAL SYMBOLS

Symbol	Definition	Symbol	Definition	Symbol	Definition
VP, V	Value premise	☺	Happiness	♀, ♀ism	Female (Feminism)
C, ©	Criterion	∅	Not	♂	Male; men
<	Less than	Δ	Change	✓	Check(s)
>	Greater than	↑	Increase	+	More
=, =ity	Equality	↓	Decrease	Sct	Social contract; Supreme Court
≠	Unequal; inequality	→	Leads to; impact	\$, \$ism	Money, capital, capitalism
f(x)	Function	c/o	Conflict; contradiction	b/c	Because
/	of; role/govt	Gov't	Government	St	State
Rts	Rights	L or Lib	Liberty	SW	Social Welfare
IRts	Individual Rights	Hrts	Human Rights	Econ	Economics
Ppl	People	H	Harm	Ea	Each
(T)	Turn	(S)	Solves; Solvency	(P)	Power

Also note that each time a new topic comes out, you'll need to come up with new abbreviations.

# APPENDIX C

## *Case Writing Exercise*

In the following activity, the objective is to write a simple affirmative and/or negative case. The evidence is provided for you to reduce any research that would need to be done. The case should have a value premise, criterion, and at least two main arguments for each side. Don't forget to use the claim-warrant-impact format!

### **CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IS JUSTIFIED**

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#### **STUDIES SHOW THAT CAPITAL PUNISHMENT DETERS MURDER.**

**Wesley Lowe, Rochester Institute of Technology, September 9, 1998**

“During the temporary suspension on cap-

ital punishment from 1972-1976, researchers gathered murder statistics across the country. Researcher Karl Spence of Texas A&M University came up with these statistics, in 1960, there were 56 executions in the USA and 9,140 murders. By 1964, when there were only 15 executions, the number of murders

had risen to 9,250. In 1969, there were no executions and 14,590 murders, and 1975, after six more years without executions, 20,510 murders occurred. So the number of murders grew as the number of executions shrank. And more recently, there have been 56 executions in the USA in 1995, more in one year since executions resumed in 1976, and there has been a 12 percent drop in the murder rate nationwide.”

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IS NOT REVENGE.

Paul Baumann, editor, COMMONWEAL, May 19, 1995, p.4

“Justice demands we treat criminals as moral agents responsible for their actions, and that we assume such moral responsibility ourselves. To be sure, retribution must not be just a fancy word for revenge. For that reason, murder is regarded as an assault on the moral order and the community as a whole.”

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT EXPRESSES MORAL OUTRAGE.

Joel M. Gore, *Due Process of Law*, 1979

“Capital punishment is an expression of society’s moral outrage at particularly offensive conduct. This function may be unappealing to many but is essential in an ordered society that asks its citizens to rely on legal processes rather than self-help to vindicate their wrongs. Indeed the decision that capital punishment may be the appropriate sanction in extreme

cases is an expression of the community’s belief that certain crimes are themselves so grievous an affront to humanity that the only adequate response may be the penalty of death.”

All arguments must connect to the criterion!

Now, try writing the negative case. Since you know what the affirmative case, you might think about writing a case that argues something a little bit different and save some of your evidence for responses to the affirmative case. Follow the same pattern as you did before especially with the claim-warrant-impact format.

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IS NOT JUSTIFIED

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Capital punishment is inconsistent with valuing life.

Hugo Adam Bedau, Professor of Philosophy at Tufts University, *THE CASE AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY*, American Civil Liberties Union Freedom Network, 1997

“An execution is a violent public spectacle of official homicide, and one that endorses killing to solve social problems—the worst possible example to set for the citizenry. Governments worldwide have often attempted to justify their lethal fury by extolling the purported benefits that such killing would bring to the rest of society. The benefits of capital punishment are illusory, but the bloodshed and the resulting destruction of community decency are real.”

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT CAN NOT DETER CRIME.

Hugo Adam Bedau, Professor of Philosophy at Tufts University, *THE CASE AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY*, American Civil Liberties Union Freedom Network, 1997

“When crime is planned, the criminal ordinarily concentrates on escaping detection, arrest, and conviction. The threat of even the severest punishment will not discourage those who expect to escape detection and arrest. It is impossible to imagine how the threat of any punishment could prevent a crime that is not premeditated. Gangland killings, air piracy, drive-by shootings, and kidnapping for ransom are among the graver felonies that continue to be committed because some individuals think they are too clever to get caught.

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT KILLS INNOCENT INDIVIDUALS.

Laurence A. Grayer, Associate, Margolis & Edelstein, *DENVER JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND POLICY*, Summer, 1995, p. 566

“There are documented cases of evidence being produced to vindicate an individual who has already been executed or who was on death row awaiting execution. In 1987, researchers documented 350 cases in which 325 defendants, whose guilt was serious doubt, were convicted of murder; 119 of them were sentenced to death. Cases such as these have lead to erroneous convictions, as was the conviction of Kirk Bloodsworth who served nine years on death row in New York until a DNA test established his innocence.

All arguments must connect to the criterion!



# APPENDIX D

## *Troubleshooting*

In this section, we provide quick answers to many common problems faced by debaters in rounds. While this can not serve as a ready-reference in rounds, reading these pages before rounds may avoid some common pitfalls and an unfortunate loss or two.



What if...	What to do
I lost a round because a judge (fill in the blank)	Our natural inclination towards this complaint is not a good one. It's never the judge's fault that you lose. It is always your fault for not persuading them. Remember, the flow is one way of winning the ballot. It is not the only way. There are many acceptable ways to debate and there are many acceptable ways to judge. Read your ballots and get ready to encounter various judges at your next tournament. If you are consistently having problems winning a particular judge's ballot, let your coach know. There's a good chance that it is an easy fix.
I can't think of a value premise or criterion?	Try looking at the commonalities or similar assumptions of your arguments. If swapping out one argument will help come up with a criterion or value premise, go ahead and do that. If you're still stuck, try widening your argument choices and see if there are different arguments you could make.
I can't find any research on the resolution?	<p>We PROMISE that there is research out there on the resolution no matter what the topic is. If you have access to a college library or its library website, research will be very easy. You'll want to find a few key words and phrases that will work for your resolution. On the health care topic, "universal health care," "privatization," health care and poor," as well as "health care and equality," might get you started. Here are some research tools that might help you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Google Scholar (Google is ok but generally a big waste of time)</li> <li>• Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe</li> <li>• Project Muse</li> <li>• Journal Storage (JStor)</li> <li>• InfoTrac (any version of the Gale Group Databases)</li> <li>• Ebsco Host</li> <li>• Also, check the footnotes of any articles you may have already read. They are typically a gold mine of information.</li> </ul>
I don't have any cross-exam- ination questions?	Begin by VIRUSing the value premise. This is an easy method that will potentially lead you to a contradiction. If you didn't hear something or failed to write it down, you will need to ask clarification questions but you will want to try to go deeper into the analysis. If you really run out of questions, go ahead and sit down for prep-time.
I don't know what they said?	There's a good chance that if it didn't make sense to you, it didn't make sense to the judge. Ask enough questions so that you can respond properly to their arguments. A great question to always ask is "what's your position," or "what's your thesis." This will give you a good idea of what you need to attack to win and what your opponent is trying to argue.
I can't read my flow?	Make as many arguments as you can from memory. Try to answer as many arguments on the flow as possible. Immediately after your rebuttal, grab a pen and try to write down as many of the arguments you just said. As your opponent is responding to your arguments, they should tag your arguments. That should fill in the gaps in your flow.

What if...	What to do
I forgot to pre-flow?	Go ahead and start the round. If you're affirmative, you can pre-flow while the negative takes prep. If you're negative, you can pre-flow before the IAR in the affirmative's prep. Go with a very skeletal pre-flow (you can't be as detailed in a 90 seconds) and if you're missing anything you can catch up when they tag your argument in their rebuttal.
I dropped my case?	Don't do that again! Seriously though, if you have offense against your opponent's case, go to those arguments first and explain why those arguments are the most important arguments in the round. Also explain why winning those arguments is enough to vote for you. If you don't have offense against your opponent's case, you will need to explain why your opponent must win all of his or her arguments in order to win. You're trying to suggest that enough defense against the case is enough to disprove his or her case and enough for you to win.
Lost a round because someone had evidence against my case?	First, determine whether you lost because you were factually wrong or because you didn't debate the arguments well enough. If it is the first, you need to change your arguments. For example, if you were trying to argue that the Civil War ended in 1964, you might want to re-think that idea. If someone just had evidence against your case, you probably need better responses to their arguments. Keep researching and figure out if there are answers to their arguments that you can succeed at the next tournament.
I have no answers to my opponent's arguments?	First, attempt to clarify the arguments in cross-examination so that you can answer the argument in rebuttal. Second, if you still don't get the argument, answer the assumption behind the argument or in the worst-case-scenario, attack the assumption behind the case. Finally, make offensive arguments against their case so that even if they extend their arguments, they have to answer yours. At least you'll have something to weigh with.
I'm running out of time in my rebuttal and can't get to everything?	<p>Prioritize. Quickly. Go to arguments in this order: (yes it's ok to jump around the flow if you need to in order to accomplish this task but make sure you SIGNPOST!)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arguments you must win in order to win the round.</li> <li>Arguments that will make your opponent lose the round.</li> <li>Any arguments related to your criterion.</li> <li>Any arguments related to your opponent's criterion.</li> </ul>
I don't know what my voting issues are?	<p>A good bet is to always have three voting issues and if you don't have ones that come to you in the round because of the debate, you can use the following format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Argument why you meet your criterion</li> <li>Argument why you meet your opponent's criterion</li> <li>Argument why your opponent does not win their criterion</li> </ul>

What if...	What to do
<p>My opponent is making arguments I don't understand or using words I don't understand.</p>	<p>The one thing a lot of judges tend to dislike is when you ask an opponent to define terms "in their own words." Instead, just ask your opponent what it means and more importantly, what it means for the debate. For example, ask your opponent what happens if you drop the argument or if you lose the argument but also ask the opponent what happens if he or she wins the argument. Don't pretend you know what your opponents are saying if you really don't. You'll only make nonsensical responses and lose very badly. Try to get a sense of what your opponents are arguing (use the position/thesis question from above) and answer that. Once this has happened in your debate, you shouldn't fear looking dumb. Make the best of it in the debate and then ask someone what your opponent was talking about.</p>
<p>I'm in my first elimination round and there are three judges.</p>	<p>First of all, don't freak out! This is great and you should remember that you are there because you've been doing something right (probably a lot of things right) at this tournament. This is your chance to show your stuff and impress a crowd. Enjoy yourself! Second, if you know who your judges are or if someone can tell you about them, try to find the commonality among all three of the judges in terms of their style.</p>