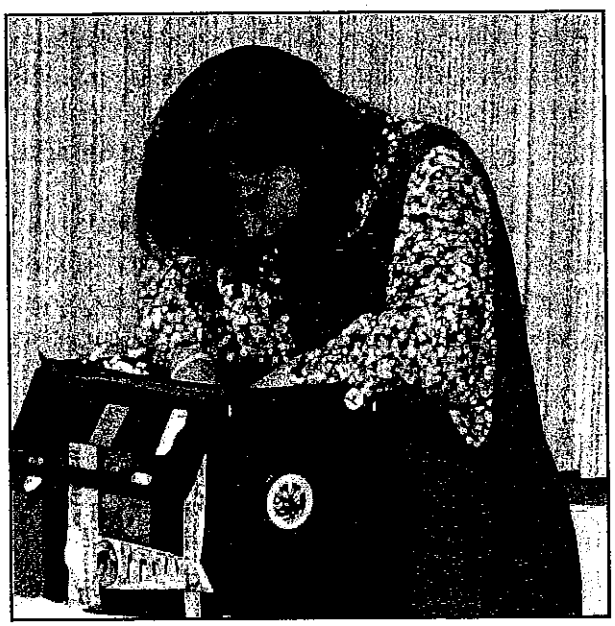
5 Developing Research Skills



Preparing for a debate is like preparing for an exam. The debate itself takes only an hour to complete, but studying for it can take several days or even weeks. Why is so much time needed to prepare to debate? The answer is **research.** Debaters need to gather evidence to support the arguments they use in a debate. A seasoned debater might spend days searching for a specific piece of evidence to support a single argument that might take only 30 seconds to deliver! This may sound like a lot of work, but the good thing about debate research is that the results can be used in many debate rounds. A key piece of evidence can result in many successful debates.

As you read this chapter, look for and learn the meaning of these debate terms:

- ✓ **brainstorming**
- ✓ **card catalog**
- ✓ **evidence**
- ✓ **evidence card**
- ✓ **key terms**
- ✓ **research**

Every debate contains many arguments. As a debater, you will need to gather information to support arguments that you wish to make. When organized and put into usable form, this information is referred to as **evidence.** Evidence is the information an audience or judge needs to accept an argument as valid. Essentially, an argument is the process of reasoning from the known (evidence) to the unknown (the conclusion). Strong evidence helps guarantee a successful conclusion.

Debaters gather evidence through research. As a debater, you will read materials on a topic area and you will begin to understand the topic better. By learning what the topic means and what issues it covers, you learn how to use the evidence you gather. To be successful in debate, you must have a good understanding of what the topic means and good evidence to support your arguments.

Searching for Evidence

As a debater, your research goal should be to obtain the best, highest-quality evidence available. The amount of evidence should never become more important than the quality of the evidence. The judge does not compare how many pieces of evidence each team presents; instead, the judge compares the analysis given on each argument and the quality of the evidence presented. One good, on-point piece of evidence will do more to support an argument than will ten general pieces of evidence.

To obtain high-quality evidence, you must have a research plan. If you just read books and magazines as you happen to come across them, you will not find high-quality evidence on a particular argument. There is always more research to do than there is time to do it. Therefore, you will need to set priorities and put into action a plan of research.

Blueprint for Research

This section outlines a successful plan of research. You can use this blueprint for debate, and you may find it helpful for other kinds of research as well. This blueprint involves two key steps: (1) brainstorming and (2) a library survey.

Brainstorming

The first step to good research is **brainstorming.** When you brainstorm, you search your mind for ideas that might be relevant to the proposition. You can do this on your own or in a group. Usually, the more people involved, the more ideas that will be generated. When you or a group brainstorm, you need to make a list of the ideas. You can then use this list when you move on to the next step—a library survey.

Library Survey

There are three main parts of a library survey: (1) the card catalog; (2) reference tools; and (3) computer searches.

Card Catalog

The starting point for a library survey is the **card catalog.** This is one of the guides to what is available in the library. The card catalog lists all the books in the library by author, title, and subject. (Many libraries have computerized catalogs, which are discussed below.)

Since you already know the debate topic and have brainstormed ideas related to the topic, at this point you will be looking for books by subject. For example, if you were researching the 1991–92 debate topic, "RESOLVED: That the federal government should significantly increase social services to homeless individuals in the United States," one subject you might look up in the card catalog is *social services.* Under this heading you would find:

Social services

Kettner, Peter M.

Designing and Managing Programs: An Effectiveness-Based Approach.

Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, ©1990.

Social services

Martin, George T., Jr.

Social Policy in the Welfare State.

Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, ©1990.

If you read these books, you might discover more **key terms,** or subjects to look up, such as housing assistance, health care, alcohol and drug abuse rehabilitation, mental health services, youth education, and job training programs. For example, you might decide to further explore the subject "health care." Going back to the card catalog and looking under this more specific term, you would find:

Health care

Bricker, P.W., L.K. Scharar, B. Conanan, A. Elvy, and M. Savarese, eds.

Health Care of Homeless People.

New York: Spring, 1985.

Health care

Institute of Medicine.

Homelessness, Health, and Human Needs.

Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1988.

Health care

Wright, J.D., and E. Weber.

Homelessness and Health.

Washington, D.C.: McGraw Hill's Health Care Information Center, 1987.

While exploring your own list of subjects, you will find additional areas cross-referenced in the card catalog. When looking under health care, for example, you would find references to prenatal care, uncompensated care, AIDS, HMOs, nutrition, nurses, emergency room care, and so on. As you discover new areas, be sure to keep a list of key terms to look up later.

Once you have completed a preliminary bibliography (list of books) from the card catalog, you will want to continue your library survey by exploring other general reference sources and perhaps doing a computerized search. Don't forget about the card catalog, however. You will want to come back to look up new key terms as you learn more about the topic.

Reference Books

The second part of a library survey is to consult the reference section of the library. For general information on your topic, you may find the following reference books useful:

encyclopedias

almanacs

yearbooks

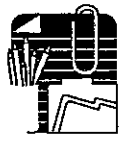
reference guides (Winchell's *Guide to Reference Books* and Shore's *Basic Reference Books*)

Although these sources may not produce evidence on the topic, they will give you background information. And this information will help you go on to more technical sources later. In addition, consult such guides and indexes as the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* and the *International Index.* In these you will find alphabetical listings of magazine articles.

Discuss

1. What does *brainstorm* mean?
2. What is a card catalog? What kinds of information can you locate there?
3. What are four types of reference books you might consult for background material?

Act



1. Using the propositions below, make a list of key terms. Remember, use your imagination. Don't list just the obvious ones.

   RESOLVED: That the United States government should increase preservation of wilderness areas.

   RESOLVED: That the federal government should implement a comprehensive program to guarantee retirement security in the United States.

RESOLVED: That academic achievement criteria should be applied to extra-curricular activities for participation.

RESOLVED: That students should have a greater voice in the editorial makeup of the school newspaper.

RESOLVED: That sex education should be a part of the secondary curriculum.

2. Using one of the resolutions in Activity 1, do the following:
   a. Make a list of books of interest on the proposition.
   b. Using one of the special indexes, make a bibliography that includes magazines or books available on the proposition.

Computer Searches

The third step in a library survey is to take advantage of the advances in computer technology. Computers have made it possible to look for more material in less time. If your library subscribes to any computerized databases or indexes, you will be able to fine-tune your research. Many libraries have also installed computerized catalogs so you can search for your key terms in a database instead of in a traditional card file. You view the sources on a computer monitor instead of flipping through cards one by one.

Many periodical indexes are now available on computer. Check which ones your library subscribes to. Databases that include periodical indexes are called *bibliographic databases.* These databases will give you a bibliographic citation, or reference. However, most of them will not provide you with the article itself. You may still have to find a copy of the article in the library.

To use a bibliographic database, first decide which index includes your subject area. Next, enter your key terms into the computer. The computer will then search the articles for those key terms, and the citations for articles containing those terms will appear on the screen.

For example, on the topic "RESOLVED: That the federal government should significantly increase social services to homeless individuals in the United States," you might choose to search the *Social Sciences Index* using the terms *homeless* or *homelessness.* Such broad topics are much easier to deal with in a computer search. The computer will be able to search the articles in the index in much less time than you could search the printed indexes. With a computer you can also combine your key terms to make your search very specific. For example, you could have the computer look for citations using the key terms *homeless* and *children.* Or you could narrow the search even further by combining the terms *homeless, children,* and *education.* The computer will then find citations for articles that deal with all three issues.

If you have a home computer with a modem, you may be able to access the indexes carried by your local library. Many university library computer indexes can be accessed by modem. You will need to consult your individual library for instructions.

Act

1. Check to see if your library is equipped to do computer searches. Is there a computerized catalog? What indexes does the library subscribe to? Collect any available information about how to use the computer system.
2. Using the current debate topic, do the following:
   a. Make a list of key terms.
   b. Search for your key terms in the computer catalog.
   c. Search for your key terms in the computer indexes.

Evaluating Evidence

Deciding which kind of evidence is best is not easy. Because evidence is used to try to obtain agreement from an audience or a judge, the basic question you need to ask is this: What does it take to get the listener to decide that the argument is valid? No doubt, some people require very little in the way of evidence to support what they already feel to be true. Even the best evidence might not cause people whose opinions have already been formed to change their minds. But while some people seem to believe anything that has appeared in print, others require extremely sound evidence.

When evaluating debate evidence, look first at general standards of evidence. Judges and debaters start by considering two general questions: (1) What can be said about the *external* qualities of the evidence—is the *source* of the evidence reliable? (2) What can be said about the *internal* qualities of the evidence—is it *truthful?*

External Criticism

External criticism has to do with how good a source is. Source reliability can be divided into two areas: (1) the excellence of the publication from which the material is drawn and (2) the competence of the author. Several criteria should be used in judging the quality of a publication and the qualifications of an author.

Quality of Publication

The publication should be respected, unbiased, and qualified in the field being researched. If a magazine, for instance, claims to report current events, does it report these events reliably, or does it interpret events to fit a particular editorial bias?

The Form of the Evidence

This question of form is complicated. For example, two debate teams may disagree as to what was or was not said in a presidential address, only to find that one team has been quoting from a source that used an advance copy of the speech, while the other team has been quoting from a source that used the speech as it was actually

given. Debaters may find that an authority has said something in a television discussion that is different from what he or she wrote in a scholarly book.

The general rule on the form of a source is that the more permanent the form, the more reliable the information. Authorities are likely to be more careful in a scholarly book that will be available for many years than in a television encounter that only takes a few minutes. The President is likely to weigh every word carefully in the prepared text of a speech, simply because every word will be carefully read, but may feel freer to exaggerate and dramatize in off-the-cuff remarks. You should look for the most permanent forms of evidence, because they usually represent the best material.

Author Competence

To determine the competence of an author to write or speak about a topic, the first thing you will want to know is who the author is. The author should be qualified to state facts or opinions on the subject you are researching and should be respected by other authorities in the field.

The author also should have a reputation for responsible reporting. He or she should not be biased. This means that the author should be able to be objective about the subject he or she is reporting on. An author with a vested interest should be avoided. For example, if a physicist makes a living testing nuclear weapons, you would expect him or her to say that such testing is necessary. However, if that same physicist said that nuclear weapons did not need to be tested, such a statement would be very valuable evidence.

Next, you want to make sure that authorities being quoted are making statements about subjects on which they are qualified. An expert in military strategy might express opinions about foreign policy. Although the military strategist may know a great deal about weapons, that does not mean he or she is qualified to speak on what U.S. foreign policy should be. However, being a layperson does not make one's opinion false or without value, any more than being an expert necessarily makes it true. The good debater is careful to gauge accurately the qualifications of the author of the evidence.

Old and New Information

Generally, the closer the author was to an event, the more likely it is that the information will be right. In current events this usually means that the most recent evidence is the best. On many issues or arguments, the date of the evidence could determine who wins the argument. For instance, a magazine article on a specific international proposal could become outdated with tomorrow's headlines. A public opinion poll on a given subject might be out of date as soon as a new poll is published. On the other hand, when debating historical events it may well be that the oldest source is the most accurate. Life in ancient Greece may be more accurately described by someone who was living then than by a modern author.

You need to be very careful when gathering evidence from books. Books are not published as quickly as magazines or newspapers. A book with a copyright date of 1991

was probably completed in 1989 or 1990, and the research was probably finished in 1988 or 1989. You want to be sure any evidence taken from a book is still up-to-date.

A good way to judge the timeliness of a book is to check the footnotes. The dates in the footnotes and in the bibliography will give you a good idea of when the book was actually written. Suppose, for example, that you are researching homeless children and the problems they face. The book you are using has a copyright date of 1991. As you look through the footnotes, you find that the most recent one appears to be 1988. Next you check the bibliography and find a few magazine and newspaper articles from the first half of 1989. From this you could conclude that the manuscript for the book was finished in late 1989. This means that any statistics or government policies you might want to quote from the book as evidence are really from 1989 and not 1991. You may need to go to magazines and other periodicals to find more up-to-date statistics.

Discuss

1. In research you should consider two general questions before you record a piece of evidence. What are they?
2. Why is the quality of a source important?
3. Define a qualified author. Why is it important to know the qualifications of the author?
4. Why is the date on a piece of evidence important?

Internal Criticism

In addition to source reliability, when you are evaluating evidence you also need to consider evidence reliability. Internal criticism, concerned with the truth of the evidence, frequently is overlooked by inexperienced researchers. They feel that if the source is reliable, the evidence must be true. However, even an apparently reliable source, the President of the United States, can make statements that may not hold up as reliable evidence in a debate.

For example, beginning in 1990, President Bush argued that the United States was in an economic downturn but not a recession. The President repeated many times at press conferences that the United States was not in a recession. Then, late in 1991, the President was forced to admit that the "downturn" was worse than he thought and that the United States was indeed in a recession. The President then argued that, although previous economic policies had not worked, the economy was about to improve. As 1992 began, most Americans were still waiting for the upturn to begin. As the President began his reelection campaign, he continued to promise an upturn, even while the economy continued a downward spiral.

President Bush's claims are an example of why good researchers should always read with caution. Never take information at face value—always put it through the tests of evidence.

What It Says

In evaluating the validity of evidence, your first and most obvious question is *what does the evidence say?* What does it report, and does this report make sense?

Does the evidence report actual events—*facts*—or does it make *inferences* about what is probably true, based on what is already known? Or perhaps the statement is a *value judgment,* based on inferences drawn from facts. Most people who study logic feel that the farther the statement is from the fact level, the more likely it is to contain an error. For example:

Fact level: This Olds Cutlass is a lemon.

Inference level: All Olds Cutlasses are lemons.

Value level: Do not buy an Olds Cutlass.

Many inexperienced debaters depend on opinion evidence, in which bias and error are most likely to become significant. It is best to present evidence that is factual in nature and let the judge follow your logic in arriving at your conclusions.

Consistency

The truth of evidence can also be judged by deciding whether it is *consistent within itself.* It is not unusual to discover inconsistencies in evidence, and a careful researcher often can disprove the opponent's arguments by showing that the opposing team didn't read enough of the quotation to indicate the true opinion of the authority. Or one can read further in the same article or in other articles by the same person to show that the so-called authority seems unable to make up his or her mind. Inconsistency, then, may be one of the first indications that a piece of supporting material is not valid.

Agreement of Authorities

Finally, the validity of evidence can be gauged by determining whether it is *consistent with other information.* Do other authorities or sources agree? Is the same fact consistently observed by others? Beware of arguments for which only one supporting source can be found. Also, be careful of a quotation that runs counter to the bulk of other information.

Discuss

1. When you are examining the truth of a piece of evidence (internal criticism), what questions should you ask?
2. What is the difference between a fact, an inference, and a value?

Act

1. For one week, watch the television news and read newspapers and magazines concerning a particular event. What differences do you see in the reporting of facts? Which sources of information are better? Why? Make a collection of the articles.
2. Using the event you chose in Activity 1, show how the date of a piece of evidence could be an important factor if the information were used in a debate.
3. Bring to class the newspaper and magazine articles you collected for Activity 1. In class, mark quotations that could be used as evidence for *or* against a proposition. Also, answer these questions:
   a. Does each article have an author? If so, do you know the qualifications of the author? If not, find them.
   b. Do you have the article titles and the newspaper or periodical titles?
   c. Do you have the date of publication for each source?
   d. Do you have the page numbers of the source?
   e. Is the source unbiased?
   f. Is the source reliable and respected by others?

Be prepared to explain why you chose the articles.

Recording Evidence

You now know what evidence is and how to find it. Now the question is, what do you do with it? First, you must decide exactly what portion of an article or book you should use to support your argument. Second, you need to record the portion (quotation) so that it is usable (both in length and form). Finally, you need to record the quotation in such a way that you are able to answer questions about its accuracy. The product is referred to as an **evidence card.**

Preparing Evidence Cards

You've been researching a number of articles and books on the current debate topic. Now you have evidence marked in these materials. How do you make that evidence usable in the debate round? One way is to put the isolated or marked material on an evidence card. Many debaters use three-by-five-inch index cards. This size is easy to use, yet big enough to hold even a long piece of evidence. Some debaters type the evidence on the card; others write it out in longhand. Although both ways are acceptable, they leave room for errors in accuracy. Many debaters now write or type the source citation on the top of the card and then cut and paste the evidence from a copy of the original. There are two advantages to this. First, it's a lot faster to cut and paste than to write or type. Second, the evidence will be accurate. You don't have to worry about leaving out a critical word or transposing numbers.

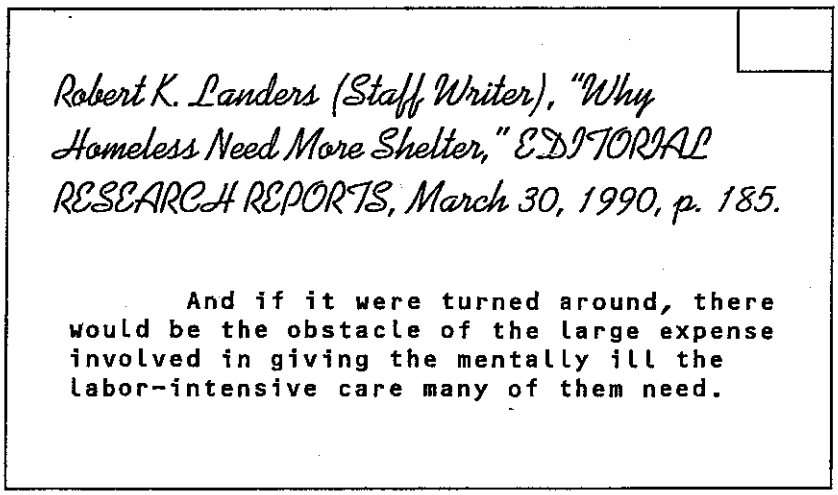
The citation of the source for each piece of evidence is very important. The full bibliographical reference should be typed or handwritten on each card and should include: author's name; author's qualifications; article title; magazine, book, or government document title; date; and page number. It is very important that the source, date, and page number be accurate. A good quotation can lose its impact (or even the round) if the opposition points out that they cannot find the quotation in the source.

Also, always include the author's qualifications on the card so you will have it ready in case your evidence is challenged. A dynamite piece of evidence can lose a great deal of its impact if you can't explain why the person being quoted is qualified.

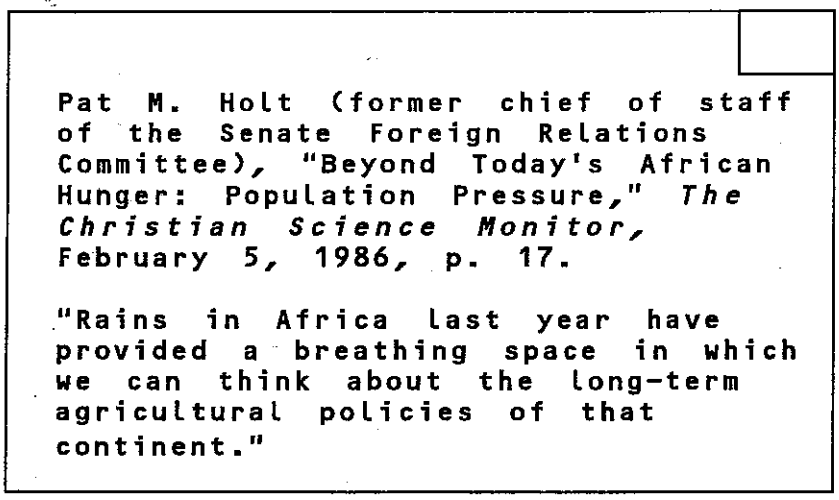
Finally, leave a space in one corner for a filing index code. You box off an area so that the number will not get mixed up with the rest of the citation. (Filing evidence is covered later in this chapter.)

Be sure to include only one piece of evidence on each index card. It can cause a great deal of confusion later if there are two quotations on one card. It will be hard to find your evidence and hard to file it. Here are two typical evidence card entries:

Cut-and-Paste Evidence Card



Typed Evidence Card



The Dangers of Ellipses

When recording a piece of evidence, be very careful to include all the words. Some researchers omit what they consider unnecessary words and indicate omissions with ellipses (. . .). This is not a good idea for debate. In fact, avoid ellipses whenever possible. What you consider unnecessary may be considered essential by someone else. However, if you choose to use ellipses, remember that adjectives, qualifiers, and such words as *not* are essential. Deleting these types of words would distort the evidence.

The debate community feels so strongly about the dangers of using ellipses that the National Forensics League now requires that internal ellipses not be used unless a debate team has the original or a copy of the original with them at the debate round. Instead of using ellipses, put brackets [ ] around the words in the quotation you actually want to read in a debate round. This way you can easily delete material that might make the quotation confusing or unnecessarily long, but still have the entire quotation available for anyone who wants to check the original. This method also decreases the number of copies of articles you need to carry with you.

Internal References

Another item you need to check carefully when recording evidence is internal references. Any piece of evidence should be able to stand on its own. Any references to *it, he, the act, the program,* and so on should clearly indicate what is being referred to. Note the qualifications in the following piece of evidence:

"He [Ruckelshaus] emphasized again that Congress, in its current consideration of Superfund, could add such responsibilities that would do more harm than help."

Without the word *Ruckelshaus,* the quotation would be incomplete. You cannot rely on your memory to remember who "He" is. If you don't qualify all of the internal references in your evidence, it will soon become impossible to remember who each "he," "she," and "it" is.

Remember, you will be recording evidence from more than one source. Over time you will probably read hundreds of articles and have several hundred evidence cards. You must have information written down or you will not remember it.

Act

Using the articles you marked for quotations, make evidence cards. Be sure to check your evidence for accuracy and references (*it* or *he*). When you are finished, compare your evidence to the examples on page 58.

Filing Evidence

As you continue to do research, you will gather more and more evidence cards. As the number of evidence cards grows, it will become very important for you to be able to find a card easily. If you can't find a card during the debate round, you might as well not have it.

You can keep track of your cards by using a filing system. There is no one best filing system—you must set up a system that works best for you. A good system will always let you know what you have and will help you find the evidence quickly during the debate round.

To begin a filing system, first separate your evidence cards into categories. The categories should be logical subdivisions of your topic. After the cards have been divided into categories, file them behind index divider cards that indicate the category. Put only a few cards in each category, preferably fewer than ten. Large categories are hard to sort through during the debate round—if you have more than ten cards in a category, you're more likely to use the first card you find instead of the best card. Even if you think you know what evidence is in your file, a large category just takes too long to get through.

Remember, your prep time is limited. It's better to use your prep time analyzing the opposition's arguments than trying to find the right evidence to support your argument. A good filing system will make it easy to find evidence during a debate round.

There are two commonly used filing systems: (1) an alphabetical system and (2) a notebook index system.

Alphabetical Filing System

The simplest filing system involves arranging your categories alphabetically in a file box. For example, if you have cards on homeless children, file them behind an index divided card labeled "Homeless Children." Also, write the heading "Homeless Children" in the upper right-hand corner of each card to make it easier to refile them after a debate round. This alphabetical filing system is used most often by beginning debaters. The system works well as long as the number of evidence cards is still fairly small. While there is no magic number as to how many cards you can control, if you have more than 600 cards, this system becomes difficult to manage.

As the number of cards increases, some debaters simply add more dividers. Others separate the evidence into three general categories and then subdivide those three. The three general categories are affirmative, negative, and both (cards that can be used to support affirmative or negative arguments). Each category is put in its own file box (or boxes!) and subdivided by subject area. For example, you may set up a separate file box for the negative evidence, and subdivide that file box by subject area. You would then file your cards behind your major subject headings, marked on index divider cards.

This system works well for many debaters, but it has some problems. First, it can take a great deal of time during a debate round to find the appropriate heading. Then, after you find the heading, you must look for the right card. Also, depending on the resolution being debated, many evidence cards could be classified as both affirmative and negative. If the file for cards labeled "both" becomes quite large, it will be difficult to subdivide the categories enough. Headings will get longer and longer to provide the detail necessary to sort out the cards. At this point, a notebook index system might be more useful.

Notebook Index System

A notebook index system allows debaters to better organize their evidence when they have many evidence cards and file boxes. In a notebook index system, evidence cards are still sorted into categories and subcategories. However, the file divider cards are labeled with codes, instead of with the names of the categories. A listing (index) of these codes and categories is kept in a notebook.

Here's how it works. On sheets of notebook paper, type the names of your evidence categories and subcategories. Then assign a code to each major category. For example, the subject category "Homeless Children" might be labeled "HC" or simply "A." Next, assign a number to each subcategory. For example, the subcategory that deals with lack of health care might be "9." Therefore, all evidence cards that deal with the lack of health care for homeless children would be labeled "HC9" (or "A9").

This coding system means that you can get to your evidence very quickly, just by referring to the index sheet in your notebook. (You can also keep the index sheet in the front of your evidence box, if you wish.) If you have several file boxes, you can also number the boxes. For example, you might number your affirmative box "1" and your negative box "2." If your cards get mixed up during a debate, it will be very easy to refile them—"1HC9" cards go in one box, "2HC9" cards in the other. (It makes sense to have a separate index sheet for each file box. The index sheet should be numbered to match the box.)

One key to using the notebook index system successfully is to keep the number of cards in each category small. You can do this by expanding the number of categories and subcategories and by eliminating the weakest evidence. Remember, you don't have to keep every evidence card you make. As you find better evidence, discard the weaker evidence.

The illustration shows part of an index sheet for the resolution "RESOLVED: That the federal government should significantly increase social services to homeless individuals in the United States." Blank spaces are left in the index sheet to allow room for adding new categories as the number of evidence cards increases. For example, under the heading "HD3" (causes for runaways), there are a couple of blank spaces. This allows flexibility in the index sheet—the categories can be expanded if any evidence is discovered that relates to possible causes.

It is better to leave too many blank spaces than too few. You don't want to run out of space for new categories halfway through the debate season. Your goal is to keep the number of cards in each category to a minimum—ten at the most. When you collect more than ten cards in a category, it's time to reread them and to consider subdividing the category.

Sample Index Sheet

HC. Homeless Children

1. Number great
2. Increasing
3. Demographic composition
4.
5.
6.
7. Social structure is at stake
8.
9. Lack of health care
10. Infant mortality
11.
12.

HD. Runaways and teenagers

1. Runaway and Homeless Youth Act
2. Numbers
3. Causes
4.
5.
6. No services
7. Prostitution
8. Suicide
9.
10.
11.
12. Motives for running
13.
14.
15.

HE. Elderly

1. Demographics
2. Need
3.
4.
5. HUD of no help
6. Independent living centers
7.
8.
9. Displacement

Note: The categories "HC, HD, HE," could also be labeled "A, B, C," etc. Some debaters find an alphabetical system easier to use than an abbreviation system.

Debaters who use the notebook index system say it's a very effective way to handle a large number of evidence cards—filing is easy, cards can be found quickly, and refiling is fast and efficient. This is probably true because many more subject headings are possible in this system. Subjects can be detailed and indicated on the divider card and the evidence cards with a brief, easily read code instead of a lengthy subcategory heading.

A word of warning though: If you are using a notebook system and you lose your index sheets or notebook, you have no way of knowing what categories your evidence is filed in. To avoid disaster, it would be wise to carry a duplicate or two at all times and to keep an extra at home.

Maintaining Evidence Files

It's always a good idea to read through your evidence files every once in a while. As your knowledge of the topic grows, the value of some cards will decrease. Cards that made sense at the beginning of the season might become too general and should be discarded. As you develop an affirmative case, the need for general evidence on the affirmative areas will decrease. You do not need to carry evidence on the affirmative that doesn't apply to your individual affirmative case.

On the other hand, by reviewing your evidence you may find material that you overlooked or whose value you did not recognize or understand at first. That evidence might suddenly become the best evidence in the file. The important thing is to tend your files the way you would a garden. Get rid of the weeds and look for the hidden ripe vegetables. It's not the size of the file that's important, but the quality of the evidence in that file. If you don't know what evidence is in there, it is of no use.

Discuss

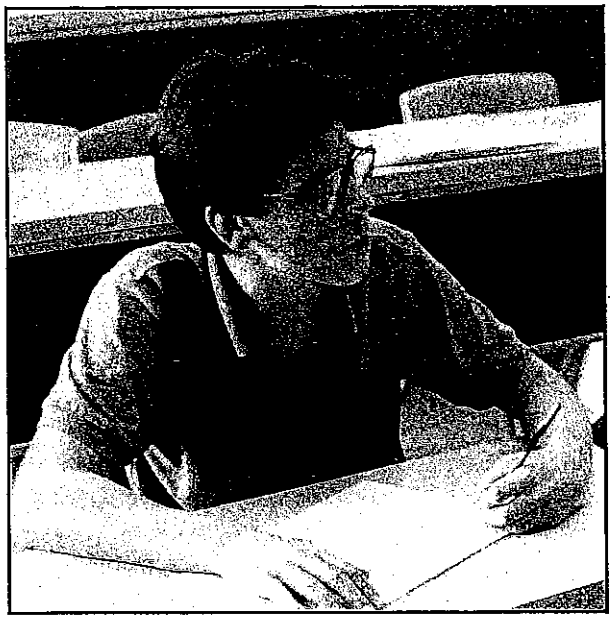
1. What is the difference between the two main types of filing systems? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?
2. Why is it important to maintain your files?

Act

1. Before you can file your evidence, you must decide which filing system to use. Choose one of the two systems described in this chapter and decide why it would work best for you. Remember, a good filing system is the key to being able to locate evidence for use in a debate round. Your system *must* enable you to retrieve pieces of information quickly.

2. Once you have accumulated 50 pieces of evidence, you should begin filing them. Be sure to label each card for easy refiling. After filing approximately 150 pieces of evidence, read through your file to see if your evidence is filed properly. Quite often, you will decide to reassign cards to other categories as you learn more about a topic. Keeping up with your filing will also help you determine where you need to do more research.

7 Listening, Thinking, Writing



Debate is a challenging activity. A lot happens at the same time. In a debate round you must listen to your opponent, think about your own responses, pull out the appropriate evidence and briefs, and prepare for your own speech. It sounds like a lot to do. It is, but there are skills you can develop to help make it all happen. As you learn to write debate briefs and take notes in a debate round (called "flowing" the debate), you will be working on your listening, thinking, and writing skills. In this chapter you will learn how to use your evidence to support arguments for use in a debate round; how to listen and take notes during a debate round; how to listen and think during your opponent's speech; and how to learn from your previous debates.

As you read this chapter, look for and learn the meaning of these debate terms:

- ✓ **abbreviation system**
- ✓ **brief**
- ✓ **case brief**
- ✓ **flowing (flowsheeting)**
- ✓ **flow sheet**
- ✓ **plan brief**
- ✓ **plank**

Monthly Catalog

In addition to the *CIS Index,* another government publication that indexes government documents is the *Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications.* The *Monthly Catalog* is especially useful for finding out about executive department publications, which are not included in the *CIS Index.* As with most government indexes, the *Monthly Catalog* uses a two-part system for finding the appropriate information. The accession number in the subject section refers you to a specific abstract reference. It is important to note the number of the pages in a document. Frequently, government documents are so short that it may not be worth the time to look them up.

Discuss

1. What information will you find in the *Congressional Information Service Index*?
2. Where can you find statistical resources of the U.S. government?
3. Why are congressional hearings of value for research?
4. Should you spend a great deal of time reading the *Congressional Record*? Why or why not?
5. What kinds of information are indexed in the *Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications*?

Act

1. Using the *Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications,* put together a bibliography of citations on the proposition chosen on page 71. Also, consult the *Congressional Quarterly* or the *Public Affairs Information Service Bulletin* for recent documents. Draft a letter to your congressperson explaining what you are doing as a debater and request copies of the most relevant government documents on your list. Documents can also be requested directly from the department or committee involved. Try writing to two or three committees for information. Include a couple of the citations you have found and ask for additional information. You can also write to the Superintendent of Documents, but there is usually a charge for documents.
2. Now try making a bibliography using the *Congressional Information Service Index.* Do the same with the *American Statistics Index.*

Writing Briefs

To be successful, a debater must research important arguments. Only with current, expert evidence can you hope to prove points critical to your position in a debate round. However, researching evidence is not enough to ensure victory.

Debate requires that you organize your evidence in a useful manner, so that you can effectively present arguments in the debate round. The structure most debaters use for organizing their evidence is called a debate **brief.** A debate brief is generally a page of arguments and evidence that can be read as needed in a debate round. A brief is not a prepared speech—the arguments are not completely written out. Debate briefs must be flexible, because you must respond to arguments being made in a specific round. You need to be able to arrange arguments so that relevant objections can be made in the round.

Each brief centers around a single argument. The reason for this is the same as the reason for having a single piece of evidence on an index card. You need to be able to get to each brief quickly and efficiently. Having only one argument on each brief means that you can pick and choose the most appropriate arguments for a debate round. You may use other arguments another time.

Debate briefs contain several pieces of evidence. Quite often there will be more than one piece of evidence for each part of the argument. This does not mean that you plan to read every piece of evidence in every round. You will choose in the round which ones are the most appropriate. If the point is really important, you might decide to read two, three, or even four pieces of evidence on the brief. The additional evidence on the brief is a resource. You may use the additional evidence in rebuttals to back up your original argument.

Affirmative Briefs

Affirmative briefs are used to support the affirmative case and to defend the affirmative plan. Before developing **case briefs,** brainstorm arguments that might be argued against your case. Then research these and construct briefs to answer the arguments.

For example, one of your affirmative contentions may argue that unemployment has two harms: diminished productivity in the economy and homelessness. You will want to construct briefs to further establish the significance of each of these harms. If, through your research, you find the present system includes a Presidential Commission on Homelessness and a Presidential Commission on Hunger, you will probably want to put together a brief showing the problems with each and how they do not solve the harms you've identified.

Plan briefs are constructed to defend against disadvantages. Plan briefs are similar to case briefs in that you try to anticipate the arguments that the negative might run against your plan. The main difference is that plan briefs need to be short. They will be used primarily during the first affirmative rebuttal, when you will not have much time to read a lot of evidence or even go through a great deal of substructure. Remember, the first affirmative rebuttalist must respond to both case and plan attacks. It will do you no good to read an outstanding but long brief against a single disadvantage and be unable to cover the other negative arguments. Affirmative plan briefs may be longer

if you also plan to use them for extensions, where needed, in the last affirmative rebuttal.

Negative Briefs

Negative briefs are also separated into case and plan briefs. To prepare negative briefs, you begin by brainstorming about possible affirmative cases. Once you have a list of cases, you can begin your research.

Negative *case* briefs are arguments against what you think the affirmative might run as contentions. You will want to write case briefs organizing your arguments on significance, topicality, and inherency. Negative case briefs usually work to undermine the credibility of affirmative studies or the rationale behind the affirmative's arguments.

You also might construct negative briefs to defend the status quo or present system. Because the affirmative will usually point out aspects of the status quo that do not work or examples that suggest the status quo has failed, as a negative you should be prepared to examine the status quo's successes and to put its failures into context.

Negative *plan* briefs are constructed a bit differently. Remember, most of the negative arguments are directed at the specific workability of the plan or at disadvantages that will come about if the affirmative plan is adopted. A disadvantage must be carefully written to anticipate objections that would dismiss it as irrelevant, trivial, or contradictory in terms of the overall negative position.

A disadvantage brief must include (1) a statement of the relationship of the plan to its bad effects on the status quo, (2) a statement proving that the consequences of the plan are significantly evil, (3) an argument proving that only the plan and not status quo policies will cause the disadvantage, and (4) an overall comparison between the plan's virtues and vices. Unless a disadvantage brief contains all of these arguments, the negative position can be dismissed by a judge on the grounds that it is not pertinent to an evaluation of the affirmative case.

Similarly, a negative topicality brief should be well prepared so that any steps a plan might take beyond the scope of the resolution can be countered. Otherwise the affirmative might be able to preemptively anticipate disadvantages. (See Chapter 9 about the specific development of negative disadvantages.)

Checklist for Briefs

Briefs are useful tools. However, there are certain dangers to using them. The following checklist can help ensure that you are writing and using briefs correctly.

Precision and Clarity

First, you need to ask if your statements are precise and clear. If arguments in a brief are written out in speech form and are too lengthy, it might be difficult to adapt the issue in the brief to the specific arguments of a given debate round. On the other hand, if arguments are not written out and the brief contains only catch phrases or labels along with evidence, you might not explain the importance of an argument clearly enough for the judge. An argument in a brief must be concise, yet it must explain the issue clearly.

Evidence

Second, you need to ask if the evidence matches the argument. You should put the strongest quotations in the brief, and these quotations should prove what the argument claims. Evidence that is slightly off-point, not credible, or out-of-date does little good. One inappropriate use of evidence weakens the credibility of your entire argument and casts doubts on other arguments you are presenting. It is better not to make an argument at all than to deploy one with weak evidence.

Flexibility

Third, you need to ask if the brief is flexible. If a brief is too long and its positions are too complicated, you will misallocate your time. On the other hand, if the brief is superficial and if an issue is extended over a number of speeches, you will be left with nothing to do except repeat earlier statements and proof. When you prepare a brief, you should anticipate situations that will involve initiating an argument and then extending refutation. Unless a brief can accommodate such uses, it might hinder good debating.

Timeliness

Next, you should ask if the brief is current. Arguments must be continually revised throughout the debate season. Debaters who prepare a brief and don't ever revise it are making a big mistake. A brief that worked well in one debate tournament might not work at the next tournament.

Remember, your opposition will be looking back at each round to see why they lost. They will then look for answers to your arguments. At the same time, you should be reviewing your own arguments. At the very least, update your evidence when possible. Examine the weak links in arguments and either strengthen or discard them. You may find a better link for that dynamite disadvantage. You may also find there are better arguments you can use. Develop those, add them to your brief, and leave the old arguments behind.

Compatibility

Finally, you need to decide which briefs are compatible. It is important that team members work out a consistent position. Debaters should think through the implications of using various combinations of arguments and make sure that their briefs are compatible. The implications of different arguments are not always obvious. You need to make sure that briefs defending the status quo do not contradict briefs that suggest that there are disadvantages to any measures that move toward resolving status quo problems. For example, if the first negative argues that the status quo is solving the problem identified by the affirmative, it is probably not a good idea for the second negative to argue that solving the affirmative harm would create significant disadvantages. (See Chapter 9 about consistency in the negative position.)

Affirmative Brief

NUCLEAR POWER - AFFIRMATIVE
2AC:GREENHOUSE SOLVENCY

[] Reductions in carbon dioxide decrease global warming.

Phillips, Intl. Inst. En. Consv.,'89 (Michael, Sierra Mag. M/A p. 58)

In a statement submitted to the House Science and Technology Committee in June 1988, Edward Davis, president of the American Nuclear Energy Council, said that the United States must revitalize its nuclear option "in order to alleviate the greenhouse effect and to meet our growing demand for electricity."

[] Nuclear power solves global warming by creating energy without carbon dioxide emissions.

Faltermeyer, staff writer, '88 (Edmund, Fortune Mag., Aug 1, p.105)

Amid mounting evidence that the earth is warming because of the greenhouse effect, splitting atoms to generate electricity is getting new respect. Unlike coal or oil, it creates neither acid rain nor carbon dioxide, which is believed to be mainly responsible for the planet's rising temperature.

[] Studies prove nuclear power is best alternative to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

Peoples, Bechtel R&D analyst, '90 (D.L., EPA J, M/A p. 17)

The limited capability of renewable power supplies suggests the need for a new evaluation of nuclear power options.

In 1988, 112 commercial nuclear power plants provided 18 percent of U.S. electricity. To produce this amount of electricity by other means would have required burning approximately 250 million short tons of coal, or 790 million barrels of oil, or 4.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas; all of these alternatives would have contributed significant amounts of carbon dioxide (CO_2) to the atmosphere.

NUCLEAR POWER - AFFIRMATIVE
2AC: GREENHOUSE SOLVENCY

[] Replacing fossil fuel plants with nuclear power reduces global warming

Phillips, Intl. Inst. En. Consv. '89 (Michael, Sierra Mag. M/A p.53.)

Any such appraisal must begin with an understanding of the contribution nuclear reactors could reasonably make toward reducing greenhouse-gas emission. Obviously, to the extent that a nuclear plant is built instead of as a replacement for an existing fossil-fuel plant, CO_2 emissions will be reduced. If it were possible to replace all U.S. fossil-fuel burning plants with nuclear facilities, total CO_2 emissions would be reduced by 28 percent nationwide.

[] A national nuclear power program offsets carbon dioxide emissions caused by fossil fuels.

Murray, Uranium Institute Analyst, '90 (Jan, Energy Policy Mag. J/A p. 495)

The potential scope for curtailing greenhouse gas emissions through nuclear electricity is therefore significant and, with the expansion of fossil fired electricity already postulated, will grow still more so. In addition, opportunities for substitution beyond electricity applications may open up. Nuclear energy is already used in a very minor way for process heat and district heating purposes. Expanded heat applications, either via combined heat and power, or dedicated heating reactors, would increase nuclear energy's scope to substitute for fossil fuel combustion.

[] Use of currently available nuclear technology is enough to decrease the greenhouse effect.

Lidsky, Prof. MIT, '88 (M., Radiation Research, p. 218)

Nuclear power, if properly managed through all phases of mining, power generation, and waste disposal, has the potential to be the most economical, least environmentally damaging source of large-scale power available. This is based on the experience of other countries, most notably France and Japan.

Negative Brief

NUCLEAR POWER -NEGATIVE
1NC: NUC. POWER NOT SOLVE GREENHOUSE

[] Nuclear power cannot offset major causes of greenhouse effect.

Business and Society Review, staff writer-Public Citizen Org., '88 (Summer, p. 59)

The claims that nuclear power must be resurrected to forestall global warming have little basis in fact. U.S. fossil-fueled electric generating plants are responsible for less than 14 percent of U.S. emissions contributing to global warming and only 4 percent of worldwide emissions. (Motor vehicle fumes, deforestation, and a variety of industrial and agricultural emissions account for the bulk of the problem.)

[] Nuclear power is not a cost-effective solution to global warming.

McGavern, Science Writer, '89 (Bill, CSM, Jan 11, p. 19)

Designing, financing, and building the new generation of reactors would take so long (probably at least 20 years) and cost so much ($2 trillion to fully switch from fossil fuels to nuclear power) that they would provide neither a quick nor cost-effective way of treating the greenhouse problem.

[] Building time for plant construction blocks solvency.

Business and Society Review, Staff Writer-Public Citizen Org. , '88 (Summer, p 59)

Most advanced reactor concepts exist on paper only; building demonstration models and subsequently constructing commercial units could take twenty years or more—a time frame that is unrealistic if nuclear is to make a significant contribution to solving the global warming problem.

NUCLEAR POWER -NEGATIVE
1NC: NUC. POWER NOT SOLVE GREENHOUSE

[] Studies prove that increased nuclear power cannot offset rate of global warming.

Kats, Analyst-Rocky Mtn Inst., '88 (Greg, Energy Policy Mag. N/D p. 538)

Under highly favourable assumptions for nuclear power in scenarios of moderate to high energy growth, we find that even if large nuclear plants (1 000 MW) could be built every one to three days from now until 2025 (which is impossible in the Third World), global CO_2 emissions would still continue to grow. Thus, nuclear power cannot contribute significantly to abating greenhouse warming, except possibly in scenarios of low energy growth for which the problem is already largely ameliorated by efficiency improvements.

[] T/A - Nuclear power divert resources from more effective ways of reducing the rate of warming.

Bossong, Critical Mass Energy Project, '90 (Ken, EPA J. M/A p. 18)

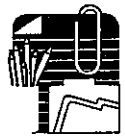
Given the limited funds available to pursue any energy strategy, investing in nuclear power could actually make a solution to global warming less likely by diverting funds from more promising options.

[] T/A - Nuclear power increases consumption of fossil fuels.

Business and Society Review, Staff Writer-Public Citizen Org., '88 (Summer, p. 59)

Nuclear technology is environmentally hazardous. The plants produce long-lived, highly radioactive waste for which there is still no known safe method of permanent storage or disposal. The construction, maintenance, and fueling of nuclear reactors are energy-intensive tasks that rely heavily on fossil fuels which add to the warming of the earth's atmosphere. The plants themselves produce trace amounts of radioactive carbon dioxide.

Act



Evaluate the two sample briefs that are provided in the text. How do they stand up to the criteria listed in the briefs checklist? How might they be improved?

Taking Notes in Debate

You now know how to organize evidence and arguments. The next step in debating is to learn how to follow arguments in a debate. Giving a speech with little preparation can be very frightening. No matter how much research you do ahead of time, you can't know what arguments you will want to use until you are in the debate round. Since each policy debate round includes eight speeches (four constructives and four rebuttals), each debate involves a significant number of arguments made by both the affirmative and negative teams.

Surprisingly, many debaters simply don't listen carefully to the arguments of their opponents. As a result, they miss arguments or misinterpret some of them. How can you prevent these problems? By taking notes. A well-thought-out, efficient system of note taking will provide you with a detailed and structured record of the arguments presented in the debate. It will help you remember the arguments and prepare an appropriate response.

Discuss

What are the advantages of taking notes during the debate?

detailed and structured record of arguments presented in the debate. Help in preparation for an appropriate response.

Flowing the Debate

Flowing or **flowsheeting** is the term many debaters use to describe the process of taking notes during the debate. The value of taking a flow goes beyond keeping notes on what was said. When you take a flow you are in a better position to analyze and respond to your opponents' arguments. Flowing lets you use your opposition's organization and specifically refute the evidence they used. By flowing the debate you also can extend your partner's arguments because you will have a written record of those arguments. Flowing also will help you prevent contradictions in your arguments, particularly on the negative side. (Contradictions between first and second negative speeches are discussed in Chapter 9.)

A good flow provides a road map of what is happening in the debate. It puts you in a better position to decide which issues you should cover in constructive speeches and then which issues you should extend in the rebuttals.

Discuss

What are five reasons for taking a flow of a debate?

1) better position to analyze and respond to your opponents arguments
2) opponents organization to refute evidence they used
3) extend partners arguments
4) prevent contradictions
5) better position on construction and rebuttal speeches

What Happens if You Don't Flow

Too often debaters pay very little attention to learning how to take a flow. It's fairly easy to spot debaters who are not good at flowsheeting. Debaters who don't practice flowing arguments all the way through the debate repeatedly drop important issues in the rebuttal speeches. Their problem is that anything that is not written down is likely to be forgotten, no matter how important it is. On the other side are debaters who try to write down every word said in the debate. These debaters miss much of what is said.

Debaters who do not point out when the opposition's evidence does not support the argument probably didn't flow the evidence. Debaters who have trouble determining which arguments to extend in the rebuttals probably flowed arguments haphazardly during the debate. Without knowing how arguments developed, it is difficult to know which arguments were important and which could be dropped.

Teams that lose to the same arguments—or even to the same team—tournament after tournament probably have no idea which arguments they lost in a particular debate, because they didn't keep good records of those debates. Reviewing flows from previous debates is probably the best way to determine where you need more work. Poor flowsheeting often results in the "judge didn't vote on the important issues" syndrome. If you don't organize the arguments in a debate by flowing the debate, chances are the judge won't be able to tell which arguments were important.

Discuss

What are some of the signs of poor flowing?

dropping of important issues in rebuttal speeches

How Flowing Works

The goal of flowing is to accurately record all the principal arguments of the debaters in the round. There is no right or wrong way to flow a debate. The **flow sheet** simply serves as a road map to the arguments.

To flow a debate, begin with several large sheets of paper. Many debaters use legal pads or art pads. Some debaters (particularly beginners) like to use preprinted flow sheets. If you are making your own flow sheets, divide the first sheet into seven vertical columns. This allows one column for each speaker's arguments relating to the affirmative case. Next, label each column according to speaker position. You will notice that there is no allocated column for the second negative constructive (2NC) speech. These arguments are usually handled on a separate sheet.

Affirmative Case

1AC	1NC	2AC	1NR	1AR	2NR	2AR
First Affirmative Constructive	First Negative Constructive	Second Affirmative Constructive	First Negative Rebuttal	First Affirmative Rebuttal	Second Negative Rebuttal	Second Affirmative Rebuttal

The second sheet is for arguments first introduced into the debate by the negative, in the second negative constructive (2NC) speech. Divide the page into five vertical columns. Use the first column to write down the affirmative plan for reference, because many of the 2NC arguments will relate to it.

Arguments Introduced by Second Negative

Affirmative Plan	2NC	1AR	2NR	2AR
	Second Negative Constructive	First Affirmative Rebuttal	Second Negative Rebuttal	Second Affirmative Rebuttal

The third sheet, divided into six columns, is used for arguments or issues introduced in the first negative constructive (1NC) and not related to the affirmative case structure. These might include topicality arguments, observations, plan attacks, or counterplans. Note that on this sheet the responses to the second affirmative constructive (2AC) speech may be extended by the first negative rebuttalist (1NR) or the second negative constructive (2NC) speaker, or both.

Arguments Introduced by First Negative (But Not Related to Affirmative Case Structure)

1NC	2AC	1NR or 2NC	1AR	2NR	2AR
First Negative Constructive	Second Affirmative Constructive	First Negative Rebuttal or Second Negative Constructive	First Affirmative Rebuttal	Second Negative Rebuttal	Second Affirmative Rebuttal

You might want to prepare your flow sheets before a debate or tournament. If so, divide three legal or art pads into columns and label them. It's a good idea to prepare plenty of sheets, because you don't know how many you might need in any given debate round.

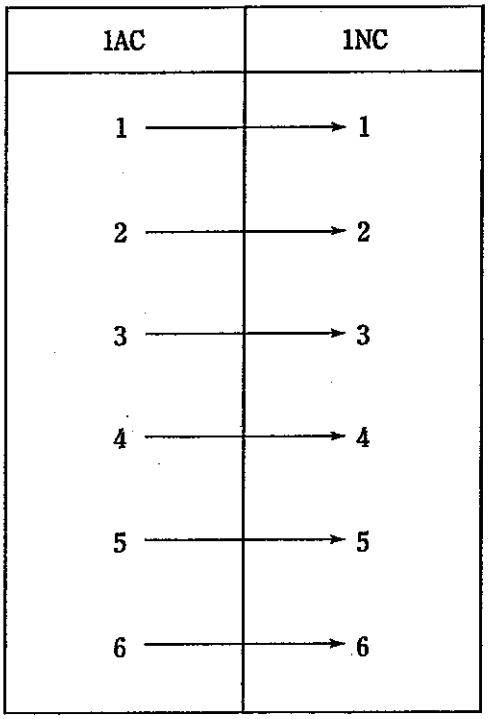
After you have divided the flow sheet vertically by speaker, divide it horizontally by argument. You want to be able to follow an argument all the way across the flow. As you flow the first affirmative constructive speech, be sure to allow plenty of space between arguments. If you don't, you will end up trying to squeeze arguments into a very small space. You may end up with one argument being flowed right next to another argument, or with lines and arrows all over the place—making it very hard to follow the debate.

When in doubt, allow more space. It would be better to end the debate with a flow sheet that has lots of white space than with one in which the writing gets smaller and smaller and responses are inadequately recorded. The following example shows a well-organized flow sheet. Note that each argument is given plenty of space to develop. (Using abbreviations in flowing is discussed in the next section.)

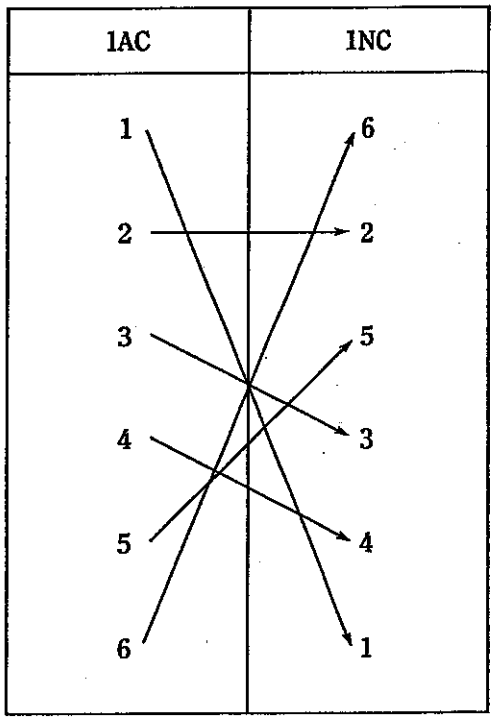
1AC	1NC
Obs US oil oriented →	1. Rsrchng tech 2. Ø lock into 1 policy
I. Aff ↑ e ind A. Imprts sgn →	1. Not sgn 2. Dom drilling ↑
B. Imprts hrmfl →	1. No OPEC hrms 2. Prices Ø hrms 3. Trd srpls

Debaters do not always respond to arguments in the same order they were presented. Therefore, to accomplish a horizontal division, you will be flowing by *argument* from one speech to the next, *not* from top to bottom on the flow. After two speeches a flow sheet should look like this (for purposes of illustration each argument is represented by a number):

Right—Horizontal

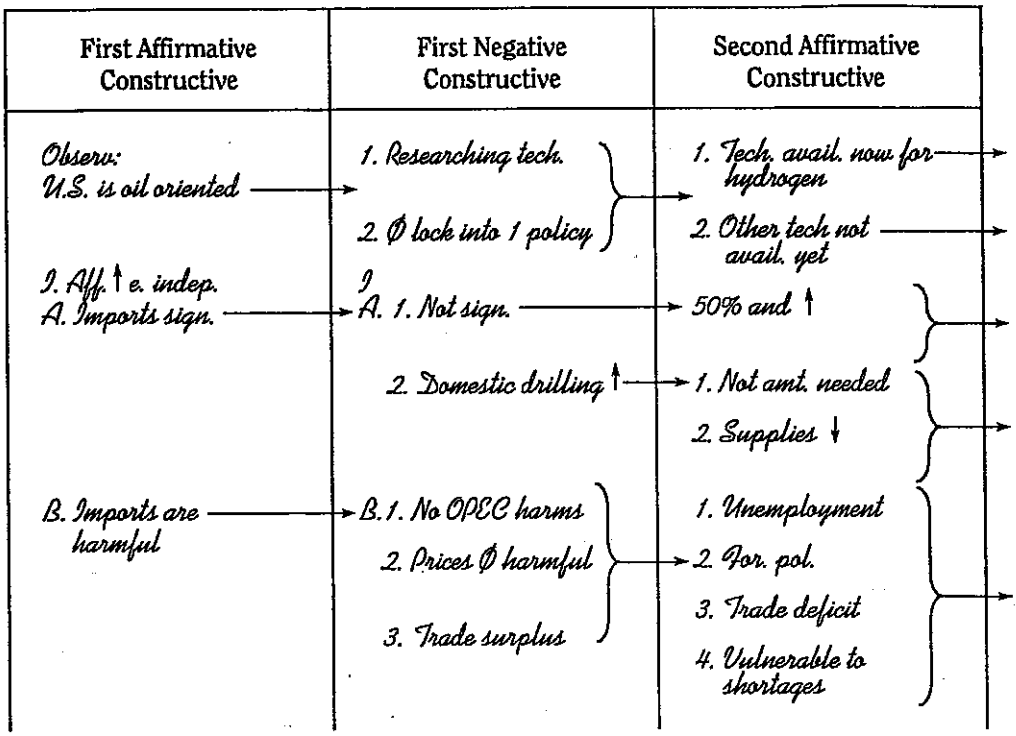


Wrong—Top to Bottom



Many debaters also like to draw arrows or lines from one speech to the next to connect arguments. You may find this useful when trying to follow arguments while delivering your own speech. This will also help you keep track of an argument during a debate if you accidentally flow it in the wrong place. In addition to using flow sheets, some debaters also like to distinguish affirmative and negative arguments by using different colors of ink. For example, you might flow the affirmative in black and the negative in red.

After three speeches, the flow sheet might look like this:



Keep in mind that this is the ideal! Very few flow sheets will have every argument properly spaced and placed next to the argument from the previous speech. How can you reach the ideal? By providing plenty of space. What may seem unimportant at first could become very important in the next speech and grow with the following speeches. When flowing the first affirmative constructive speech (1AC), use several sheets of paper (this is the sheet with seven vertical columns). You might even put just one observation, contention, or advantage on each page. This will give you enough space to expand any one of the arguments presented. Do the same with the arguments presented in the second negative constructive speech (2NC).

By placing only one main argument (i.e., observation, contention, advantage, disadvantage) on each sheet, you will have a lot of sheets of paper to deal with. How can you make sure that you don't get mixed up during your constructive and rebuttal speeches? Before you get up to give your constructive or rebuttal speech, decide the order in which you want to present your arguments. Then number your pages in pencil or with stick-on notes in that order. This way, if something gets out of place during your speech, you can quickly reorganize without searching through all the pages for the argument that matches the evidence you are about to read. This will also make it easier for you to let the judge and opposition know your order of presentation before you begin. Numbering is just one more step in preparation. Remember, one key to successful debating is to leave nothing to chance.

To help keep track of past debate rounds, each flow sheet should be labeled with the name of the tournament and of your opposition. This will help you keep track of the kinds of cases and arguments different schools are running.

Your flow sheets will not only improve your debate techniques but also serve as a guide as you prepare for the next tournament.

Symbols and Abbreviations

It's almost impossible to flow everything said in a debate. To compensate for this, debaters use **abbreviation systems** to help them flow quickly. Words that you hear a lot in debates should be abbreviated or given a symbol. For example, instead of writing out the word "topicality," you might simply write a capital "T." Everyone's abbreviation system will be different, but without some kind of system you will not be able to flow efficiently. Here is a sample list of commonly used symbols and abbreviations:

Adv advantage
Circ circumvention
CP counterplan
I impact
Inh inherency
PS present system
T topicality
EXT extratopicality
MR minor repair
$ dollars, money, funding
Sig significance
XX dropped argument
??? used to indicate you may have misflowed or do not understand the argument or evidence

> greater than
< less than
↑ increase
↓ decrease
→ causes
↛ does not cause
= equals
≠ does not equal
w with
w/o without
bec because
avg average

NYT *New York Times*
WSJ *The Wall Street Journal*
CR *Congressional Record*
SHrgs Senate Hearings
HHrgs House Hearings
WP *Washington Post*
NW *Newsweek*
NR *New Republic*
USNW *U.S. News & World Report*
BW *Business Week*
BL *Black's Law Dictionary*

You will probably develop other source abbreviations as you learn which ones are used a great deal on a particular topic. You will also want to develop a set of abbreviations for the specific resolution to be debated. Each topic has many terms that are repeated frequently. This set of abbreviations will grow as you become more familiar with the topic. For example, the following is a beginning list of abbreviations on the topic "RESOLVED: That the federal government should significantly increase the availability of housing for homeless people in the United States":

hmlss homeless
hc health care
NHms nursing homes
SS Social Security
JT job training
MI mental illness

Ed education
FA food aid
DCFS Department of Children and Family Services
Rec recession
FS food stamps
SK soup kitchens

These abbreviations are not written in stone. How you choose to abbreviate a word may be very different from someone else. The key here is that the abbreviations make sense to you and are easy to remember. That is why you let this list grow naturally as you flow more and more debates.

A lot of symbols and abbreviations have been presented here. Don't try to remember or use them all at once. You don't want to be in the middle of a speech and forget what your symbol or abbreviation stood for. Add new abbreviations to your system slowly. Discard the ones that do not work for you. If a symbol seems unnatural, drop it or find a new one.

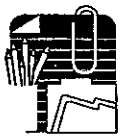
Another easy way to shorten your note taking is to write words without vowels. For example, "world trade" would be written as "wrld trd" or "homeless" as "hmlss." This technique works for many debaters, and it becomes easy to do with practice. It should also save you time during the round. Whatever abbreviation system you decide to use, it must work for you and it must be clear at all times.

Discuss

1. Why should you develop a system of symbols and abbreviations for taking notes in a debate round? to save time
2. Since many of the suggested abbreviations are new to you, how should you go about learning to use them?

write them down

Act



1. Create a list of abbreviations and symbols that could be used for note taking.
2. Practice using these abbreviations and symbols while listening to class lectures, the nightly news, or the radio.

What to Flow

The outlining structure used in debate is a critical tool for keeping arguments on track. At a bare minimum you need to flow the structure of each argument. Even if you do not understand an argument, miss some or all of the evidence, or fail to see its immediate significance, you should flow it. This will give you the opportunity to check it out later. You may want to ask for clarification during one of the cross-examination periods.

As much as possible, you want to flow the evidence being used. This should include the source's name, the publication (abbreviated where possible), and a date. The dates on evidence often gain significance as the debate progresses. When both teams have contradictory evidence on an argument, the most recent source will often be the one accepted. Key phrases from the evidence should also be flowed. By doing this you will be better able to compare sources and determine if the evidence really supports the argument.

The affirmative plan should be flowed in detail. To make plan attacks and disadvantages specific to a particular affirmative case, the negative will want to take a close look at the specific wording of the affirmative plan. The affirmative plan can be

fairly lengthy and quite complicated. How much of it do you flow? You want to flow those parts of the plan, called **planks,** that are specific to the particular affirmative case being debated. These will usually include such things as the type of board that will implement the plan, the mechanism for implementing the plan, funding, and enforcement of the plan. You especially need to flow planks that seem out of the ordinary.

Disadvantages also should be flowed in detail. Disadvantages are often decisive issues in a debate. The negative will claim that the links or impacts of a disadvantage are independent, and that any one of them means the affirmative case should be rejected. The links in a disadvantage are the triggers or causes of the disadvantage—whatever in the affirmative plan causes the disadvantage to occur. By arguing that the links are independent, the negative claims that each link by itself could cause the disadvantage. The negative therefore argues that the affirmative must beat *all* the links to beat the disadvantage. Obviously, if you do not flow each link or impact and the relevant responses, one of them is likely to slip through. That one argument could be billed by the negative as the winning issue in the debate. Listen carefully and note whether the evidence says what the opposition claims it does and whether it truly supports the argument. If it does not, note this on your flow.

Should you flow your partner's speeches? Definitely. Unfortunately, many debaters see their partner's speech time as an opportunity to work on their own arguments. Although this may seem like a good idea at first, it can cause some real problems. Each debater in the round has to extend his or her partner's arguments in the rebuttals. It is rather difficult to do this if you didn't flow them! Having your partner hand you her or his flow, or even a sheet with the arguments she or he wants you to extend, can be disastrous. When you get up to speak, you run the risk of looking at those arguments and not having the slightest idea what was actually argued. You can end up extending the argument inappropriately, contradicting your partner, or not answering a response made by the opposition.

Another problem that arises is a contradiction of arguments between the two speakers on either the affirmative or negative. For example, the first negative might argue that there is no reason to adopt the affirmative plan because the present system *is already solving the problem.* Next the second negative (who has not flowed the first negative speech) gets up and runs a disadvantage on the *harms of solving the problem.* This kind of contradiction could lose the negative the round.

There can also be problems on the affirmative. If the first affirmative does not flow the second affirmative constructive speech, he or she will not know what priority was given to the negative attacks. The result might be that in the first affirmative rebuttal the priority of arguments is changed. Now the judge does not know what is important and what is not, because the affirmative team has presented two different scenarios.

These problems can be avoided with planning, cooperation, and clear communication between debate partners. However, not flowing your partner's speeches still leaves room for error. You will always have a better picture of the debate if you listen to and flow all speeches.

Should you flow the cross-examination periods? Absolutely. To avoid confusion on your flow sheet, you might want to flow the cross-examination periods on a separate

sheet of paper. Too often, what is said in cross-examination is forgotten as soon as the next speech begins. Many judges won't vote on an issue raised in a cross-examination period unless it is then presented in a constructive or rebuttal speech. While most debates are not won or lost in the cross-examination periods, there can be some concessions or gains. For example, the negative may be cornered into admitting that there is no real evidence to support a "killer" disadvantage. Or the affirmative may admit that the evidence of harm presented applies only to one state, rather than to the nation. In both cases, you would want to note this and carry through the argument at the appropriate point in your team's next speech. You should note on your flow that the admission came in the cross-examination, and then remind the judge of this in the speech.

To master flowing in such great detail is not easy. It requires much practice. The key is to begin with the basic outline offered for each argument and add details as you gain experience.

Follow-Up

A flow sheet has many uses beyond the actual debate round. Once a debate tournament is over, debate squads should meet for discussion. From the flow sheets, squads should be able to prepare a list of cases, arguments, and even extensions that could be used against arguments they might meet at another tournament. From this list, research assignments can be made and preparation for the next tournament can begin. Take the cases on the list and discuss them with your squad. What were the strengths and weaknesses of each case? Did the negative attacks work? How could the cases be improved? Do other team members have ideas about different arguments that could have been run?

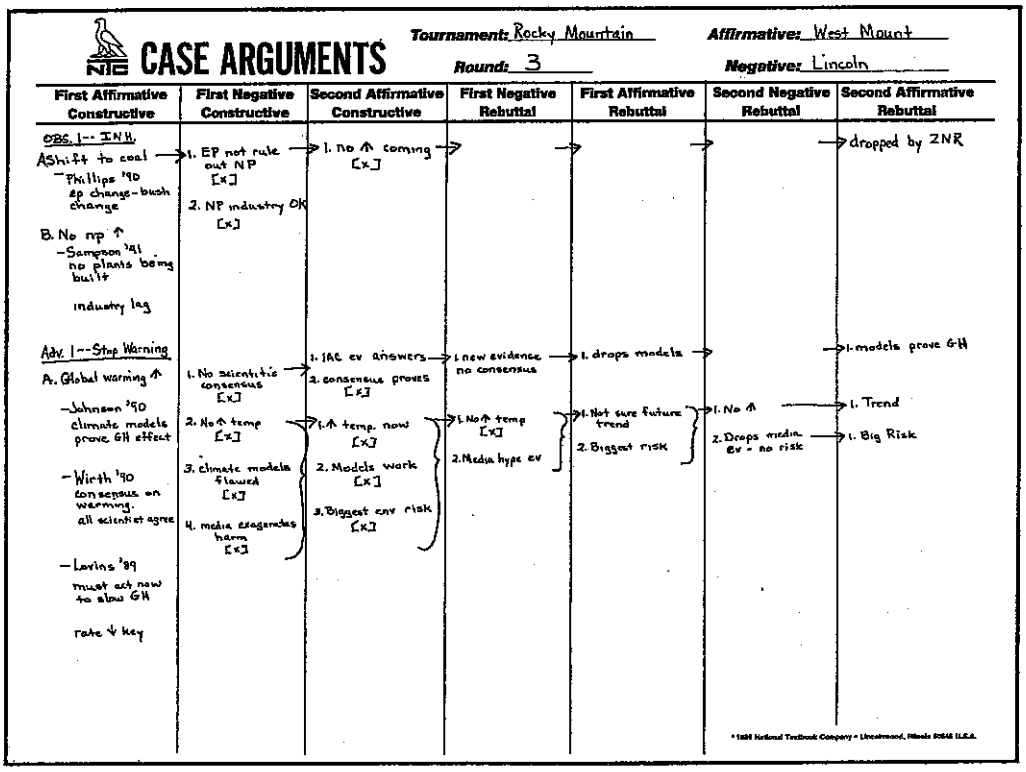
Each team or squad should keep a file of debate flow sheets. Each one should be labeled with the names of the teams debating, the tournament, and the winner of the debate. When the squad receives an invitation for another tournament, use the file to find out if anyone on the squad has debated the schools that will be attending. If so, pull those flows. You can then focus on specific cases and arguments when preparing for the tournament. If you were on the affirmative last time, look at what arguments the opposition used against you. How could you improve your responses? Were your answers to the disadvantages weak?

One word of caution: Remember that many teams change affirmative cases and negative approaches from one tournament to the next. Your preparation should not end with the old flows—they should be only the beginning.

If you are good at flowing evidence citations, you will be able to use your old flows to check sources. If you lost because of a particular argument, you might want to check out the evidence. Does the evidence in context support the argument? You may find qualifications on the evidence that takes away some of its impact. Check the footnotes and the bibliography—you might find other useful sources. Your flow sheets are a valuable source of information and should be checked frequently throughout the year.

Case Argument Models

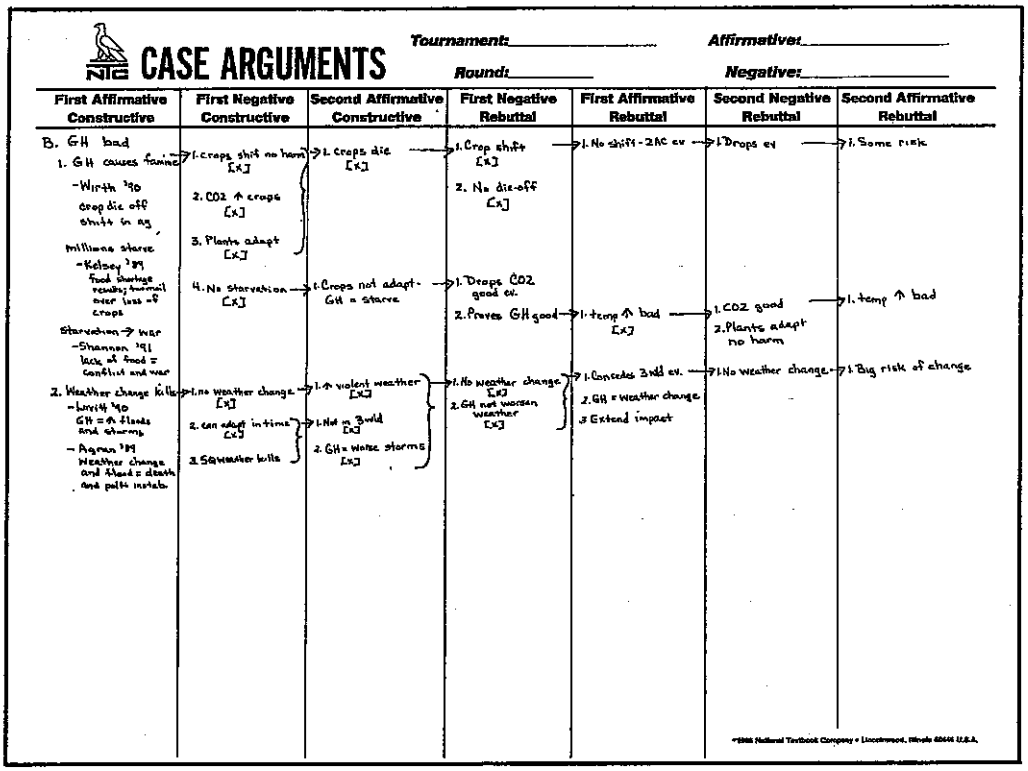
AR acid rain
CO2 carbon dioxide—gas released when fossil fuel is burned
EP energy policy
FF fossil fuel
GH greenhouse effect/ global warming
(I) impact to argument
NP nuclear power
NPP nuclear power plant
N/L no link to argument



CASE ARGUMENTS

Tournament: Rocky Mountain Affirmative: West Mount
Round: 3 Negative: Lincoln

First Affirmative Constructive	First Negative Constructive	Second Affirmative Constructive	First Negative Rebuttal	First Affirmative Rebuttal	Second Negative Rebuttal	Second Affirmative Rebuttal
OBS. 1 -- INH.						
A Shift to coal →	1. EP not rule out NP [x]	1. no ↑ coming [x] →	→	→	→	→ dropped by ZNR
- Phillips '90 ep change - bush change	2. NP industry OK [x]					
B. No np ↑						
- Sampson '91 no plants being built						
industry lag						
Adv. 1 -- Stop Warning						
A. Global warming ↑	1. No scientific consensus [x] →	1. IAC ev answers →	1. new evidence no consensus →	1. drops models →		→ 1. models prove GH
- Johnson '90 climate models prove GH effect	2. No ↑ temp [x] →	2. consensus proves [x] → 1. ↑ temp. now [x]	1. No ↑ temp [x] →	1. Not sure future trend →	1. No ↑ →	→ 1. Trend
- Wirth '90 consensus on warming. all scientist agree	3. climate models flawed [x]	2. Models work [x]	2. Media hype ev	2. Biggest risk	2. Drops media ev - no risk →	→ 1. Big Risk
- Lovins '89 must act now to slow GH	4. media exagerates harm [x]	3. Biggest env risk [x]				
rate ↓ key						

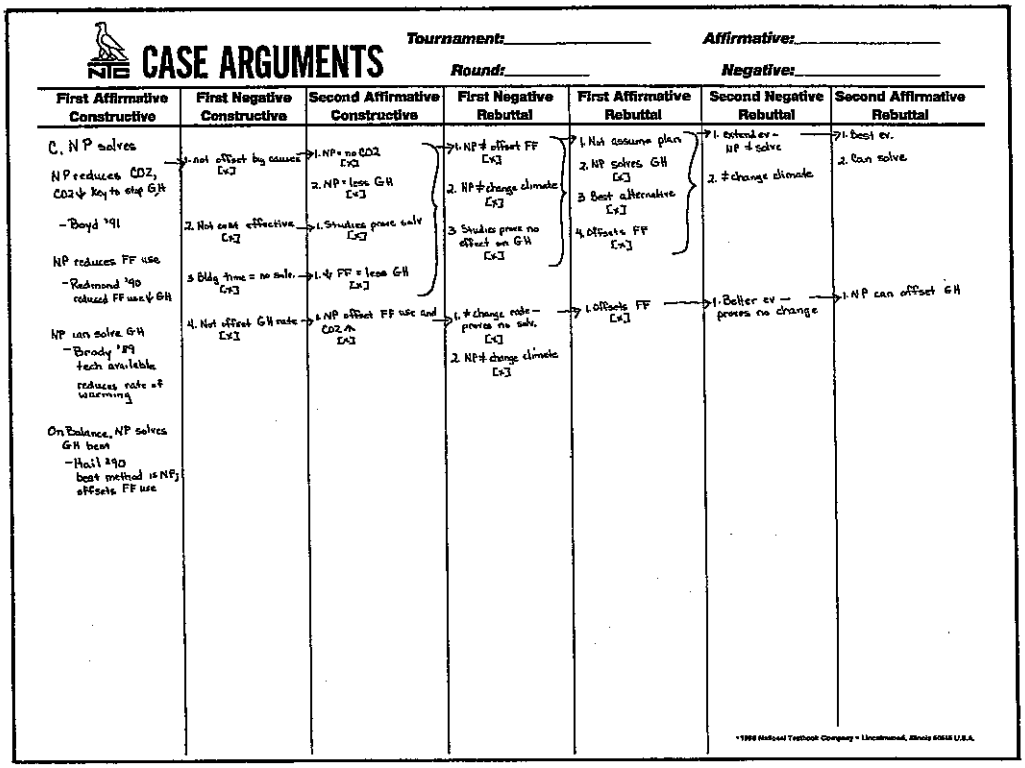


CASE ARGUMENTS

Tournament: Affirmative:
Round: Negative:

First Affirmative Constructive	First Negative Constructive	Second Affirmative Constructive	First Negative Rebuttal	First Affirmative Rebuttal	Second Negative Rebuttal	Second Affirmative Rebuttal
B. GH bad						
1. GH causes famine →	1. crops shift no harm [x] →	1. crops die [x] →	1. Crop shift [x] →	1. No shift - IAC ev →	1. Drops ev →	→ 1. Some risk
- Wirth '90 crop die off shift in ag	2. CO2 ↑ crops [x]		2. No die-off [x]			
millions starve	3. Plants adapt [x]					
- Kelsey '89 food shortage nearly twice! over loss of crops	4. No starvation → [x]	1. Crops not adapt - GH = starve →	1. Drops CO2 good ev.			
Starvation → war			2. Proves GH good →	1. temp ↑ bad [x] →	1. CO2 good →	→ 1. temp ↑ bad
- Shannon '91 lack of food = conflict and war					2. Plants adapt no harm	
2. Weather change kills →	1. no weather change [x] →	1. ↑ violent weather [x] →	1. No weather change [x] →	1. Concedes 3rd ev. →	1. No weather change →	→ 1. Big risk of change
- Lovitt '90 GH = ↑ floods and storms	2. can adapt in time [x] →	1. Not in 3rd [x]	2. GH not worsen weather [x]	2. GH = weather change		
- Agnew '89 Weather change and flood = death and path instab.	3. SG weather kills	2. GH = worse storms [x]		3. Extend impact		

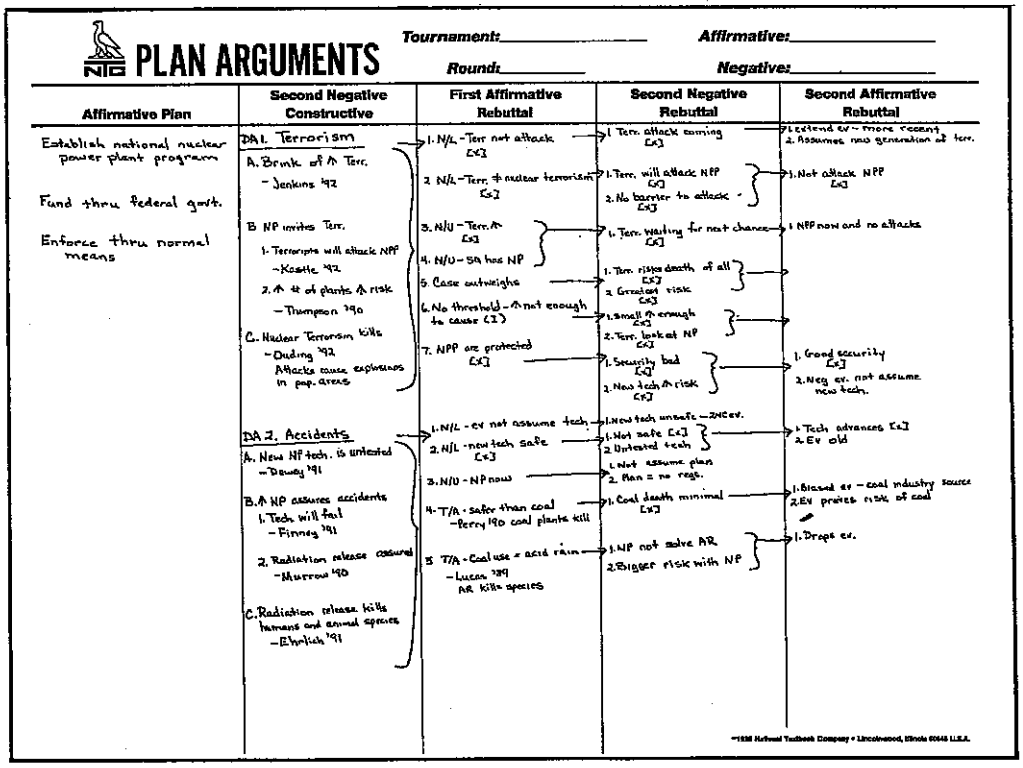
N/U non unique argument
O/W outweigh
SQ status quo
Terr terrorism
T/A turn around
[x] signifies that evidence was read but that no cite was written
3wld third world



CASE ARGUMENTS

Tournament:_____ Round:_____ Affirmative:_____ Negative:_____

First Affirmative Constructive	First Negative Constructive	Second Affirmative Constructive	First Negative Rebuttal	First Affirmative Rebuttal	Second Negative Rebuttal	Second Affirmative Rebuttal
C. NP solves NP reduces CO_2, CO_2 ↓ key to stop GH -Boyd '91 NP reduces FF use -Redmond '90 reduced FF use ↓ GH NP can solve GH -Brady '89 tech available reduces rate of warming On Balance, NP solves GH best -Hail '90 best method is NP; offsets FF use	1. not offset by causes [x]	1. NP = no CO_2 [x] 2. NP = less GH [x]	1. NP ≠ offset FF [x] 2. NP ≠ change climate [x] 3. Studies prove no effect on GH [x]	1. Not assume plan 2. NP solves GH [x] 3 Best alternative [x] 4. Offsets FF [x]	1. extend ev – NP ≠ solve 2. ≠ change climate	1. best ev. 2. Can solve
	2. Not cost effective [x]	1. Studies prove solv [x]				
	3 Bldg time = no solv. [x]	1. ↓ FF = less GH [x]				
	4. Not offset GH rate [x]	1. NP offset FF use and CO_2 ↑ [x]	1. ≠ change rate – proves no solv. [x] 2. NP ≠ change climate [x]	1. offsets FF [x]	1. Better ev – proves no change	1. NP can offset GH

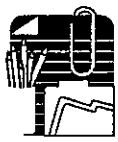


PLAN ARGUMENTS

Tournament:_____ Round:_____ Affirmative:_____ Negative:_____

Affirmative Plan	Second Negative Constructive	First Affirmative Rebuttal	Second Negative Rebuttal	Second Affirmative Rebuttal
Establish national nuclear power plant program Fund thru federal govt. Enforce thru normal means	DA 1. Terrorism A. Brink of ↑ Terr. - Jenkins '92 B. NP invites Terr. 1- Terrorists will attack NPP -Keatle '92 2. ↑ # of plants ↑ risk -Thompson '90 C. Nuclear Terrorism kills -Ouding '92 Attacks cause explosions in pop. areas	1. N/L - Terr not attack [x] 2. N/L - Terr ≠ nuclear terrorism [x] 3. N/U - Terr. ↑ [x] 4. N/U - SA has NP 5. Case outweighs 6. No threshold - ↑ not enough to cause (1) 7. NPP are protected [x]	1. Terr. attack coming [x] 1. Terr. will attack NPP [x] 2. No barrier to attack [x] 1. Terr. waiting for next chance [x] 1. Terr. risks death of all [x] 2. Greatest risk [x] 1. Small ↑ enough [x] 2. Terr. look at NP [x] 1. Security bad [x] 2. New tech ↑ risk [x]	1. extend ev – more recent 2. Assumes new generation of terr. 1. Not attack NPP [x] 1. NPP now and no attacks 1. Good security [x] 2. Neg ev. not assume new tech.
	DA 2. Accidents A. New NP tech. is untested -Dewey '91 B. ↑ NP assures accidents 1. Tech will fail -Finney '91 2. Radiation release assured -Murrow '90 C. Radiation release kills humans and animal species -Ehrlich '91	1. N/L - ev not assume tech 2. N/L - new tech safe [x] 3. N/U - NP now 4. T/A - safer than coal -Perry '90 coal plants kill 5. T/A - Coal use = acid rain -Lucas '89 AR kills species	1. New tech unsafe – ZNC ev. 1. Not safe [x] 2. Untested tech 1. not assume plan 2. Plan = no regs. 1. Coal death minimal [x] 1. NP not solve AR 2. Bigger risk with NP	1. Tech advances [x] 2. Ev old 1. Biased ev – coal industry source 2. Ev proves risk of coal 1. Drops ev.

Act



1. Sit in on the practice debates of other teams on your squad. Flow each of the speeches. Compare your flow to those of the teams debating. Go back over your flow to see where you could have used better abbreviations. Identify where you needed more information but were unable to flow it all.
2. At your next tournament, tape some of your debate rounds. Afterward, listen to a round and flow it. Feel free to stop and start the tape as necessary. Compare this flow to the one from the actual tournament round. Identify places where you improved when flowing the round for the second time. Now listen and flow another round without stopping the tape. Are there places where your flowing improved? Each time you listen to a round, identify one area of flowing you would like to improve and concentrate on that.
3. Using the flows from your last debate tournament, rework the way you organized your speech for presentation. Also, identify sources of evidence that should be researched.
4. Make a list of abbreviations specific to the topic being debated. Work on using these when you flow a debate. Remember to add to the list as you become more familiar with the topic.
5. Are there journals, newspapers, etc., used regularly on the current topic? Work out a set of abbreviations for them.