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What Is Debate?



When the word *debate* comes up in a conversation, most people think of the Presidential Debates. Beginning with the Kennedy-Nixon Debate in 1960, political debates have been the arena in which candidates “confront” each other directly. But as you will learn in this book, the format used for political debates does not set the stage for a *true* confrontation between candidates. Most political debates are, at best, modified press conferences. Questions and issues are chosen by a panel rather than by the candidates. In this book you will look at a different kind of debate: academic debate. You will learn about the nature of debate, and you will develop valuable life skills. After reading this book, you may even decide to participate in academic debate.

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

- ✓ affirmative
- ✓ debate
- ✓ evidence
- ✓ logical reasoning
- ✓ negative
- ✓ present system
- ✓ proof
- ✓ proposition
- ✓ status quo

What Debate Can Do for You

Debate develops skills and values that are important for everyone. You don't need to become a speech major, lawyer, or politician to benefit from debate. Everyone can benefit from learning how to be a good leader and how to investigate and analyze problems. Debate also helps develop critical thinking skills. Debate will help you think on your feet, and it will help you bring an open mind to questions and issues.

Of course, debate also helps develop useful speaking and listening skills. As a debater, you will learn to put together effective, persuasive speeches. You will become better organized. You will become better at getting the full meaning of a spoken message. And as your speaking and listening skills improve, you probably will find that you become more self-confident—not just in debate but in your everyday life as well.

Other important skills that you will learn through debate are teamwork and cooperation. Debate is a competitive activity, but it relies on teamwork. Everyone needs to participate in order for a debate to be successful.

Finally, debate will teach you one way of using your brains to have fun. There is a thrill involved when you match wits with the competition. If you participate in a debate team, you will have a chance to travel and meet new people. You will have the pleasure of seeing hard work pay off and of making new friends in the process.

Leadership Skills

A good leader is able to state a goal, formulate a plan, and then work to achieve that goal. A leader must motivate others and prove to people in positions of authority that the goal is worth achieving. Few classes and activities in school teach leadership skills. But society needs articulate men and women who can analyze a problem, win others' agreement under stress, and persuade others to act. Students who can do this often rise to positions of leadership in business or civic activities after high school or college.

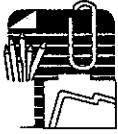
Debate can help you develop valuable leadership skills. Many people who have become leaders were debaters while they were in school. A survey of 160 senators, members of Congress, governors, Supreme Court justices, Cabinet members, and other leaders revealed that 100 of the leaders had high school or college debate experience. All of the 100 found their debate experience helpful in their careers, and 90 classified the experience as "greatly helpful" or "invaluable." Of the 60 who did not have debate experience, 26 expressed regret that they had not participated in debate.

Discuss



How might debate help to develop one's leadership capabilities?

Act



Think about your plans for the future. How do you think debate might help you achieve your future growth?

Investigation and Analysis

Most people have only a superficial knowledge of the problems facing the world today. Many do not like what they see or talk of a need for change. But in general, people do not have enough information to propose a solution. And most would not know where to look for the information they need.

Debaters have an opportunity to investigate and analyze problems facing the country and the world today. Because debate resolutions often deal with such problems, as a debater you will acquire a better-than-average knowledge of current problems. You will also acquire the skills needed to critically analyze problems. You will become prepared to meet the challenges of the future.

Critical Thinking Skills

Debate is a great way to develop your critical thinking skills. Debaters need to know how to choose the best type of approach, method of organization, or presentation style for a debate. They also must know how to find the best evidence. They must evaluate the evidence being used by the other debate team and understand exactly what it does for their arguments. They must think about the consequences of each argument and evaluate its worth.

Debaters use many upper-level thinking skills to answer questions such as: What are the demands of the debate topic? What are the potential strengths and weaknesses of the research materials that have been gathered? Based on the evidence, which approach to analysis seems strongest in the debate? What might the opponents do? How might the judges react to the opposition's arguments? As a debater, you will find that the critical thinking skills you develop as you answer such questions prove invaluable.

Open-Mindedness

When trying to develop an argument, it is often difficult to remain open-minded on the issues. Personal biases create blind spots, and people find themselves unable to see the reasons behind someone else's position, or unable to anticipate what others will say against their own position.

Debaters, however, are forced to consider what the opposition might say. As a debater, you will learn to evaluate your opposition's arguments. You will learn to ask questions: What are the reasons behind the opposition's position? What is the quality of the evidence to support that position? Does the opposing team's reasoning make sense?

Debaters use the answers to these questions to help establish and support their own positions. They learn that, on almost any issue, it is possible to find good reasons for supporting either side.

Thinking on Your Feet

Today's world moves at a rapid pace. With modern communication, what used to take days now happens in minutes. For example, the FAX machine has taken away what used to be several hours of precious thinking time, and people are often expected to respond this afternoon instead of in tomorrow's mail. Government officials, lawyers, business executives, even private citizens are often required to respond quickly yet thoughtfully—a difficult challenge!

Debate teaches you to analyze issues quickly. An academic debate takes just one hour. Within that hour, debaters must make and respond to arguments. Debaters prepare their speeches *during* the debate, not ahead of time. As a debater, you will learn to listen, analyze, and organize a response—all at the same time.

Discuss



1. Why are critical thinking skills important? What advantages does the critical thinking have over others who have not developed these skills?
2. What are the possible consequences of approaching an argument with a closed mind? How does having an open mind on an issue help you prepare your position?
3. How can debate help you develop an analytical mind? Why is it useful to develop your analytical capabilities?

Act



1. Identify an important issue in the national news, and state the issue in a single sentence. Which side of the issue do you favor? Outline the pros and cons of the issue. Have you come up with more reasons to support the side you favor? If so, push yourself to think of more reasons to support the other side of the issue, and equalize the pros and cons.
2. Using the issue you choose for Activity 1, write a short essay (two or three paragraphs) supporting the side you favor. Then write an essay that supports the side you do *not* favor. Have a classmate or teammate read both essays. Which essay is most persuasive?
3. Collect five articles or newspaper clippings on the issue you chose for Activity 1. Identify any biases you see in the articles. Would these articles be useful as evidence to support your paragraphs for or against the issue? Why?

Speaking Skills

The way debate speeches are organized and delivered helps determine the effectiveness of arguments, so debaters learn to select, arrange, and present their materials according to the best principles of public speaking. Debate places a premium on extemporaneous (spur of the moment) delivery, requiring speakers to think on their feet.

As a debater, you will speak before many different audiences. You may speak before a single judge, a panel of judges, a class, a group of people at a meeting, or even a radio or TV audience. Each of these situations provides different challenges. As you learn to adapt to different judges, audiences, and speech situations, you will develop flexibility and ease in thinking and speaking.

Organization

As a debater, you will learn to arrange arguments so that your ideas are easy to follow and hard to forget. In a debate, the judge and the other team take nothing for granted. When a speech is unorganized and confusing, there is a chance no one will be able to find the argument—much less find it convincing. The judge gets confused, and the other team is often able to rework the arguments to its advantage. The need to be clear and convincing will help you to become highly skilled in organizing your presentation.

As a debater, you also will learn to prioritize your arguments. In any given debate, debaters think of many more arguments than can be presented within the time limit. Consequently, debaters must first decide which arguments to use and then prioritize them. Many a debate has been lost because the debater didn't have time to present that last argument, the one that would have destroyed the opposition. Debaters learn over time to identify which arguments to eliminate if it appears time is running short. You will find that the skills required for organizing and prioritizing arguments will also help you write term papers, study for exams, or argue for changes in school policy.

Discuss



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1. Why is the delivery of a speech important in persuading an audience?
 2. What impact does a poorly organized speech have on an audience?
 3. Why is it important to prioritize your ideas and arguments?

Act



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1. Attend a meeting of a student organization, the school board, or the city council. (Sometimes these meetings are broadcast on cable television.) Evaluate how the speakers delivered their speeches. How did delivery affect the audience?

2. Identify a speech that was poorly or well organized. Outline the strong or weak points of the organization. What could have been done differently to make the appeal more effective and persuasive?
3. Go to the library and look up the most recent State of the Union address. Outline the issues being presented in the speech. Is the organization of the speech effective? Why?
4. Assume that the State of the Union address had to be cut in half. How would you cut it? What issues would you leave out or edit? How would you change the order in which the issues were presented?

Critical Listening Skills

Most people tend to tune out much of what is said to them or around them. These people are known as passive listeners. Passive listeners hear only approximately 25 percent of what you say, and there's no guarantee they will remember all of that 25 percent. Many businesses have become concerned about passive listeners. They learned that good listening does not happen naturally—it is a learned skill. Businesses now offer classes to teach their employees critical listening skills.

Critical listening is a crucial skill in debate. Debaters who daydream during an opponent's speech or become engrossed in gathering evidence for their next speech are likely to find that their replies are ineffective or even irrelevant. Thus, debaters learn to divide their attention between listening attentively to their opponents and recording their arguments on a flow sheet (the form used for taking notes; see Chapter 7).

As a debater, you will become an active listener. You will learn to concentrate on the speaker, mentally reviewing what has been said, trying to anticipate what will come next, and noting the kind of evidence being used. By being an active listener, you will be able to tailor your responses to specific points being made, often using the same words the opposition used. Your ability to listen critically will become an important life skill.

Act



1. Attend a PTA, school board, or city council meeting and identify instances in which speakers are not listening to what is being said. What difference does this make in the proceedings? How might arguments have changed if people had been listening more critically?
2. At the same meeting, identify instances in which audience members made arguments or statements that were flawed because they had not listened attentively during the proceedings.

Self-Confidence

Debate requires you to research and formulate a case and then defend that case against strong opposition. You will discover that skillful opponents have no trouble finding flaws in arguments you thought were flawless. Your first response may be to panic, retreat, and avoid the problem. As a debater, however, you can't just give up. You have to defend your position.

Debate will teach you how to discipline yourself to concentrate on the problem, organize your thoughts, and respond to arguments effectively. With time and practice most debaters realize that they can think on their feet and defend a position. They also realize that most of their opponents are not invincible or unbeatable. This process helps debaters develop self-confidence and function under stress—both valuable life skills.

Teamwork and Cooperation

Debate requires teamwork. The two members on each team must work together. Affirmative team members must research and understand the arguments that make up their case. A negative team that does not work together runs the risk of contradicting itself. The negative team members must communicate with each other to decide which arguments to use.

As a debater, you will find that cooperation goes beyond the affirmative and negative team. Many times there is more research work to be done than one team can manage. On a debate squad everyone works together to do the research on the negative side of the proposition. The resources are then pooled and used by everyone on the squad.

The ability to work well with others is a valuable life skill. When you cooperate and work with others, it is often possible to find a compromise to many problems. Several minds working together might find solutions that are better than those found alone.

Fun

There are lots of educational reasons to debate. But aside from that, the bottom line is that debate is *fun*. Debaters find the challenge of each debate round invigorating. The adrenalin flows as the first affirmative speech begins. What will the case be? Can your team refute the arguments? Will you outwit the opposition? Can you convince the judge that your position is the correct one? The high degree of anticipation when waiting is almost unbearable—who won the round?

Every debater remembers the first round she or he won, and many can remember every argument. With that first win comes the challenge of qualifying for the elimination rounds at a tournament. And then—the ultimate thrill of winning a tournament.

But debate is more than winning or losing. It is a terrific opportunity to build friendships. Because you will be competing against other schools, you will meet students from around the city, the state, or even the country. As you get to know them, special bonds begin to form. You may compete fiercely in a debate, but when it is over, win

or lose, you will still be friends. At debate tournaments it is not uncommon to see students from different schools helping each other prepare arguments against a particular case. Debate crosses school boundaries and becomes a way of life. It is an activity like no other.

What Exactly Is Debate?

Debate is defined as “a regulated discussion of a proposition by two matched sides.” Well, yes—but what does *that* mean? It’s really fairly simple.

“A regulated discussion” means that there are agreed-upon rules. Debate isn’t a free-for-all shouting match. Debaters take a logical approach to the discussion. They take turns. They listen to each other and respond carefully to arguments, point by point. In addition to rules about procedures, debate is also “regulated” in that someone listens to the arguments and decides which side has made the best case.

Along with being “regulated,” debate involves an agreed-upon topic of discussion, the **proposition**. The proposition is a statement that is open to interpretation. It is a statement about which reasonable people may accept arguments on either side.

And that leads to the last part of the definition: “two matched sides.” In debate, someone always argues *for* a proposition, and someone else argues *against* the proposition. The judge listens to both sides of the argument and makes a decision based on the reasoning and evidence provided.

Debate is an important part of the U.S. legal and political systems. In a court of law the defense and the prosecution debate the guilt or innocence of the accused before a jury. They do this by presenting evidence from witnesses and by refuting the evidence through cross-examination. In the U.S. legislative branch (the Congress), bills are presented to the House of Representatives and Senate and then debated. Debating skills have helped shape history. In 1957 the Senate designated Senators Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, Robert M. LaFollette, and Robert A. Taft as Senate Immortals, largely due to their abilities as debaters. These senators used their debating skills to provide leadership and to help clarify issues of great importance to the nation.

But academic debate is different from courtroom or legislative debate. An academic debate is approximately one hour long. There are two teams, and each team has two members. The **affirmative** team argues that a change should be made in the **present system** or **status quo**. The present system includes the current laws, regulations, and rules that govern how people live. The **negative** team defends the present system. It argues that although the present system may have a few minor problems, they are problems that can be solved without a major change (a new law, regulation, or rule).

The Basics

Suppose, for example, that the topic for debate is your school’s student dress code. The proposition might be worded this way: “RESOLVED: That appropriate dress for school should be left up to the individual student.”

The affirmative team would claim that the current dress code (the present system) restricts students’ freedom to choose what to wear to school. The affirmative would

try to prove this claim by documenting the school's dress code rules and showing how these rules prevent students from wearing what they want to school. Then, the affirmative would propose the elimination of all rules relating to student dress. The affirmative would also show that the elimination of a student dress code would not be harmful. If there are any advantages to eliminating the dress code, the affirmative would want to outline these as well.

The negative's job would be to defend the present system (the current dress code). The negative would argue that there is nothing wrong with the present dress code. The negative might show that the dress code is very liberal and that most students wear what they want anyway. The negative might also argue that students participated in making the dress code. The negative would also want to discuss the disadvantages of eliminating the dress code. For example, some disadvantages might be that not all students want to follow the latest fads in fashion and that some students cannot afford to buy new clothes as each fad comes along. To eliminate the dress code would subject these students to peer pressure to dress in the latest fad.

In order for either team to convince someone that they are right, the arguments for or against the student dress code must be proven. This **proof** can be logical reasoning, evidence, or a combination of the two. To use **logical reasoning** means to explain why a particular argument makes sense. Sometimes an argument can be explained best through common sense or with facts that are assumed to be true by most people.

However, the preferred form of proof is **evidence**. Evidence is the information used to form the basis of an argument. When debaters look for evidence to prove an argument, they look for a source that is respected by others and that supports the argument they are making. Such statements are usually found in books, newsletters, newspapers, magazines, news releases, journals, and interviews. For example, if the negative wants to prove that student dress codes are essential and valuable, they would want to research educational journals for articles (written by teachers and administrators) that discuss student dress codes. Popular magazines aimed at teenage audiences might also have articles on dress codes. Newspapers might also have information if there has been some controversy in a school involving students and the dress code. And the school newspaper should not be overlooked. (How to find sources, identify pieces of evidence, and put them in a usable form is discussed in detail in Chapters 5, 6, and 7.)

Discuss



1. What is a debate? How does academic debate compare to courtroom or legislative debate?
2. In debate why do the affirmative or negative teams need proof to support their arguments?
3. Identify the two types of proof and explain the advantages and disadvantages of each.

2

How Debate Works



The first time you participate in a sport, you may find it slow-going and difficult. Often the terminology is strange, the rules are new, and the territory is unfamiliar. But after you become familiar with the game and its rules, you often find that it becomes easier and enjoyable.

In a sense debate is also a game, difficult at first, but one that becomes easier with practice. In this chapter, you will learn how debate works. After you understand the basics, you will be able to go on, in the following chapters, to use the basics to plan, prepare, and deliver arguments.

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

- ✓ affirmative case
- ✓ case side
- ✓ disadvantage
- ✓ harm
- ✓ inherency
- ✓ judge
- ✓ plan side
- ✓ problem area
- ✓ refutation

The game of debate is made up of many different parts. It has its own terminology, ideas, and processes. Debaters must know and understand these different elements. In Chapter 2, you will take your first look at some of the basic elements in debate: the players, the problem area, and the five characteristics of a proposition.

The Players in the Game

Debate involves a number of key players: the affirmative team, the negative team, the timekeeper, and the judge.

The Affirmative

The affirmative team argues for the adoption of the debate resolution or proposition. (Remember that the proposition calls for a change to be made in the present system or status quo.) A debate resolution is usually open to a number of interpretations. For example, the resolution "RESOLVED: That the federal government should establish a comprehensive program to significantly increase the energy independence of the United States" might be interpreted to include stripmining of coal, oil imports, nuclear power, solar power, or the Alaska pipeline. Any of these would be an appropriate focus for a debate, and it is the affirmative team that gets to decide just what the focus will be.

When the affirmative decides which area of the proposition it wishes to discuss, it develops a position and presents an **affirmative case**. The affirmative case is the position developed by the affirmative throughout the debate. The affirmative case may be organized in a number of ways (see Chapter 8), but it always includes (1) a justification for changing the present system, (2) a plan of action change, and (3) the advantages of that plan. The affirmative case or affirmative position is often divided into two basic parts: (1) justification for change (the case side) and (2) a plan for implementing the change (plan side).

Discuss



1. The affirmative determines the area of the problem that will be debated. What advantage do you think this gives the affirmative team in a debate?
2. What are the three parts of the affirmative case? Why do you think all three parts are necessary?

The Negative

The negative team responds to the affirmative by attacking and destroying the affirmative's arguments. This is called **refutation**.

Because the affirmative chooses the specific area to be debated in the debate round, the affirmative can prepare many of its arguments in advance. Affirmative teams usually

argue the same case round after round, and they become very experienced at defending their case.

For each debate proposition, there usually will be several points the negative can prepare that can be used against a large number of affirmative cases. However, since the affirmative determines exactly what the focus of the debate will be, negative teams must learn to think quickly, improvise, and apply the appropriate negative arguments to whatever case the affirmative team presents.

The negative team, on the other hand, never knows what case is coming. The negative may debate four different affirmative cases in four rounds of debate. For example, on the energy topic, a negative team might debate against a stripmining case in round one, an oil imports case in round two, a nuclear power case in round three, and a solar power case in round four. Successful negative debaters learn to anticipate cases and arguments and to prepare specific refutations for those arguments.

Refuting the Affirmative Case

The negative refutes the affirmative case in three general areas. First, the negative can deny that the affirmative **harm** exists. The affirmative harm is an undesirable effect caused by the present system. Harm exists when needs are denied or when suffering or loss of life occurs. The negative can deny the harm by challenging how the affirmative measured the harm, or by arguing that the harm is not really caused by the present system.

Second, the negative can refute the affirmative case by claiming that adopting the proposition will not solve (or meet) the harm that the affirmative has identified. These kinds of arguments challenge the affirmative's **inherency**, or justification for change. The negative argues that the present system can and will solve any problems *without* any outside action. The negative might argue (1) that the present system is capable of solving the problem, (2) that the present system has recently adopted programs that will solve the problem, or (3) that recent changes in conditions that are unrelated to the affirmative harm will solve the problem in the future.

Third, the negative might attack the affirmative plan. The negative might demonstrate that the plan (1) can be circumvented, (2) does not take into account outside factors that could affect the plan, or (3) has an internal flaw. The negative might argue that the affirmative plan will not meet the needs outlined in the affirmative case. (This is called a plan meet need argument.) The negative might also argue that adopting the affirmative plan will cause negative side effects, and that these **disadvantages** will outweigh any advantages gained by the affirmative plan.

To win the debate, the negative needs to win only *one* of these arguments (harm, inherency, plan meet need, or disadvantages). Negative strategies and approaches are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9.

Discuss



1. What are the three general areas in which the negative can refute the affirmative case?

2. How does the negative argue that the affirmative harm does not exist?
3. Generally, what does it mean to challenge the affirmative's inherency?
4. What types of arguments does the negative make to challenge the affirmative plan? Define each.

The Timekeeper

Another player in a debate round is the **timekeeper**. The timekeeper keeps track of each debater's speaking time and lets the speaker know how much speaking or preparation time has elapsed. The timekeeper does this by using time cards. The time in a debate is counted down in minutes (8, 7, 6, 5, etc) until the last minute, when 30-second increments are used (1, 30 seconds, stop). When all of the allotted time has been used, the speaker is allowed to finish the last sentence and then must stop.

If a timekeeper is not available, the judge can keep time or each team can keep time for itself. The teams should keep time only when no other option is available. (Rules governing individual speech time limits, preparation time, and speaker responsibilities are covered in more detail in Chapter 3.)

The Judge

The final player in a debate is the **judge**. There is usually only one judge, although sometimes a three-person panel evaluates a debate and decides who wins and who loses. The audience or class listening to a debate may also serve as the judge.

In presidential and other political debates, the voter or the public in general is the judge. After political debates, polls are taken to determine who "won" the debate. The media usually evaluate political debates and decide "who did the better job of debating." This often influences the judgment of the audience at large.

Discuss



1. Who are the key players in a debate?
2. What is the difference between the affirmative and the negative teams?
3. Why is it important to keep time in debate?

The Problem Area

You already know that debates are focused on resolutions. To get to a debate resolution, you need to start with the **problem area**. A problem area is a general issue that causes concern to a community or group of people, such as the global environment, poverty, national defense, or medical care. As you can see, each of these problem areas is very broad. To arrive at a workable debate resolution, the problem area must be narrowed down to a specific question.

For example, in the area of medical care, you might start with the question "Should adequate medical care be guaranteed?" But this is still fairly broad. *Who* should get the medical care? At *what cost*? *What type* of care should be provided? A much more specific question would be "Should medical care for major illnesses be provided for everyone?" This question is much more focused and could be debated. Put in the form of a debate proposition, it would read: "RESOLVED: That the federal government should guarantee medical care for those with catastrophic illnesses."

Act



1. Identify one issue of concern in your school and one in your community. Phrase the problems as questions. Do they need to be more specific? Why would these problem areas be good for debate? Would it be possible to research the problems?
2. Repeat Activity 1 by identifying national and international problem areas.
3. The following problem areas are worded as broad questions. Identify three areas of interest for each and word them as specific questions.
 - What changes should be made in United States foreign policy toward the Middle East?
 - What should the United States do to improve the global environment?
 - What should be the United States' foreign policy toward Europe?
 - What should be done to meet the needs of the homeless in the United States?
 - How should the United States improve its presidential election process?
 - What should be the United States government policy toward the region beyond Earth's atmosphere?
 - How should the United States serve its interests in the Asian Pacific Rim, which includes China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand?

Propositions

Propositions provide focus for discussion and debate. A proposition must possess certain characteristics. They include significance, controversy, a single idea, debatability, and durability.

Significance

The key characteristic of a proposition is significance. The problem to be debated should be significant. It should affect many people around the country or even around the world. For example, the problem of how to provide jobs for all employable United States citizens would be the basis for a significant proposition because the problem affects

most Americans. Inflation, access to medical care, toxic wastes, pollution, national defense, world hunger, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons are all significant problem areas and would be good candidates for debate propositions.

However, city taxes, county jails, state lotteries, or fire codes would usually not be appropriate for debate propositions. They lack significance in that they affect only a few people. This does not mean that such problem areas are *never* appropriate for debate. There may be times when the situation calls for debating a more limited issue. For example, in audience debates, debates before a group of people with no background in academic debate, a limited problem area is usually chosen because it is of more interest to the audience and will likely have a greater impact.

Discuss



1. When is it appropriate to debate a limited proposition? Why?
2. Name three problem areas that would be of interest to *your* school's student body. Are they significant to people who are not associated with your school?

Controversy

A proposition is debatable only if it is controversial. That is, there must be a difference of opinion or a conflict of interest about the proposition. For example, the proposition "RESOLVED: That the Constitution provides for a separation of church and state" is not controversial. It is a fact that can be verified. However, the proposition "RESOLVED: That President John F. Kennedy was killed by a single assassin" is open to a great deal of controversy.

Single Idea

A debate proposition should contain only one idea. To prepare and argue effectively, debaters must be able to focus on a single problem area. For example, the proposition "RESOLVED: That the United States should become energy independent and work to purify the air and water" presents two subjects for argument. The first is energy independence, and the second is pollution control. Trying to debate both subjects in the same round will lead to poorly developed arguments and a great deal of confusion.

Discuss



The following propositions are noncontroversial. Explain why. How would you rewrite them so they could be debated?

RESOLVED: That the federal government should examine the presidential election campaign process in the United States.

RESOLVED: That children should be guaranteed a safe place to live.

RESOLVED: That each American should have a place to live.

RESOLVED: That all countries of the world should work toward peace and harmony.

RESOLVED: That political stability is desirable in the Middle East.

RESOLVED: That world governments should work to reduce global pollution.

RESOLVED: That the United States should work on foreign policy initiatives in Europe.

Act



The sample proposition given above, "RESOLVED: That the United States should become energy independent and work to purify the air and water," contains two ideas. Rewrite the sample proposition as two separate propositions, each with a single idea. Are the new propositions controversial? Why?

Debatability

Propositions should be stated as impartially and unemotionally as possible. Emotional language can give the affirmative or the negative an unfair advantage. For example, "RESOLVED: That rehabilitation programs should be established for hardened, dangerous criminals" is stated with a slant to the negative. The wording implies that rehabilitation would be difficult, if not impossible.

Propositions should be worded so that they favor neither the affirmative nor the negative. For example, "RESOLVED: That all United States citizens have a right to clean drinking water" places a heavy burden on the negative. It is not a reasonable negative position to argue that people do not have a *right* to clean drinking water. A more debatable proposition would be "RESOLVED: That the federal government should establish a comprehensive national policy to protect the quality of drinking water in the United States." This wording provides a better balance of issues and arguments for the affirmative and the negative.

Discuss



Why is it important for a proposition to be debatable?

Act



1. The following propositions are not debatable. Identify the problem and rewrite each so that it would be debatable.
RESOLVED: That strengthening United States alliances with one or more countries in the Middle East would be beneficial.
RESOLVED: That every United States citizen should be given an opportunity to earn a living.
RESOLVED: That the United States should strengthen its alliances with one or more countries in the Middle East and Europe.
RESOLVED: That the federal government should provide a job for every U.S. citizen and increase trade in the Asian Pacific Rim.
RESOLVED: That the United States should cut military spending and increase space exploration.
RESOLVED: That the federal government should better protect the health of the American people by finding an alternative for nuclear energy.
2. Identify three problems facing your school or community. Write a proposition to be debated for each problem.

Durability

The last characteristic of propositions is durability. Will the problem exist throughout the debate season? For example, the proposition "RESOLVED: That students should be allowed to leave campus during their free class periods" would be risky if the school administration is already considering adopting such a proposal. The affirmative would have little to debate if the proposal actually went into effect during the debate season. A proposition should be timely, but its adoption in the immediate future should be unlikely.

Act



1. Each of the following propositions contains a flaw. Identify which of the five characteristics—significance, controversy, a single idea, debatability, or durability—it does not meet, and explain why.
RESOLVED: That the military draft should be reinstated with registration at a student's local high school.
RESOLVED: That the federal government should establish comprehensive security guidelines for U.S. airports to make them safe.
RESOLVED: That the federal government should increase social welfare programs in the current budget.
RESOLVED: That city governments should establish a program to improve the collection of parking fees.

RESOLVED: That enrollment in elementary school is rising.

RESOLVED: That fresh vegetable prices fluctuate with the growing seasons.

RESOLVED: That the federal government should tax citizens equally and use a significant portion of the tax dollars to improve the educational system.

RESOLVED: That the federal government should establish a comprehensive program to provide medical care for all Americans.

RESOLVED: That the federal government should provide more shelters to protect battered women.

RESOLVED: That toxic wastes are a significant health hazard.

RESOLVED: That age and sex discrimination are not socially desirable.

RESOLVED: That the federal government should reduce the trade deficit and balance the federal budget.

RESOLVED: That the math skills in elementary and secondary schools are declining.

2. Choose three of the propositions from Activity 1 and rewrite them as workable propositions.
3. Write three original propositions that you would be interested in debating. They can involve school policy, local policy, state regulations, or national issues. Explain how the propositions meet the five characteristics of a proposition.

3

Debate Formats and Speaker Responsibilities



Whether the event is the Indianapolis 500, the Olympic ice hockey finals, or the Super Bowl, you can be sure that all winning team members know exactly what their roles are and how they fit into the overall team plan. Organization, planning, and teamwork are essential to winning. Like other activities, debate depends on each team member playing a particular position with special responsibilities. The order and length of speeches and each speaker's duties are determined before the debate begins. In this chapter you will look at the various debate formats and speaker responsibilities.

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

- ✓ constructive speech
- ✓ contentions
- ✓ cross-examination debate
- ✓ Lincoln-Douglas debate
- ✓ negative block
- ✓ negative philosophy
- ✓ novice debater
- ✓ preparation time
- ✓ rebuttal speech
- ✓ solvency
- ✓ standard debate
- ✓ topicality
- ✓ voting issues

There are two main kinds of academic debate: policy debate and value debate. **Policy debate** involves resolutions that urge taking action. Policy resolutions almost always include the words *should* or *ought to*, and they usually direct the government or other groups in power to do something. Policy debate emphasizes objective arguments backed up by evidence. Policy debate is the main focus of *Getting Started in Debate*.

In contrast, **value debate** involves resolutions that have to do with evaluating ideas or actions. Value debate is based largely on subjective reasoning and on persuasion. The emphasis in value debate is on analysis and persuasion, rather than on evidence.

At the high-school level, there are two popular formats for policy debate. These are standard or traditional debate and cross-examination debate. There is also one popular format for value debate, which is Lincoln-Douglas debate. Standard debate is used most often by beginning debaters, and cross-examination debate is used for most tournaments at the high-school and college level.

Standard Debate Format

The **standard debate** format was used by high schools and colleges almost exclusively until the mid-1970s. The standard debate format consists of two types of speeches: the constructive speech and the rebuttal speech. **Constructive speeches** are 8 minutes in length and present each team's major points. **Rebuttal speeches** are 4 minutes in length. The rebuttal speeches are used to refute or extend major arguments that were raised in the constructive speeches. (The table shows the order of constructive and rebuttal speeches in standard debate.)

Beginning debaters often use the standard debate format because it allows them to concentrate on the basics. Many debate coaches prefer their new, or **novice**, debaters to become familiar with this format first. The standard debate format is used at many novice tournaments.

Standard debate usually involves two-person teams. Some novice tournaments will have four-person teams instead of two-person teams. Two people debate on the affirmative side and the other two debate on the negative side. This allows the debaters to get used to debating one side of the topic before having to debate both sides. After several tournaments, the four-person team becomes two two-person teams, and each team debates both sides of the topic using the standard debate format. Once novice debaters master the basic skills through standard debate, they can move on to cross-examination debate.

Standard Debate Format

First Affirmative constructive	4	8 minutes	BLAKE
First Negative constructive		8 minutes	JEFF
Second Affirmative constructive	↓	8 minutes	BRADY
Second Negative constructive		8 minutes	CHRIS
First Negative rebuttal	2	4 minutes	JEFF
First Affirmative rebuttal		4 minutes	BLAKE
Second Negative rebuttal	↓	4 minutes	CHRIS
Second Affirmative rebuttal		4 minutes	BRADY

1A - Blake
2A - Brady
1N - Jeff
2N - Chris

neg
blake

Cross-Examination Debate Format

Cross-examination debate first appeared in the 1930s. During the 1970s, cross-examination debate began to grow in popularity because debaters found it innovative and creative. By the mid-1970s, it had become the preferred debate format. **Cross-examination debate** is similar to standard debate but adds question periods (cross-examination) after each constructive speech. The question periods provide an opportunity for the opposing teams to confront each other directly. (The table shows the order of speeches and cross-examination periods in cross-examination debates.)

Cross-Examination Debate Format

First Affirmative constructive	8 minutes	- brock
Negative cross-examination of First Affirmative speaker	3 minutes	- Chris
First Negative constructive	8 minutes	- Jeff
Affirmative cross-examination of First Negative speaker	3 minutes	- Brock
Second Affirmative constructive	8 minutes	- Brock
Negative cross-examination of Second Affirmative speaker	3 minutes	- Jeff
Second Negative constructive	8 minutes	- Chris
Affirmative cross-examination of Second Negative speaker	3 minutes	- Brock
First Negative rebuttal	4 minutes	
First Affirmative rebuttal	4 minutes	
Second Negative rebuttal	4 minutes	
Second Affirmative rebuttal	4 minutes	

Lincoln-Douglas Debate Format

Although **Lincoln-Douglas debate** resembles standard and cross-examination debate, it is different in a couple of significant ways. First, as mentioned before, Lincoln-Douglas is a form of value debate. Second, Lincoln-Douglas debate involves only two participants (one on each side) instead of four. This means that the emphasis of the debate is different from standard or cross-examination debate, and also that the speaker order and speaker times are different. Third, Lincoln-Douglas debate involves value propositions instead of policy propositions. It involves debating values and attitudes, rather than policies and actions. (Propositions are covered in more detail in Chapter 3.)

Lincoln-Douglas debate is named in honor of two famous debaters, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas. Lincoln and Douglas both ran for the Illinois State Senate in 1852, and as part of the election race, they met for a series of debates. But in 1980 the National Forensic League, one of the major high-school debate associations, established Lincoln-Douglas debate as a tournament event. It has been a popular debate format ever since.

As you can see from the table, the speech order for Lincoln-Douglas debate is quite different from policy debate. Each side gets the same amount of speaking time, but the time is allocated differently. The affirmative has a shorter constructive speech but two rebuttal speeches. There is proportionally more cross-examination time than

in policy debate, and cross-examination skills are more important to building arguments in this type of debate.

Lincoln-Douglas Debate Format

Affirmative constructive	6 minutes
Negative cross-examination of Affirmative	3 minutes
Negative constructive	7 minutes
Affirmative cross-examination of Negative	3 minutes
Affirmative rebuttal	4 minutes
Negative rebuttal	6 minutes
Affirmative rebuttal	3 minutes

value

Discuss



1. What are the differences between standard, cross-examination, and Lincoln-Douglas debate?
2. What advantages do you think there are in using cross-examination debate rather than standard debate?

Preparation Time

Debate is an *extemporaneous* speech activity. With the exception of the first affirmative constructive speech, speeches are not written out before the debate begins. But even if your speech isn't written out, you still must organize your points and put your materials together before you stand up to speak. The time between speeches used for preparation is called **preparation time** or prep time.

Preparation involves jotting down final notes, gathering materials (such as evidence cards and briefs) together, checking with your teammate, and getting to the podium to speak. Since it would be unreasonable to allow unlimited time for preparation in a debate round, time limits are set. There are three types of prep time rules.

One-Minute or Two-Minute Rule

This rule applies to individual speakers. Each speaker is allowed either one or two minutes to prepare each speech. For example, when the first affirmative constructive speaker finishes speaking and sits down, the preparation time for the first negative constructive speaker begins. In one or two minutes the first negative constructive speaker is expected to be ready to speak. If the speaker takes longer than the one or two minutes, the additional time is subtracted from his or her speaking time.

Eight-Minute Rule

The eight-minute rule is the one most commonly used in debate rounds. The rule applies to the affirmative and the negative as a team. Each team is given a total of eight minutes' preparation time to use as it wishes. Preparation time is calculated from the time one speaker sits down until the next speaker begins speaking. The elapsed time is recorded by the timekeeper (or judge, if there is no timekeeper), and each team is informed as each minute of prep time elapses.

No rule governs how each team allocates its preparation time. For example, the negative might use four minutes before the first negative constructive speech, one minute before the second negative constructive speech, one minute before the first negative rebuttal speech, and two minutes before the second negative rebuttal speech. The affirmative may wish to use most of its preparation time before the first affirmative rebuttal speech. When a team has used the full eight minutes, any additional prep time is subtracted from subsequent speaking time for that team. Any unused preparation time is simply lost.

There are two variations on this rule: the five-minute and the ten-minute rules. The procedure is the same, but the total prep time for each team is shorter or longer. Which time frame is used is left up to the tournament director.

Lincoln-Douglas Debate

In Lincoln-Douglas debate, each debater is allowed a total of three minutes' preparation time during the debate. The rules for using this prep time are the same as those for the eight-minute rule.

Discuss



1. Why do you think it is necessary to have rules controlling the time allowed for preparing speeches?
2. What are the differences between the different types of prep time rules? Does one rule seem to offer significant advantages over the others? Why?

Speaker Strategies and Responsibilities

As you begin to debate you need to develop an understanding of each speaker's duties and responsibilities. They are the blueprint for a debate round, the rules of the game. You also need to understand the different kinds of speeches in a debate. Arguments are presented, developed, and critiqued during the constructive speeches. These are followed by the rebuttal speeches, which are used to extend arguments and summarize the affirmative and negative positions.

Each debate begins with the first affirmative constructive speech, in which the first affirmative speaker claims that the resolution should be supported. This speech

is followed by the first negative constructive speech, which refutes the arguments that were presented by the first affirmative. The second affirmative speaker then attempts to rebuild the affirmative case (redevelop the first affirmative arguments). Finally, the second negative constructive speech poses objections to the affirmative plan (the solution to the problem presented by the affirmative).

Rebuttal speeches begin with the first negative rebuttal and alternate until the second affirmative has the last speech in the debate. The first negative rebuttal argues against the responses developed by the second affirmative constructive speaker. The first affirmative rebuttalist must respond to all the negative arguments (the second negative constructive arguments and first negative rebuttal extensions). This can be as much as twelve minutes of negative speaking time. The first affirmative rebuttal is viewed by many as the most difficult speech in the entire debate.

The last two rebuttal speeches sum up final positions. Because there is not time to argue and extend every argument, the second negative rebuttalist must select the most important objections to extend. The second affirmative rebuttalist must answer the objections extended in the second negative rebuttal and then reestablish the affirmative case.

Speaker Order and Speaker Responsibilities

Speaker Order	Speaker Responsibilities
First Affirmative constructive	Presents reasons for change (contentions or advantages) and a solution.
First Negative constructive	Challenges affirmative's definition of terms and topicality, and refutes affirmative's contentions or advantages.
Second Affirmative constructive	Rebuilds the affirmative case, refutes major negative arguments, and extends remaining affirmative arguments.
Second Negative constructive	Presents objections to the affirmative's plan. These include plan workability, plan solvency, and disadvantages.
First Negative rebuttal	Refutes, extends, and develops the case arguments introduced by the second affirmative.
First Affirmative rebuttal	Responds to all negative arguments (the second negative constructive arguments and first negative rebuttal extensions).
Second Negative rebuttal	Extends negative arguments on case and plan. Selectivity is crucial. These arguments are usually labeled "voting" issues.
Second Affirmative rebuttal	Answers negative's objections extended in the second negative rebuttal and reestablishes the affirmative case.

Discuss



What are the significant differences between constructive and rebuttal speeches?

First Affirmative Constructive

The first affirmative constructive speech is usually all-inclusive. It includes **contentions** or arguments, the affirmative plan, and the advantages of the plan. Thus, all of the affirmative reasons for change are laid out at the beginning of the debate. By laying everything out at the beginning, the first affirmative constructive sets the stage for better development of arguments, clear definitions of issues, and a greater opportunity for both teams to analyze and extend arguments.



The key first affirmative strategies are (1) to present the strongest possible case for the proposition and (2) to leave the affirmative in a strong offensive position. To achieve this, the first affirmative should be sure to

1. Give a brief, pleasant introduction that summarizes the affirmative's approach to the resolution.
2. State the resolution (proposition).
3. Define the key terms of the resolution (proposition).
4. Present the affirmative's justification for change (need/harm contention or advantages).
5. Present the affirmative's plan (proposed solution to the problem).
6. Present the advantages of the affirmative's plan and show how the affirmative plan solves the need or harm.
7. Briefly summarize the affirmative's case.

The best order for steps 4, 5, and 6 depends on the type of affirmative case being argued. (In the need case, the order of presentation would be 4, 5, 6, while in the comparative advantage case, the order of presentation would be 5, 6, 4. Affirmative cases are covered in more detail in Chapter 8.)

Outline for First Affirmative Constructive Needs Case

- I. Introduction
 - II. Statement of the resolution
 - III. Definition of terms (sometimes these are defined by the plan)
 - IV. Inherency (justification for change)
 - V. Significance
 - VI. Presentation of the plan
 - VII. Solvency of the plan (how the plan solves the need or harm)
 - VIII. Summary
-

Outline for First Affirmative Constructive Comparative Advantage Case

- I. Introduction
 - II. Statement of the resolution
 - III. Definition of terms (sometimes these are defined by the plan)
 - IV. Attitudinal inherency (justification for change)
 - V. Significance
 - VI. Presentation of the plan
 - VII. Advantages of the plan
 - VIII. Summary
-

Discuss



1. What are the key strategies behind the first affirmative constructive speech?
2. How do the different elements of the first affirmative constructive allow the affirmative to set the stage for the rest of the debate?

First Negative Constructive

The first negative constructive speech is in direct response to the first affirmative constructive. The negative team must decide if it agrees with the affirmative definition of terms and choice of topic area. The negative must decide now what the **negative philosophy** will be—what position the negative will take against the affirmative case.

The key first negative strategies are (1) to maintain the validity of the present system, (2) to take the offensive away from the affirmative, and (3) to expand the debate beyond the arguments presented in the first affirmative constructive speech. To achieve this, the first negative speaker should be sure to



1. Give a brief introduction that explains the negative's philosophy or point of view in the debate.
2. Show how the negative will organize its analysis of the affirmative's arguments.
3. Challenge the affirmative's definition of terms. (This usually requires both explanation and evidence.)
4. Challenge the affirmative's **topicality**, the specific affirmative case area. For example, on the topic "RESOLVED: That the federal government should establish minimum educational standards for elementary and secondary schools in the United States," an affirmative team that argues for educating school children about AIDS may be challenged on topicality. While AIDS education may be a good idea, the issue of whether educating children about AIDS falls within the scope or intent of the resolution definitely would be debatable.

5. Defend the present system by summarizing the present system's aims and effectiveness in meeting its goals.
6. Argue that the affirmative team has not adequately justified changing the present system.
7. Briefly summarize the negative's position in the debate.

It is not necessary for the first negative to cover all seven steps. For example, the negative does not have to challenge the affirmative definition of term or topicality in every debate. However, if the negative *does* plan to challenge the affirmative's definitions or topicality, this should be done in the first negative constructive speech. (The only exception would be if the second affirmative speaker makes an argument that causes the negative to decide that the affirmative's definitions are no longer valid, or that the affirmative case really is not topical.) Negative strategies are covered in more detail in Chapter 9.

Outline for First Negative Constructive

- I. Introduction and statement of the negative philosophy
 - II. Definition of terms
 - III. Topicality arguments
 - IV. Refutation of affirmative points
 - A. Statement of the affirmative point to be refuted, using the affirmative's labels
 - B. Statement of negative position on the argument
 - C. Evidence for the negative point
 - D. Explanation of the negative point's impact on the affirmative case
 - E. Restatement of negative position on the argument
 - V. Restatement of the negative philosophy or summary of the negative impact on the affirmative case overall
-

As a negative debater, you will find structuring and labeling your arguments is important. If your arguments are not easy to identify, they will be lost later in the debate. An outlining system, using numbers and alphabet letters (Point I, subpoint A, subpoint B, Point II, etc.), will help keep the structure of the debate clear.

Discuss



1. What are the key strategies for the first negative constructive speech?
2. What issues should the first negative to sure to raise in this constructive speech?

Second Affirmative Constructive

The second affirmative constructive speech has three primary purposes: (1) to reestablish the affirmative position in the debate; (2) to refute the major arguments presented by the first negative speaker; and (3) to extend affirmative arguments and present any remaining constructive materials for the affirmative team.



The key second affirmative strategies are (1) to uphold the affirmative's burden of proof or support of the resolution, (2) to remain on the offensive, and (3) to narrow the range of arguments. To achieve this, the second affirmative should be sure to

1. Give a brief introduction that reestablishes the affirmative position.
2. Prove that the affirmative case justifies the topic by reestablishing the affirmative definition of terms and topicality, if necessary.
3. Reestablish the affirmative justification for change.
4. Prove that the affirmative harm exists, is significant, and is likely to grow worse if nothing is done.
5. Demonstrate that the harm is caused by the present system or that the advantages of the affirmative plan are unique to the plan.
6. Review any affirmative arguments that have not been attacked up to this point.
7. Briefly summarize the affirmative position.

The second affirmative constructive speaker should be ready to refute anything the first negative constructive speaker brings up. Where possible, the second affirmative constructive speaker should draw negative arguments back into the affirmative case structure, so that the affirmative case is strengthened. The second affirmative constructive speaker may also present additional advantages of the affirmative plan. However, this should not be done at the expense of an adequate case defense.

Outline for Second Affirmative Constructive

- I. Introduction that overviews the debate thus far, showing the relationship between the affirmative case and the negative philosophy
 - II. Defense of the definition of terms and topicality, if necessary
 - III. Reestablishment of the affirmative inherency (harm or advantage and its significance)
 - IV. Attack on the negative philosophy or negative arguments defending the present system
 - V. Presentation of additional advantages if necessary
 - VI. Summary that emphasizes arguments dropped by the negative and arguments being carried by the affirmative
-

As a second affirmative, you need to be careful about presenting additional advantages. Although it is useful to have additional advantages in the second affirmative constructive speech, you should never present additional advantages at the expense

of adequately responding to arguments raised by the negative. Winning an additional advantage doesn't do you much good if you lose inherency or give up a more significant advantage because of an inadequate response.

Discuss



1. What are the three purposes of the second affirmative constructive speech?
2. What are the key strategies for the second affirmative constructive?
3. When should the second affirmative constructive speaker try to introduce additional advantages? Where should these come in the speech?

Second Negative Constructive

Traditionally, the second negative constructive speech deals with the affirmative plan. There may be times when a new argument on case (the justification for change) also needs to be developed. However, the primary purpose of the second negative constructive is to deal with three issues: (1) plan workability; (2) plan **solvency**, the issue of whether the affirmative plan will really solve the problem; and (3) plan disadvantages.



The key second negative strategies are (1) to outline arguments against plan workability and solvency, and (2) to establish the disadvantages to adopting the affirmative plan. To achieve this, the second affirmative should be sure to

1. Give an introduction that outlines what the second negative speaker will cover in this speech. This is important because the structure of this speech departs from the affirmative case structure. You should be laying out a road map for everyone to follow for plan objectives.
2. Show why the affirmative's proposal is unworkable or impractical. This might involve three or four separate and numbered arguments.
3. Show why the affirmative's plan will not solve the problems of the present system outlined by the affirmative on case (the justification for change).
4. Detail the disadvantages of the affirmative's plan. This might involve as many as five or six specific harmful side effects of the plan, but it is better to have two or three well-developed disadvantages than six poorly developed ones. Disadvantages should be presented with supporting evidence.
5. Give a very brief conclusion. This may involve contrasting the advantages offered by the affirmative with the disadvantages and demonstrating that the disadvantages outweigh the advantages.

The second negative constructive speech is the first speech of what is called the **negative block**. The other half of the negative block is the first negative rebuttal, which follows immediately. Negative debaters take advantage of this long block of speaking time. For example, if the second negative constructive speaker covers case arguments before doing plan attacks, there won't be much left for the first negative rebuttal speaker

to do. So case arguments usually are extended (or continued) in the first negative rebuttal. Whenever evidence is available to support an argument, it should be used. However, sometimes you can prove solvency and workability arguments by using explanations. Solvency and workability arguments are usually arguments of logic. On the other hand, disadvantages *require* evidence to support them.

You should develop a disadvantage with as much care as you develop an affirmative harm contention or advantage. Successful disadvantage arguments always demonstrate the link between the affirmative plan and the disadvantage, pointing out how the plan actually causes the disadvantage.

Outline for Second Negative Constructive

- I. Introduction that reviews the negative philosophy and outlines contentions of this speech
 - II. New case arguments (only if the second affirmative constructive has created the need to present new arguments on definitions or topicality)
 - III. Workability—attacks on specific elements of the affirmative plan
 - IV. Solvency—demonstrations that the affirmative's plan is incapable of meeting the need or achieving the advantages claimed
 - V. Disadvantages
-

Discuss



1. What is the primary purpose of the second negative constructive speech?
2. What are the key strategies for the second negative constructive?

First Negative Rebuttal

The first negative rebuttal speech is the first rebuttal speech. It is delivered right after the second negative constructive speech and forms part of the negative block. When structured with care, the negative block can have a significant impact on the affirmative case.

The first negative rebuttalist should refute, extend, and develop the case arguments that were introduced by the second affirmative constructive speaker. As a first negative rebuttalist, you will need to pick and choose which arguments to carry through. You should be especially careful not to ignore arguments that were raised for the first time in the second affirmative constructive. Many judges consider the *second* negative rebuttal too late for a first response to second affirmative constructive arguments.

The key first negative rebuttal strategy is to extend the negative's case attacks. To achieve this, the first negative rebuttalist should be sure to

1. Define terms, if necessary. If the affirmative has adequately defended its definition, drop this argument. If not, explain why the affirmative definitions still are not acceptable.



2. Refute any second affirmative constructive arguments about topicality, if the negative still feels that the affirmative case is not topical. Extend the negative explanation of why the affirmative case is not topical.
3. Return to the rest of the arguments in the first negative constructive, refuting the affirmative's objections. Because time may not allow the first negative rebuttalist to return to every point, only the most important points should be developed. Explain why these are the most important case arguments in the debate.
4. Attack again the affirmative's justification for change.
5. Summarize the negative block (second negative constructive and first negative rebuttal).

In order to provide a strong conclusion to the first negative rebuttal, you should relate the negative's position on case (justification for change) to the plan objections just presented in the second negative constructive. An effective structure is an "even-if" argument. It establishes that the need for change really doesn't exist, but that, *even if* it did, the affirmative plan is significantly unable to meet the need and/or creates serious disadvantages. This type of conclusion makes a complete unit of the negative position.

Discuss



1. What are some of the advantages of the negative block? How can the negative team structure its arguments to use the block effectively?
2. Why should the first negative rebuttalist not ignore the arguments presented in the second affirmative constructive?

First Affirmative Rebuttal

The first affirmative rebuttal speech is one of the most difficult speeches in the debate, because in only four minutes, the first affirmative rebuttalist must respond to two negative speeches—up to twelve minutes of uninterrupted negative arguments. This is a lot of ground to cover! Good organization and a concise use of language can make this speech a little easier. The first affirmative rebuttalist must answer all new arguments presented by the second negative constructive speaker. In most cases these arguments will deal with the affirmative plan. However, time also must be reserved to respond to the most important case arguments presented by the first negative rebuttal speaker.

The key first affirmative rebuttal strategies are (1) to ensure the affirmative has met the burden of proof, (2) to validate the affirmative plan, and (3) to narrow the debate, both on case and on plan. To achieve this, the first affirmative rebuttalist should be sure to



1. Refute the negative's plan objections. Try to consolidate as many arguments as possible. Point out fallacies (flaws) in reasoning, as well as missing links in

arguments. When possible, try to show how negative disadvantages are really affirmative advantages.

2. Return to the affirmative's case to rebuild it at major points of attack. Attempt to narrow the debate by focusing on a few issues. Explain why these are the important issues in the debate.
3. Consolidate (group together) as many first negative rebuttal arguments as possible, and refute them.
4. Briefly summarize the strengths of the affirmative's case.

Much ground must be covered in the first affirmative rebuttal. It must be covered quickly enough to stay within the time limits but thoroughly enough for the responses to have an impact on the debate. You will have to decide within any given round how to allocate your time effectively. It often works best to spend about half of your speaking time on plan attacks and the rest on case. Remember to watch the time carefully, allocate it wisely, and make every word count.

Discuss



1. Why is the first affirmative rebuttal speech one of the most difficult speeches in the debate?
2. What are the key strategies for the first affirmative rebuttal?
3. How can the first affirmative rebuttalist narrow the debate?

Second Negative Rebuttal

Because this is the negative's last chance to speak in the debate, the second negative rebuttalist must carefully choose which arguments to extend. First negative and second negative must work together to decide what the **voting issues**, the reasons to vote either affirmative or negative, are. At the end of the second negative rebuttal, the negative wants the judge to view the arguments presented in this speech as the most important arguments in the round.

As with all rebuttal speeches, time is short, and there is much ground to cover. A good rule to follow is to spend less than half of your time on case arguments and most of your time on plan arguments. Because plan arguments are still the newest arguments in the debate, they take the most amount of time to cover and extend thoroughly.

The key second negative rebuttal strategies are (1) to identify the case arguments the negative views as voting issues, and (2) to demonstrate that the significance of the disadvantages outweighs the advantages or the solvency of the affirmative harm. To achieve this, the second negative rebuttalist should be sure to

1. Give a brief introduction and a road map of the direction of the speech.
2. Briefly reestablish topicality and definition-of-terms challenges, if still applicable.
3. Reestablish key case arguments as voting issues and extend them.



4. Review plan objections and disadvantages, refuting the affirmative's responses and pointing to the issues the affirmative neglected to discuss. Since time may not allow reviewing all the second negative arguments, choose the disadvantages that are most important to the negative and drop the rest.
5. Summarize the negative position, calling for the rejection of the proposition.

Remember, the second negative rebuttalist presents the last word on all of the negative's positions (case and plan). Good communication between first and second negative is really important now. The first negative can probably identify voting issues on case better than the second negative can. At the same time, second negative is in a better position to identify the voting issues on the plan. It is up to the individual whether the second negative rebuttalist covers case or plan first. Some debaters make the decision depending on the individual round, ending each second negative rebuttal with the most important voting issues. In some rounds these issues are on case and in others they are on the plan. Other debaters go to case first and end with plan attacks because this is considered the negative offensive ground.

If you think you have more arguments than available time, you might decide to begin rather than end the rebuttal with the most important voting issues. Then, if something is dropped at the end, it will be the least rather than the most important issue. Negatives can win the round by winning any one of the important voting issues. The key is to think, communicate, and stay organized.

Discuss



1. What does the term "voting issues" mean?
2. What are the key strategies for the second negative rebuttal speech?
3. How should second negative rebuttalists divide their time between plan and case arguments? Why?

Second Affirmative Rebuttal

The second affirmative rebuttal speech follows the last negative speech in debate. It concludes all the arguments in the round. Like any other rebuttal, the second affirmative rebuttal should not contain new arguments, lines of reasoning or emphases raised for the first time in the debate.



The key second affirmative rebuttal strategy is to put the debate in perspective and thus continue to advance the affirmative's basic strategies. To achieve this, the first affirmative rebuttalist should be sure to

1. Give a brief introduction and provide a road map of the speech.
2. Extend answers to plan objections, taking special care to refute major disadvantages and to point out those that were dropped by the second negative rebuttalist. (Continue to group together negative arguments where possible.)

3. Center the speech on the three or four major arguments on which the affirmative's case depends. If these are different from those identified by the negative, explain why.
4. Review the basic affirmative analysis and call for the acceptance of the proposition.

As the second affirmative rebuttal speaker, you are in a unique position. You have an opportunity to crystallize the debate for the judge. If arguments have become muddled or confused, this is the last chance to clarify them. As the second affirmative rebuttal speaker, you need to explain what the central arguments mean in terms of the whole debate round. For example, you might demonstrate why the advantages or solvency of the affirmative harm outweigh a disadvantage the negative may be winning. Also, the second affirmative rebuttal should not misrepresent what has or has not been said in the round.

Discuss



1. What is the key strategy for the second affirmative rebuttal? What makes this speech unique?
2. How can the second affirmative rebuttal speaker narrow the debate in this last speech?