victory briefs

Introduction to Public Forum Debate

Public Forum Textbook*

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Contents

1 Preface

1.1 Letter from the Editors

Congratulations on starting your journey into the wonderful world of Public Forum debate! It is truly one of the greatest, most fun, and most rewarding activities you can do in middle and high school (and, for many who come back to coach and judge this activity, even through college). Whether you've never heard of Public Forum debate before or know a little but want to learn more, this is the textbook for you!

We are the Victory Briefs Institute and we have been helping students reach their full potential at every level of competition, including winners of the NSDA National Championship, the Tournament of Champions, the National Debate Coaches Association Champions, the National Catholic Forensic League National Championship, and countless invitationals at the local, state, and national level across both Public Forum and Lincoln-Douglas debate. We pride ourselves in having an innovative curriculum, an excellent and well-rounded staff, and a top tier camp experience at all our sessions.

We are quite proud of this new textbook and the hard work of the contributors that has gone into preparing this educational resource. This represents the work of some of the most successful Public Forum debaters and coaches of recent. Each of the authors has been an outstanding camp instructor and has a distinguished debate resume, which will be detailed below. This is advice written by those who have been consistently successful, so we know the details and concepts outlined in this book have been field-tested.

The chapters that follow cover all the core concepts and skills needed to give a comprehensive introduction to Public Forum debate. While this textbook cannot replace the invaluable instruction of a coach, it can greatly enhance any Public Forum debate curriculum for those with established debate programs and serve as a comprehensive introduction to Public Forum debate for those without established debate programs. This textbook covers the basics that apply to debaters from every background and every circuit, so that no matter who you are, there will be something in here for you. It is

packed with great information from cover to cover, so you'll be picking up new insights the second and third times you read it.

In addition to conveying the conceptual basis for different skill and knowledge sets, our goal is to give you practical, implementation-oriented steps to help you improve right away. With that in mind, we encourage you to not only read the book but also take advantage of the drills and other exercises suggested by the authors. It is one thing to know about a concept; it's another to be able to execute it. Getting the most out of this book will require you to put time and effort into practicing these skills and concepts before they use them in competition. There is no replacement for practice, especially when you're just starting out!

We hope that you find this to be a helpful resource as you start your debate journey! We are glad you have chosen to make us part of what is, hopefully, one of the best activities of your middle or high school career. Additionally, we offer a summer debate institute, called the Victory Briefs Institute, which is a fantastic way for debaters to quickly improve their debate skills. To learn more about our summer institute, our coaching service Victory Briefs squads, and our other published instructional materials including our topic briefs, please visit www.victorybriefs.com.

Enjoy and happy debating!

– The Victory Briefs Institute

1.2 Notes on Contributors

Chris Conrad debated for the Nueva School, where he amassed 5 bids to the Tournament of Champions in his senior year, won the Kandi King Round Robin, and reached finals of the James Logan Martin Luther King Invitational. Since graduating, he has primarily worked as an assistant coach for The Hill School in Pennsylvania. Chris is super excited to keep coaching at VBI this summer!

Russell Legate-Yang debated Public Forum for 4 years at Strath Haven High School in Pennsylvania. He was his debate team's captain, as well as the first on his team ever to break at a national circuit tournament. Over his career, he amassed 9 bids, qualifying to the TOC both his junior and senior year. He has made appearances in late outrounds at many national tournaments, including Yale, Bronx, GMU, Harvard, and the TOC. Russell also has won UPenn, the Bronx Round Robin, Villiger, Lexington, and Pennsbury, as well as numerous speaker awards. He finished his career ranked 3rd in the country. He currently studies Economics and Math at the University of Chicago.

Matthew Salah was the Director of Public Forum Debate at Victory Briefs. Matt Salah debated for four years at the Nueva High School in San Mateo, California. As a member of the first graduating class of his high school, Matt played a large role in founding and establishing the debate team at Nueva. Some of his most notable accomplishments include championing the Tournament of Champions (2017), the ASU Invitational (2017), and the Bronx Science Tournament (2015). Now, Matt coaches debate for Horace Mann High School, and studies political science and economics at Swarthmore college.

Krithika Shamanna was a Public Forum Curriculum Director at Victory Briefs. She is a two-time qualifier to the Texas Forensic Association State tournament in both Public Forum and Domestic Extemp. She has competed in late out-rounds of every national tournament she has attended since sophomore year including the University of Texas, Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, Bellaire, ASU, Dowling and the International Tournament of Champions. She has received invites to round robins such as the Bellaire Round Robin (reaching semifinals her sophomore year), Kandi King Round Robin, Harvard Round Robin and Berkeley Round Robin. Her senior year she championed the Grapevine Classic tournament (in addition to winning top speaker with perfect speaker points), Colleyville Heritage tournament and the Myers Park Invitational and has been ranked as high as #1 in the nation by Debate Rankings. She currently attends Rice University.

Alina Shivji is a junior at Loyola University Chicago. As a Public Forum competitor

for Colleyville Heritage HS, she was a three time qualifier to the Texas Forensics Association State Tournament and the National Speech and Debate Association Tournament where she advanced to elimination rounds numerous times. She competed nationally and reached late elimination rounds at tournaments including the University of Texas, the Grapevine Classic, the Hockaday Invitational, Apple Valley, and the Berkeley Invitational. Due to her success, Alina was invited to several Round Robins such as the Berkeley Round Robin and the Kandi King Round Robin. As an instructor, Alina advocates for a narrative-based approach to debate. Accordingly, her teams have gotten to elimination rounds at the Barkley Forum, the Berkeley Invitational, TFA State, NSDA, and TOC.

Ellie Singer is a graduate of the Blake School in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where she competed in public forum for four years. Her junior year, she was top speaker at the Glenbrooks, top speaker at NDCA, and placed in the top 14 at NSDA Nationals, autoqualifying her for the ToC and Nationals in 2017. Her senior year, she received a bid and speaker award at every regular season tournament, championed the Glenbrooks, won and was top speaker at the Ivy Street Round Robin, placed 2nd at the Tournament of Champions, and also competed in world schools debate with Team USA, semifinaling and earning a speaker award at the World Schools Debating Championships. Ellie now attends Yale University where she competes in parliamentary debate.

Lawrence Zhou is Director of Publishing at Victory Briefs, where he was formerly a Lincoln-Douglas Curriculum Director. He is also currently a League Director at the National High School Debate League of China, the largest debate league in China, promoting Public Forum Debate. In high school, he was the 2014 NSDA National Champion in Lincoln-Douglas debate and won the 2012 and 2014 Oklahoma State Tournament. In college, he was the national runner-up at the 2018 Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl competition, advanced to elimination rounds in college policy debate at the 2016 and 2018 CEDA National Tournament, and won the 2019 Beijing Language and Culture University Cup in British Parliamentary Debate. He graduated from the University of Oklahoma with degrees in Management Information Systems, Marketing, and Philosophy. He currently coaches at the Harker School, where he has coached multiple debaters to the TOC as well as coaching independent debaters to finalist and semifinalist appearances at NSDA Nationals.

2 An Overview to Public Forum Debate by Russell Legate-Yang

2.1 Defining Debate

The first job of any introductory textbook is to define its subject matter—just what exactly are we talking about? But a formal definition of "debate" is difficult to articulate. Debate, as a complex social systems, is conceptually slippery; even the most experienced debaters will disagree on how to articulate a precise definition. More generally, formal definitions can end up being less clear than an informal description of the general "sense" of the subject matter. To deal with these problems, this text first takes a stab at a formal definition of debate and then illustrates an informal notion of what is meant by this definition.

Debate:

- An *extracurricular activity* in which the primary activity is the *competitive exchange of verbal ideas;* and,
- An *institution*, i.e. a social organization with formal rules, structures of power, in- and out-groups, norms, values, enforceable patterns of behavior, etc.

What does this mean? Debate is an *extracurricular activity* in that the principal actors are students; you will debate your peers. Debate exists primarily at the high school and college levels, but middle schoolers increasingly participate in formal debate.

During the debate round, students participate in the *competitive exchange of verbal ideas*: opposing debaters articulate arguments supporting or opposing some *resolution*. The *resolution* is a *stance* on a *topic*. For instance, consider the resolution: "Resolved: The United States should end its arms sales to Saudi Arabia." The topic is American weapons sales to Saudi Arabia. The stance, the position the resolution takes, is that the United States should end these sales. In the debate round, one team supports this

resolution, by arguing that the United States should indeed end these sales; the other team opposes this resolution, by arguing that the United States should not. The team that supports the resolution is known as the *affirmative* or *pro* team, and the team that opposes the resolution is known as the *negative* or *con* team.

Crucially, debaters engage with each other *verbally* by arguing back and forth during the round; hence an *exchange of ideas* occurs. This is what differentiates debate from public speaking. While debate involves public speaking, public speaking focuses on the discrete speech act, whereas debate focuses on the back-and-forth between opposing teams. In other words, public speaking holds the medium of exchange as its subject, whereas debate holds the substance of exchange as its subject.

This exchange is essentially competitive because the judge(s) decides which team was most persuasive at the end of the round. Notably, this means that debaters do not always aim at discovering the truth. Contrary to the Socratic debate, in which participants engage to further the mutual aim of discovering the truth, the two debating teams are essentially opposed. Although some of the questions asked by the resolution are indeed very difficult to resolve, a correct answer should hypothetically exist. However, on a rough aggregate level, wins are split between the two sides: the team supporting the resolution will win roughly half of the time at a given tournament. If a correct answer to the question of the resolution exists, then what explains this discrepancy?

The answer is that debate is essentially competitive, rather than truth-seeking. Competing debate teams vary in their preparation and debating prowess. That is, even if a correct answer exists, there is no guarantee that any team will both know that answer (preparation) and present it convincingly (debating prowess). Moreover, judges evaluate the round based on the material debaters present within that round and that round alone. For instance, judges are strongly discouraged from fact-checking the materials a debating team presents in the round; fact-checking is the duty of the opposing team, not the judge.

This does not mean that debate is "anti-truth" in any way. On the contrary, debate can help illuminate an answer to a difficult question by encouraging research, reflection, and reason. Debate informs its participants about the facts and competing stances on an issue, and it also equips them with critical thinking skills to understand and interpret this information. Hence, debate cannot and does not promise to support the discovery of the truth at all cases, but it will do so in most cases.

A final remark on the competitive nature of debate is that competition shapes almost

every aspect of the event. In the economy, competition drives innovation. Similarly, as debaters compete to win rounds, they develop new strategies, arguments, and presentation styles. For instance, some debaters speak faster than conversational speeds because this practice allows them to cover make more arguments in the same amount of time.

To extend the analogy with the economy, unchecked market behavior can sometimes undermine consumer welfare—for instance when one company becomes so big that it can charge whatever price it wants. Similarly, there is a consensus in the debate community that some competitive behaviors are for the worst: while they may increase competitive success, they undermine key values of the activity like education and fairness. These competitive behaviors are regulated either formally, through official rules, or informally, through norms. For instance, in Public Forum Debate, the official rules prohibit the negative team from arguing in favor of an alternative policy that is out of the scope of the resolution: a *counterplan*. Recall the previous example of a resolution, "Resolved: The United States should end its arms sales to Saudi Arabia." The official rules of Public Forum prohibit the negative team from arguing, "The United States should not end its arms sales to Saudi Arabia because the US should end its arms sales to Turkey instead." For an example of regulating behaviors informally, the debate community almost universally believes that it is unacceptable to present brand new arguments in the last speech of the debate. Saving the best arguments for the last speech both undermines fairness, because the opponents would not be able to even try to give a response, and the educational value of the debate, because all other speeches in the debate would become virtually useless. But no formal rule explicitly says, "Debaters are not allowed to present new arguments in their last speech." Instead, the debate community—judges, debaters, and coaches alike—generally strongly discourage this behavior.

The distinction between formal and informal rules leads to the next element of the definition: debate is an *institution*. This is a fussy and notoriously ambiguous way of saying, "debate is probably not what you imagine when you hear the word 'debate.'" Debate only weakly resembles US presidential or party candidate debates, and it certainly looks nothing like an argument with your friends or family. It should already be clear from the preceding discussion that "debate," as we use the word, refers to a very specific form of debate. In debate, we interact with—by following, rejecting, and influencing—official rules, informal norms on what behaviors are acceptable in round, and trends in popular types of arguments. Indeed, although the precise features of the institution are difficult to map in detail, the fact that a debate textbook exists is evidence that a coherent system (of rules, norms, etc.) regulates debate. This remark—that debate is a human

system and not an idealized abstraction—is perhaps self-evident in many senses, but it is nonetheless important because we too often forget the human side of debate.

2.2 Defining Public Forum Debate

Public Forum Debate (PF or PFD), is a form of debate intended to be accessible for a general audience. In particular, Public Forum was created with the intention that anyone, even someone without formal debate experience, could serve as a judge. Indeed, many Public Forum debate rounds are adjudicated by people outside of the debate world: parents of students, community members, teachers, and volunteers.

Public Forum is a relatively young debate event, having been created in 2002. The event's birthday is important to understand its features. Policy Debate and Lincoln-Douglas debate are other, long-established forms of debate. Public Forum was created because many members of the debate community believed that Policy and Lincoln-Douglas had become too inaccessible for the average American. Many Policy and Lincoln-Douglas debates were—and still are—highly technical. For instance, in many rounds of Policy and Lincoln-Douglas, debaters argue about texts in philosophy and speak very quickly, sometimes too quickly for an inexperienced judge to effectively render a decision.

Even if Public Forum was created with the intention of being accessible to a general audience, how does the event maintain this intention? In particular, competitive pressure (as previously discussed) might push the event towards inaccessibility, for instance, if speaking faster grants a competitive advantage. While Public Forum has arguably become less accessible over the years because of this competitive pressure, the event, on the whole, is still more accessible than other forms of debate. This has largely been due to the event's norms and not its rules (consider the near impossibility of creating a formal rule to enforce accessibility).

In that case, what exactly are Public Forum's norms and formal structure? This is the novel question this textbook aims to answer—to provide a thorough explanation of how Public Forum works, both formally and informally.

2.3 The Features of Public Forum Debate

What does Public Forum look like? Visually, there are two teams and the judge(s). Most rounds have one judge, although during elimination rounds (e.g. finals, semifinals, quarterfinals, etc.), multiple judges often preside. When multiple judges preside over a round, the slate of judges is called a *panel*, and the panel, of course, comes in odd numbers (so a decision can be made: a 2-1 or 3-0 vote, for instance). Depending on the round and the specific debate tournament's rules (since each tournament often has its own procedural rules), spectators might be in the room: other debates who want to watch the round. Spectators almost exclusively watch elimination rounds, since during pre-elimination or preliminary rounds would-be spectators are themselves debating.

During the round, debaters follow a specific order of speeches. Denote the two opposing teams as *Team A* and *Team B*. Note that the position of each team with respect to the resolution (i.e. affirmative and negative) does not depend on the team. That is, Team A might be the affirmative team in one round, and then the negative team in another round; the speaking order of the teams can vary with tournament rules. On each team, there are two debaters, one *1st speaker,* and one *2nd speaker*. These roles are fixed during the debate round (although team members may swap their positions between rounds). Each speaker gives two speeches during the round, for a total of eight speeches in the debate round. Each speech proceeds without interruption for a designated amount of time and has its own function. Teams alternate giving speeches. Finally, there are in addition three *crossfires*: blocks of three minutes in which debaters have a chance to argue back and forth with each other directly, rather than through speeches. The back and forth nature of the crossfire is reflected in customary debate language: "you" in a speech generally refers to the judge (e.g. "you should vote for us because"), whereas "you" in a crossfire generally refers to your opponent whom you are speaking to (e.g. "so what you're saying is…"). Each speaker participates in two crossfires: the first crossfire proceeds between the two *1st speakers*, the second crossfire proceeds between the two *2nd speakers*, and final *grand crossfire* proceeds between all four speakers. The speech order proceeds as follows:

Speaker 1 Constructive (Team A, 1st speaker): 4 min.

Speaker 2 Constructive (Team B, 1st speaker): 4 min.

Speakers 1 and 2 Crossfire: 3 min.

Speaker 3 Rebuttal (Team A, 2nd speaker): 4 min.

Speaker 4 Rebuttal (Team B, 2nd speaker): 4 min.

Speakers 3 and 4 Crossfire: 3 min.

Speaker 1 Summary: 3 min.

Speaker 2 Summary: 3 min.

Grand Crossfire (all speakers): 3 min.

Speaker 3 Final Focus: 2 min.

Speaker 4 Final Focus: 2 min.

*Each team has three (3) minutes of preparation time that they can choose to use in any distribution between any speeches in the round.

The *constructives* are the first set of speeches in the round. The purpose of the constructive is to lay out the fundamental position and arguments of each team. In addition to arguments, teams often present relevant background information on the topic (since, in Public Forum, judges need not have expertise in the subject of the debate). Notably, the constructive is usually the only entirely pre-written speech in the round. That is, since all other speeches in the round will address not only your arguments but also your opponents, and since you are unsure what the opponents will argue before you enter the round, all other speeches cannot be fully pre-written. Moreover, since pre-writing a speech confers a competitive advantage over delivering a speech extemporaneously, teams very often prepare their constructive speech in advance.

The *first crossfire* occurs between the *1st speakers* on each team. Speakers alternate asking questions to the opposing speaker until three minutes has elapsed. The team which delivered the first constructive asks the first question. The first crossfire is an opportunity to set up the foundations for the debate. That is, first crossfire is a chance to ask clarifying questions about arguments and background information, establish priorities and values in the debate (for instance, to agree upon the most important topics in the round), and to poke holes in your opponent's reasoning.

The *rebuttals* are the second set of speeches in the round. The purpose of the rebuttal is generally to address the arguments your opponents made in their constructive speech. However, the purpose of the rebuttal is more fluid than that of the constructive. Teams often refute the arguments made by their opponents as well as strengthening their own arguments from their constructive. Indeed, some members of the debate community believe that the second rebuttal must respond to the arguments in the first rebuttal in

addition to responding to the opposing constructive (this process, refuting the refutations, is called *frontlining*).

The *second crossfire* occurs between the *2nd speakers* on each team. The format is identical to the first crossfire. In terms of substance, debaters generally focus on specific points to ask questions about in the second crossfire. This is because debaters must narrow the round after the rebuttals in preparation for the *summary* and *final focus*.

The *summaries* are the third set of speeches, widely considered to be the most difficult in the round. The summary, as its name implies, summarizes the content of the round thus far and articulates why one team is winning. This task is challenging because the summary is only three minutes long, while nineteen to twenty-one minutes of debate have preceded it. Hence, delivering a strong summary is a challenging task that requires a great deal of synthesis, critical thinking, and efficiency in speaking style.

The *grand crossfire* is a crossfire between all four debaters. Debaters have a last chance to argue back and forth about their positions before proceeding to the *final focus*, the last speeches in the round. The purpose of the grand crossfire is less clear than that of the other speeches. It is for this reason that the National Speech and Debate Association, which regulates Public Forum Debate, is considering removing the grand crossfire. This goes to show that debate is in fact a very dynamic institution.

The *final focuses* are the last speeches of the round. Each team must concisely and persuasively articulate why they have won the round. In particular, this means that the final focuses must compare arguments more so than any other speech, that is, the final focuses must answer the question: "Why are one team's arguments better than the other team's arguments?"

Finally, each team has two minutes of *preparation time*, also known as *prep time* or simply *prep*. Teams may choose to use this time in any distribution and at any points between any speeches (for instance, 47 seconds before the first rebuttal, 13 seconds after second crossfire, and 120 seconds before second final focus). This is time for debaters to talk (quietly) to their partners to determine strategy, responses, review their materials. Should a team request to see the evidence their opponents cite, then that team also uses prep time to review the evidence. Both teams are allowed to prepare during prep time even if only one team is using their two minutes. Hence, teams should be strategic about when they use prep time to garner a competitive advantage.

Now that we have a rough sense of debate, Public Forum Debate, and the structure of Public Forum Debate, we will proceed to examine every part of Public Forum in greater

depth and rigor.

3 Basic Argumentation by Alina Shivji

This chapter will provide a brief introduction into argumentation in debate. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the foundation of all debate is the exchange of arguments. However, arguments in debate are distinct from the arguments you might have with your parents. This chapter will cover the basics of argumentation as well as expand upon some of the concepts of argumentation that are unique to competitive debate. A solid understanding of argumentation is necessary for success.

3.1 Three Fundamental Components of an Argument

In English, the very first questions you learn to answer when writing an essay include Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How. In debate, the basic fundamentals come down to answering the same questions regardless of the level of competition you are at. In this chapter, we will identify the three basic components of any argument (claim, warrant, impact) and then discuss the role each part serves in the greater context of the round. As we delve deeper into this section, you should be able to identify each component due to the words used in the examples provided below.

A claim is the central premise of the argument. In other words, it is what you want to prove. Think of the claim as the *what* questions you learned to answer in English. The claim, the first part of any argument, sets the stage for the warrant and the impact. It begs the judge to ask questions due to its vagueness, yet specificity. For example, if the topic is whether the US government should impose tax cuts on the wealthy or not, a possible claim could be "tax cuts stimulate economic growth." Notice how the previous statement is not as broad as "tax cuts help the economy." It is more specific than that. It treads the line between too vague and too focused forcing the judge to ask *"how or why do tax cuts stimulate economic growth."*

The how or why question above is the question a warrant seeks to answer. Simply put, a warrant is a reason why the claim is true. The primary way to explain this component of

an argument is to answer *"how or why x is true."* In these scenarios, x is always the claim. A warrant is the most important part of the argument because, without it, the claim is merely a statement of opinion. In the absence of a warrant, the argument remains unclear and does not advance forward. Instead, it remains at a standstill. Using the example of tax cuts, a potential warrant to support the claim above (tax cuts stimulate economic growth) can be "tax cuts stimulate economic growth due to an increase in investor confidence." The purpose of the warrant in this instance specifies why economic growth will increase, explains it, and justifies it.

Sometimes multiple warrants are needed to prove a claim because a single warrant will need more of an explanation. Each sentence in the argument should provide momentum forward. When constructing the argument, if you believe your reasoning is too broad then you should continue to develop the warrant further. If we were to develop the argument above even more, we could say "due to tax cuts, companies retain more of their revenue making investors more comfortable with making new investments." This sentence elaborates on why investor confidence increases and explains the warrant before it. Most of the time you will have to dive deeper into the warrant to guarantee your judge understands the entire argument. Doing so will make the argument much more cohesive.

The final component of the argument is the impact. The impact is an explanation of why the argument matters to the audience (judge, opponents, etc.). In other words, it begs the *so what* question? Why should the judge care about the issue discussed in your argument?

The impact should always build on the warrant and return to the central premise of the argument, the claim. It should display the real world effects of an argument including benefits and harms of a certain policy or action. For instance, *"increasing investor confidence will likely boost investment in research and development, a key factor in producing growth opportunities and new jobs. The new jobs allow for an increase"* The example does not just touch on investor confidence good or bad. Instead, it incorporates a warrant within the impact to explain why the increase in investment will boost economic growth. Similarly, when you are writing arguments, you should aim to state the impact (what will the warrant lead to), the reasoning for the impact (why it will result in that scenario), and why the judge should care about the impact. Using these three parts, let's review the example above:

State the impact: economic growth

The reasoning for the impact: boosts research and development investment

Why the judge should care: increases jobs and dulls the impact of poverty for millions

The portion explaining why the judge should care discusses the terminal impact or last impact. On the impact level, there are only two routes you can take to terminalize the impact (the process of getting to the last impact). Either you will look at life (living or dying) or quality of life (economic or social status). It is really your decision on how far you want to go. When writing the "terminal impact" keep in mind that it will always be largest in scope and magnitude. In other words, it will affect the most amount of people.

Before ending this section, it is necessary for you to know how to identify the claim, the warrant, and the impact in a speech. Below you will find a list of words and phrases that you should look out for.

Claim:	Warrant:	Impact:
• *Should*	• *This is true because*	• *Reason*
• *Ought*	• *Due to*	• *Matters*
• *Will*	• *Cause*	• *Important*
• *Is*	• *However*	• *Significant*
	• *Thus*	• *Consequence*
	• *This is why*	

3.2 Types of Advanced Arguments

Now that you have a basic understanding of the different parts of an argument, this next section is aimed at helping you learn the different types of arguments you can make to start putting that knowledge to the test. As we touch on each, we'll take some time to specifically connect them to what you just learned about claims, warrants, and impacts to put these in context for how you'd use them in a debate strategically. For the purposes

of this section, we'll use the following example topic to frame the discussion- Resolved: *The United States federal government should enforce antitrust regulations on technology giants*.

When you make an argument for why either you are correct about the topic, or why your opponent is wrong, an important precursor to the "debate" is grasping why the position being discussed is the uniquely affected by the current state of the world. If both sides in a debate are affected in the same way by an argument, you don't gain any sort of advantage by making the point in round. This condition for arguments is called ***uniqueness***.

Typically, discussions around uniqueness relate to the "warrant" of the argument they're connected to. For example, if one were supporting our example topic with the argument that technology giants kill economic competition in the industries they inhabit, a uniqueness claim against this could call into question whether antitrust regulations would improve competition in those industries. If a debater is explaining their argument should take precedence because certain conditions about the world hold true, they also need to prove that those conditions are only resolved/supported in the world that they defend.

After you've established that there is some special circumstance in the world related to the resolution, a connection needs to be drawn between that situation and the side of the topic being argued for/against. These ties to the position you defend is called a ***link***, and it acts as a sort of trigger to indicate the topic causes/prevents something that leads to an "impact."

Links are typically the precursor to the "impact" of an argument, and they tend to encapsulate a "claim" and "warrant." For example, if one were arguing that tech start-ups and entrepreneurs are getting discouraged because of the difficulty of breaking into industries dominated by tech giants, a link argument could say that enforcement of antitrust regulations would cause big companies to downsize a little bit. Once a debater has established a link, there's an additional linking argument called an ***internal link*** that needs to be made to finally tie that initial connecting argument to the impact they are presenting (e.g. companies downsizing would create enough space in the market to motivate Venture Capital firms to inject more money into the tech space, which supports innovation and growth). The key thing to understand about links is that if a debater is saying something is happening in the world that's going to produce some sort of effect, they need to explain the logical steps needed to get from their claim to the end result.

When responding to link arguments, there are a couple of different routes that you can

take. The first of these, which is fairly simple, is called a ***delink***. These arguments are typically just meant to deny the initial premise that your argument would trigger some sort of impact, calling into question the "warrant." For example, if someone were arguing that enforcing antitrust regulations would incentivize companies to leave the US and establish a base of operations elsewhere, this could be delinked by arguing that companies like Google have already chosen to work around regulations instead of leaving the country. This effectively removes the connection to any sort of negative impact the other team may be trying to draw out of large tech giants leaving and taking their tax dollars with them.

The other response to link arguments is called a ***link turn***. This is a type of argument that can be used to flip an argument made by your opponent against them, specifically by arguing that the connecting argument that they've made produces the opposite impact of what they've presented. For example, in response to the argument that not enforcing antitrust laws would stifle competition in technology, a link turn could be made to say that the current state of affairs encourages more companies to throw their hat into the ring and compete (i.e. Disney has entered the streaming space to compete against Netflix). This actually makes the argument that competition is important, which was proposed by the other team, a reason to vote for you. These types of arguments are preferred when they can be made over simple delinks, as they help to give the judge a reason to vote for you (***offense***), instead of just a reason to not vote for the other team (***defense***).

3.3 Offense and Defense

In sports, there are players on a team whose purpose is to score points for their team. These players are focused on offense. There are also players that try to prevent other teams from scoring. These players are focused on defense.

Arguments function the same way. There are either "offensive" or "defensive" arguments. Offensive arguments are essential to you winning the round just like scoring points in basketball is key to a team winning. In debate, offensive arguments are turns, impacts, or reasons to vote for you.

In contrast, defense prevents the opposing team from winning. Similarly, defensive arguments are reasons to not vote for your opponent. For example, mitigating your opponent's impact is not a reason to vote for you, but a reason to NOT vote for your

opponent.

At the end of the round, the judge can only vote for offensive arguments made and extended throughout the debate. Even though this is true, you should not solely focus on offensive or defensive argument. A combination of the two gives you a stronger position because you are pointing out logical flaws in the link and the general argument. When you are making these kinds of arguments, it is necessary to remember quality over quantity of arguments. Instead of reading 4 turns and 10 delinks, try reading 2 turns and 3 delinks that are well warranted. The 14 responses sound like a lot, but in actuality, they are short and underdeveloped. Due to this, relying on a few strong responses is usually a better alternative.

3.4 Flowing

Now you know the kinds of argument and the functions of them in debate. Where do we go from here? We will put all the parts together and get you prepared to deliver a speech. In this section, we will cover an essential skill called flowing. In school, most students take notes to retain the material you learn in class. Similarly, in a debate round the process of note taking is called flowing. It helps you keep track of everything that goes on in the round. You should flow every single speech in the debate with the exception of crossfire.

You do not have to flow crossfire, but sometimes it can be useful. During crossfire, clarifications and strategic questions are made. So, in advanced rounds, flowing crossfire can be very useful especially since teams will hint at the arguments they'll make in a following speech. But, the decision to flow crossfire is really up to you.

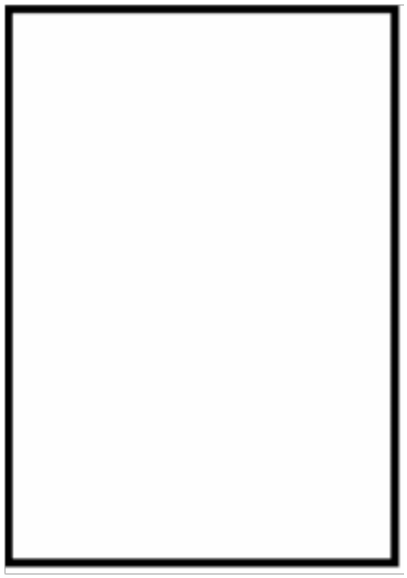
So what makes flowing different than typical note taking? A lot. But, it is simple and just like everything else talked about above, practice is critical.

Anyway, unlike your notes in class, flowing does not involve writing out full sentences. You need to abbreviate as much as possible because you do not have access to a powerpoint or anything as such to keep up. You are listening to your opponent's speeches in that moment and need to understand what they are saying. Many debaters worry that they won't understand their abbreviations, but once you begin practicing you'll find yourself turning to the same abbreviations over and over again. If not, there is a list at the end of this section to make the process easier.

Moreover, when taking class notes you take up all of the lateral room and then move downward In PF debate, you have eight speeches to flow. Due to the number of speeches you need to flow, you should use two sheets of paper (*minimum size: 8.5 by 11.0 inches)*. In order to stay organized and see the way arguments interact with one another, you should write the major points of each speech down the margin of the page. When you are done, it should look like there are 4 columns on a sheet, one for each speech. In the beginning, to make the process easier, try drawing four visible lines on each piece of paper. It will create a very clear visual for everything that goes on in the debate, so you are able to effectively follow along.

Although flowing is very different than typical note-taking methods, there is one similarity. The paper should be set up vertically.

You want to set the papers vertically: it provides more room, so you can leave space between each individual idea.



Horizontal Flow

^This is incorrect because the paper is set up horizontally. A debate round encompasses a lot of information. Flowing horizontally limits the number of details you can write on one side. Plus, it prevents you from seeing things holistically.

Before you flow the constructive speech in the first column (starting with the left side), label each side (pro/aff or con/neg) on each sheet. It can be in the upper right-hand corner or right above the constructive, it doesn't matter as long as you create a physical note of it.

If you followed each guideline correctly, you should end up with something similar to this:

Don't worry about the points and args in the example of above yet. Instead, focus on the organization of the flow itself. Each argument is spaced out because of the vertical set up. It provides more room so you can separate ideas out accordingly. There are also two colors used. You should mirror this because it helps differentiate the sides, making argument interaction (a fundamental concept in debate) very easy. Lastly, notice how each side is labeled. It prevents you from getting confused as the debate progresses.

Since your flow is organized, we can focus on the actual process of flowing. Remember the three parts of an argument: claim, warrant, impact. When you flow each speech, you want to ensure that you get all three parts.

The claim often takes the form of a tagline or a three to seven-word summary of the argument. Examples of this include *"contention one: stimulating economic growth" or "subpoint a: increase in jobs"* (see what these terms mean in chapter 3). Writing the tagline can help you understand the crux of the argument.

The warrant will often give you the uniqueness or nuance of the argument. As discussed above it is identifiable with words such as *"because"* and *"due to."* If you do not flow the warrant, you are only responding to the surface level assertion, and you leave a major flaw in your refutation. In order to truly engage with the argument, it is vital to write down any potential warrants or reasons why the claim is true.

Lastly, the impact is critical to outweighing and telling the judge why your argument is better. So, look out for terms like "this is important because" or "as a result."

Excluding these three fundamentals, you want to list important pieces of evidence. The evidence is significant if it offers a quantification or additional reasoning. For example, saying "economic growth increases" does not offer any important detail or contribution

to the flow. However, saying "investor confidence increases economic growth by 5%" suddenly changes the value associated with the argument. As a result, details like these are essential to write down or flow.

Best Practices

- Pull up recordings of debate rounds and flow them at home in the format displayed above.
- Try a flowing a song with a faster beat that you don't know. So, you get used to writing at a fast pace.
- If you are not in elimination rounds, then go flow them and watch ADVANCED ROUNDS
- Flow in shorthand, trying to flow complete words is difficult. A list of abbreviations that can be used is provided below. Use whatever works for you personally. A good tip is to flow words without vowels, e.g. "building" becomes "bldg"

Abbreviation List

- On balance: OB
- Framework: Fw
  - Cost Benefit Analysis: CBA
  - Utilitarianism: Util, U
  - Deontology: Deont, D
- Observations: O1, Ob1
- Contention 1: C1, 1), C1A (whole argument) and C1B (evidence)
- Subpoints: C1A, C1B
- Warrant: W1 or W
- Link: L or L1
- Impacts: I, IPX, IX, IX1
- Solvency: sol, (S)
- Crossfire: cx, cf
- Turn: <–, T
- Extensions: ext, –>
- Link Turn: LT1, L (back arrow)
- Summary: Sum, S1 or S2
- Grand Crossfire: Gcx, Gcf
- Final focus: FF1, FF2, FF, AFFF, NFF
- Voters: V1, V2
- Reverse Voting Issues: RVI

General

- Squo: rn, squo, SQ
- Economics: econ, eco, ec
- Politics: pol, pc, poltx, ptx

- Social: soc
- Capital: cap, C
- Counterplan: CP, (CP)
- Alternative: alt
- Increase or Decrease: arrow up and down
- Money: $
- No: x

Sources

- Christian Science Monitor: CSM
- Council on Foreign Relations: CFR

4 Constructives by Krithika Shamanna

This chapter will provide a brief introduction to case writing. A team's case is presented in the very first speech in the round -- the constructive. The purpose of a case is to concisely present an argument or set of arguments that affirm or negate the resolution to the judge and opposing team. Starting from the beginning and writing a case can seem somewhat overwhelming -- but in reality, it is not too much different than any persuasive essay you have written before. Just like a persuasive essay, you need an argument or thesis, reasons for why the argument is true and the implications of it. So where do you start when writing a case? Research!

4.1 Research

To start writing a case, the first step is research. While Google is a great starting point to read news articles related to the topic, you will likely find that databases with academic studies and research projects contain some of the stronger pieces of evidence on the topic. Research is not easy and is extremely time-consuming. However, there are some tricks to make the process easier! General research is helpful at first, but you may quickly realize that after a while most articles have a lot of the same information. At this point, targeted research can be useful. Some quick tips for google searches include:

1) Use quotation marks to search for specific phrases or words

> I.e. If I am researching GMOs, I may put the word "superweed" in quotations to find specific articles related to the impact GM crops have on weeds.

2) Use the "%" symbol in quotes to find great impacts!

3) If the search is pulling up a phrase that is irrelevant to what you are looking for, use the - symbol to filter those articles out

4) If you come across a super long PDF, make sure it is relevant to the subject you are

researching! Start by reading the abstract and conclusion to make sure you are not wasting your time.

Similar to writing a research paper, it is important to find reputable sources to use as evidence i.e. blogs and biased websites are usually not acceptable. Some reputable websites that provide up to date current information include The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and The Economist. On the other hand, if you are looking for academic articles to provide you with in-depth knowledge of the subject, databases such as Jstor or even Google Scholar are great places to look (especially if you are on the search for empirical studies).

While researching, you may come across various articles that you can piece together to make a broader argument on the topic. Once you reach this point, you are at a great starting point to write your case! The next step is to write an outline. The argument you wish to make is your claim and acts similar to a thesis for the purposes of your case. An outline doesn't have to be extremely detailed, but can simply act as a starting point.

Here is an example outline:

"Resolved: Deployment of anti-missile systems is in South Korea's best interest."

Con Case

Contention 1: Angering North Korea

Currently, North Korea is not angry. (This is called uniqueness and is explained later)

Claim: However, North Korea would be angered by the deployment of anti-missile

defense systems in South Korea.

Warrant: North Korea views anti-missile defense systems as an act of aggression.

> Impact: If North Korea is angered, it is less likely to engage in diplomatic negotiations. Without diplomacy, conflict will continue or be exacerbated.

Once you have come up with an outline, the next step is to start filling it in with information. While researching, you may have come across articles with quotes you could use to prove your argument. The easiest way to keep track of such evidence is to cut a card. The following section will elaborate on this notion.

4.2 Cards

In debate rounds, you often hear the word "card" thrown around a lot. A card refers to a section or portion of evidence cut from an article that is used as evidence in a case. The phrase originates from the past, before computers were a norm in the debate world when debaters would hand write their sources on an index card.

Here is an example:

Climate change is an existential risk – immediate action is required to avert global catastrophe

Hollingsworth 19, Julia [a Digital News Producer based in Hong Kong, who joined CNN in 2019. She writes about the Asia-Pacific region], "Global warming could devastate civilization by 2050: report", 4 June 2019, CNN, https://www.cnn.com/2019/06/04/health/climate-change-existential-threat-report-intl/index.html, accessed 13 June 2019

Twenty days of lethal heat per year. Collapsed ecosystems. And more than 1 billion people displaced. Those are all probable scenarios that could devastate societies by 2050 if swift and dramatic action isn't taken to curb climate change, according to a think tank report backed by a former Australian military chief. **The paper, by the Melbourne-based Breakthrough National Center for Climate Restoration, is** not a scientific study, but **an attempt to model future scenarios based on existing research. It paints a bleak future in which more than a billion people are displaced, food production drops off and some of the world's most populous cities are left partially abandoned.** Its foreword is written by Chris Barrie, a retired admiral and former head of the Australian Defense Force, who said that "**after nuclear war, human-induced global warming is the greatest threat to human life on the planet." "A doomsday future is not inevitable," he notes. "But without immediate drastic action our prospects are poor."** Andrew **King, a climate science lecturer at the University of Melbourne** who was not involved in the report, **said its findings were "plausible**," although he did not expect human civilization to end in 2050. "**Without a doubt (climate change) is a huge threat to human civilization," he said.** "It's the details that we need to pin down."

A case is made up of several such cards intermixed with analysis. As you can see, a card is essentially a portion of an article copy and pasted, with key phrases or sentences highlighted/underlined. This is similar to using a quotation - but rather than only copy and pasting the quote, the quote is visible among the broader context of the article. In fact, one of the most important reasons to cut a card is to make clear the context in which a quote appears. Hence, it is crucial that when cutting a card you copy and paste the entire paragraph in which the quote appears (and in many cases the paragraph before and after). During a debate round, teams directly read the highlighted/underlined portion of the cards in their case.

So what are the parts of a card? A card includes a "tagline" which is a 1-2 sentence introduction or brief explanation of the part of the article being used. In addition, the card includes a full citation of the article or study from which the card is cut (usually

some form of MLA citation with the addition of author qualifications). There are two main purposes for cutting a card: to ensure the evidence is used accurately and to ease the exchange of evidence during a round. If a team were to directly read from a card, there is a lower chance that they are misconstruing the information in the source. Additionally, if any team were to ask to see the evidence in the round, they do not have to sort through a lengthy PDF or article but instead, are provided with the important section of the article the quotation is from.

Cards are usually read in the following order: the tagline, the author's last name, and qualifications, followed by the underlined or highlighted portion of the card. To ease the process of card cutting, there are a few downloadable software additions you can use! Verbatim is an add-on for Microsoft Word (the Google drive counterpart is Debate Template and is available as an add-on) that has features such as condense and emphasis to simplify the process. Cite Creator is a Chrome add-on (available in the Chrome store) that provides you with a citation ready to use for a debate round.

4.3 Parts of a Case

A case usually consists of anywhere between 1 to 3 contentions. A "contention" is a fully formulated argument for why the judge should either affirm or negate the resolution. A contention, like any argument, consists of uniqueness, a claim, warrant, and an impact. However, to make the case stronger, you can and should modify the number and type of each individual part. For example, many of the strongest cases have multiple well-developed warrants. A good case consists of a balance between evidence and analysis.

Example Case (The full citations are taken out of this version to make it more readable):

Klein DJ Pro Case November 2016

We *affirm* **Resolved: On balance, the benefits of the Internet of Things outweigh the harms of decreased personal privacy.**

Contention 1: Clearing the skies

> Cullinen of the CWR (2013) explains, What makes the potential of the M2M technology set so large, but also so compelling, is [Due to the IoT's] its **wide range of applications** across a variety of sectors. One of the most vexing challenges faced by attempts to tackle climate change is the fact that nearly every modern human activity results in some level of emissions. M2M [it]

> **can lessen the CO2 generated by** things as diverse as widespread **deforestation, automobile exhaust, the production of** basic primary **materials, and** [electricity] the **generation** of the electricity that powers our lives.
>
> Ultimately, he concludes that the IoT Luckily, we now possess mature technologies that can accomplish this goal, and even surpass it. By the end of the decade, M2M and related ICT technologies **could reduce** [total global greenhouse gas] GHG **emissions by** 9.1 Gt CO2 e annually, a figure equal to **18.6 percent** of the world's total 49 Gt CO2 e emitted in 2011—approximate to the total emissions of the United States and India in 2010, the second and third most carbon-intensive countries in the world (EDGAR 2013).

Emissions reduction from the Internet of Things is important for two reasons:

First, mitigating air pollution

> McSweeney of the Carbon Brief writes that reduced emissions have the potential to They then simulate the air pollution and health benefits of these policies. Their results suggest the clean energy policy would **prevent** around **175,000 premature deaths from air pollution by 2030, and** around **22,000 deaths per year after that** [in the United States alone]**.**

Second, for reducing refugee flows

> The UNHCR explains, [Due to increased carbon emissions and severity of natural disasters] **In 2015, people are twice as likely to be displaced by a disaster than they were in the 1970s**.
>
> In fact, the UNRA' 15 writes that, Considering the impact of sudden-onset, weather-related hazards alone, **a global average of** at least **22.5 million people have been displaced each year from 2008 to 2014**, and disaster displacement since the 1970s is on the rise (IDMC 2015). Since 2008, close to 175 million people who live in developing countries have been displaced **by disasters**, accounting for 95 per cent of the global total (IDMC 2015).

These crises will only worsen if we don't mitigate emissions.

Contention 2: To the rescue

> The IoT can mitigate the effects of natural disasters. Ullrich of GIZ '15 writes, **Due to** high population density, **poor evacuation infrastructure** and exposure to severe weather events, developing countries are disproportionately

exposed to the risks of natural disasters, and often have limited means to mitigate their effects. As a consequence, according to a World Bank study, more than **95 per cent of all deaths caused by disasters occur in developing countries.** [However,] **IoT technologies** can't stop disasters from happening, but **can be** very **useful for** disaster preparedness, such as prediction and **early warning systems.** In this way IoT [which] **can compensate for** a **poor infrastructure** that puts developing and emerging countries in a particularly vulnerable position**.**

Crucially, The International Red Cross (2008) explains, At the shortest timescales, a **warning**[s] of an impending storm can **help communities** prepare and **take** immediate **actions such as evacuation to reduce the loss of life.**

The World Bank finds that **Investing in** hydromet and **early warning systems** [in developing countries] **can save an average of 23,000 lives annually** and provide between US$3 billion and US$30 billion per year in economic benefits**.**

For example, the UNDP found that in India, a 1999 cyclone resulted in 10,000 deaths. After an early warning system was implemented, only 21 died in a similar cyclone in 2014.

Contention 3: Resource scarcity

The IoT reduces resource scarcity in two ways.

First, through precision agriculture

Manyika of McKinsey (Global Institute) finds In farming, we estimate **that IoT techniques—using sensor data** to guide a seed-planting machine to the optimum depth based on soil conditions at a specific place in the field, for example—**can increase** [agricultural] **yields by** up to **25 percent.**

Second, by eliminating water waste

Facility Executive explains, With field proven, wireless technology and cloud-based analytics, **smart irrigation** replaces existing irrigation controllers (which are just simple timers), with cloud enabled smart irrigation controllers that [which] **appl**[ies]y **water based on plant need and weather.** Moreover, with flow sensors and real-time alerts, property managers and

> landscape contractors can be alerted the second something goes awry, which if your site has any significant landscape at all, you know this can happen quite frequently.With traditional irrigation controllers wasting anywhere from 25% to 75% of a site's water use, smart irrigation controllers — which **can eliminate** up to **95% of water waste** — are now being specified for new construction by a wide range of *Fortune* 1,000 corporations and leading municipalities across the country.
>
> This is important since Global Agriculture notes **70% of** "blue water" [freshwater] **withdrawals** from watercourses and groundwater **are for** agricultural [irrigational] **usage.**
>
> Water preservation is critical, as The IFPRI estimates **that crop losses due to water scarcity could be as high as 350 million metric tons per year** [by 2025], slightly **more than the entire** crop **yield of the U.S**.[21]

However the IOT will lead to a net increase in yields. This is beneficial for three reasons.

First, it saves lives

> Poverty.com explains that About **21,000 people die every day of** hunger or **hunger**-related causes, **according to the United Nations.**
>
> Which is only set to worsen, as Davies of Texas A&M '14 explains the [quoted by Phillips, Kathleen "Food Shortages Could be the most Critical World Issue by MidCentury" (2014) Texas A&M Agrilife. Web. 4 Oct. 2016] He said the **world population will increase 30 percent** to 9 billion people **by mid-century.** That would call for [requiring] **a 70 percent increase in food to meet demand.**

Second, it reduces poverty

> Irz of the University of Reading finds, Regardless of differences in data and formulation, the results show **that a 1% increase in yields leads to a reduction in the percentage of people living on less than $1 per day of** between 0.6% and **1.2%.** This is a very tangible result, since the R&D cost of generating a 1% yield gain can be calculated.

Third, it mitigates terrorism

> Shrivastava of Bucknell University posits, **The ecology of terrorism is the scarcity of natural resources** and the unequal distribution and control of

> resources **that cause**[s] **poverty and** living condition **discontent.** This discontent spills over into violence, which, in turn, causes the displacement of more people. The displaced population then becomes the source of demand for nationhood. Religious and ethnic affiliations shape the desire to seek shelter in ethnically defined communities. The U.S. government has declared Cuba, Iran, Libya, Syria, North Korea, and the Sudan sponsors of international terrorist activities. These states don't lack ecological resources. But their resources are under centralized control and concentrated in the hands of a few. The autocratic control of land, oil, minerals, and critical natural resources deprives people of livelihoods and fosters social and political unrest and, eventually, violence. Vicious and long-lasting form of terrorism has occurred in failed nation states ** **such as [For example, in]** Somalia, Afghanistan, and Palestin**[e]ian Territories. All exhibit a common pattern. The movement of population into concentrated areas causes** an** extreme **overload on** ecological **resources**. Natural resources are depleted, **overwhelm**[s]ing **the ability of the land to support** [people] them**, creating poverty, and giving rise to** conditions for **terrorism.**

Life shouldn't be a privilege. Vote Pro.

Every case has some characteristics in common. Teams normally start their case by reading the resolution and indicating whether they are affirming or negating in the round. Depending on the topic, sometimes teams opt to include a short introductory explanation of specific terms or necessary context. If you do opt to include an introduction, make sure it has a specific strategic purpose - as otherwise, you are wasting time that could instead be spent on bettering your contentions. There are three types of introductions that are common in PF: definitions, historical context, and frameworks. With regards to definitions, defining every word is extremely unnecessary (many teams have the tendency to over-define). However, if a certain definition of a word has the ability to greatly influence the progression of the round, it can be useful to include it. You will likely rarely have to define words as the resolutions are normally written in a clear manner. Similarly, historical context is typically unusual in PF as most resolutions focus on current events. Nonetheless, such context can be useful in setting up the rest of your case by educating the judge about past precedent. For example, a previous topic in which context was common was the resolution "Resolved: Deployment of anti-missile systems is in South Korea's best interest." Teams opted to include a brief history of the overall stability in North Korea before beginning their case, to provide evidence regarding the

probability of scenarios that may take place if anti-missile systems were deployed. The last type of introduction -- a framework -- is perhaps the most common. The purpose of a framework is exactly what is sounds like -- to frame the round. This means that teams have the opportunity to directly tell their judges what they should prioritize or pay attention to during the course of the round. For example, a common framework you may hear is that the judge should vote for the team that best reduces poverty in the round. This framework applies to topics in which the resolution is some sort of policy change that has the potential to impact poverty i.e. the pro may claim that affirming reduces poverty while the con side will claim that voting pro increases poverty (or that the con side has lower poverty rates). Debate rounds often are very difficult to evaluate -- especially when teams have multiple warrants and impacts. In such a case, a framework can be very helpful to a judge as it helps them narrow down the round to one specific idea. However, a framework is fairly useless if it is only in your case and not talked about at all in the latter part of the round. Hence, if you choose to include a framework, make sure you and your partner plan to utilize it to help strengthen the narrative you present to the judge throughout the course of the full 45 minutes.

The next important characteristic of a case is uniqueness. To illustrate the importance of uniqueness, consider these two arguments: 1) We should increase funding for public schools because it improves the education of its students by providing more resources such as textbooks. 2) Currently, our schools are underfunded and the students have been doing poorly on standardized tests. We should increase funding for public schools because it improves the education of its students by providing more resources such as textbooks. Why is the second version of this argument stronger? The proposal -- to increase funding for public schools -- is introduced without any context. How much funding are public schools getting now? Do public schools even need funding? Without explaining the status quo, the proposal to enact a change is much weaker. Thus, uniqueness is essentially an explanation of the current situation to provide context to the judge about why they should vote either pro or con. For example, in the second contention of the case, there is an explanation (highlighted in yellow) that currently, warning systems are helping communities to evacuate in the case of a disaster. Without this crucial information, the judge would not be able to understand the impact of IOT technology; the technology does not just work in theory but is working right now.

The rest of the contention is quite simple and follows the same argument structure that was introduced to you before -- claim, warrant, impact (highlighted in orange, pink and green respectively). It is important to remember when writing a contention that

it cannot simply be a list of cards copy and pasted together. In English class, if you were to submit an essay that was made up of only quotes, your teacher would likely be very confused. Similarly, if you were to read a case that was only cards, your judge is unlikely to understand your argument. There must be a clear order and organization connecting the pieces of evidence, with your own analysis in between. Now that you know how to write a case, we can ask: what makes a great case?

4.4 Great Casing

Here are some identifiable features of a great case:

1. Multiple warrants proving why the claim is true

Let's say I am arguing that the government should increase its funding of public schools. I could stick to one reason that it should do this i.e. the funds could be used to buy more textbooks which will then improve the education of the students of these schools. Or I could add an additional reason! The government should increase funding of public schools because the funds could be used to buy more textbooks which will then improve the education of the students and the funding would allow teachers to be paid higher salaries leading to fewer teachers absenteeism.

2. Well developed impact scenario(s) with evidence that is comparative

The best impact evidence isolates for something specific. For example, let's say you are debating a topic about the benefits or harms of GMOs. A good piece of impact evidence will compare a situation with GM crops to one without i.e. it will look solely at the benefits/harms of specifically those crops and not all crops in general.

3. Great evidence!

Great cases have quality over quantity. You do not need 4 contentions to have a great case; sometimes one contention is more than enough! Focus more on the analysis and explanation of the evidence you use rather than the amount. There are many situations where you may come across three amazing studies that all essentially say the same thing. Do not use all three! Pick whichever you think is the strongest and work on making your explanation of it very clear.

4.5 Evidence Ethics and Other Evidence Related Debates

On the national circuit especially, you will likely hear the phrase "evidence ethics" thrown around frequently. Evidence ethics refers to the practice of accurately portraying the sources you use in the round. This means that in case, it must be very clear what parts of your argument are directly from an article or study and what happens to be your own analysis. Violations of evidence ethics include any form of mis-cutting the card i.e. leaving out key information from the source that may change the meaning or intent of the author, altering the information in the source in any way and using incorrect methods to cite the evidence. Deleting portions of the source that disagrees with you fits under this category as well. In addition, paraphrasing the source in a manner that is in actuality not backed up by the source itself is considered unethical.

Thus, the debate around evidence ethics can be boiled down to two main issues: paraphrasing in case and disclosing cases before round. The easiest way to avoid evidence ethics issues is to, of course, read direct quotations from a properly cut card. However, because you only have four minutes for the constructive, teams often resort to paraphrasing lengthy studies to present their evidence in a concise manner. Paraphrasing in case can be very tricky; often unintentionally, teams will represent their sources as stronger than they actually are when paraphrasing. Hence, judges on the national circuit often tend to be more lenient with paraphrasing in later speeches but prefer direct citations in case. In general, you cannot go wrong with reading direct quotations! If you do need to paraphrase, ensure that you are indeed staying true to what the author is claiming (do not be afraid to consult with other fellow debaters on this).

In terms of disclosing cases, teams on the national circuit may ask you to share your cases with them before round. There are many arguments for and against disclosure – this section will focus on the more common ones. While you certainly have no obligation to disclose, the purpose of disclosing cases (or sharing them with the other team before round) is to establish better evidence ethics in round. In round it can be hard to identify evidence ethics violations due to the time constraint. Unless you call for a card, it could be difficult to determine whether something is mis-cut or paraphrased - and even if you do, two minutes may be too short to determine the accuracy of a team's presentation of evidence. Thus, teams often get away with bad evidence ethics without any ramifications! Given debate is meant to be an educational activity, unethical behavior undermines the purpose of the activity. Disclosing cases before the round creates an accountability mechanism that holds each team to accurately represent the informa-

tion they provide. However, a primary argument against disclosure is that it puts small schools at a disadvantage. If a small school with only a few teams were to share their case ahead of time, large teams with coaches ostensibly have the time and resources to prepare pre-written rebuttal speeches (known as "prep-outs") to the case. Smaller schools lack the same advantages. Currently, disclosure is not required, but the debate circuit is constantly changing and evolving. If asked to disclose a case, be prepared to either share it with other teams or have a compelling reason(s) as to why you should not have to.

4.6 Drills

To make sure it is readable and ready for round!

It is easy as a debater when writing cases to forget about your audience in the round. The case may be strategically smart and intuitive to both you and the opposing team who has conducted substantial research on the topic. However, it may be missing instrumental analysis that clears things up for the judge. It is always important to remember that in Public Forum your judge could be anyone – it could be an experienced former TOC-qualified debater who now coaches, or it could be a parent of a team in the pool. Your case must be easily understandable and clear to all types of judges.

A super easy drill to ensure your case is ready for round is to practice reading it to other people. If you are worried it is too complex, practice reading the case to a family member. Ask them to point out any areas that were not as clear or parts they simply may not have understood. This will help you identify if your case is missing important context or needs additional explanation. Debaters often have a tendency to fill their case with as many cards as they can possibly fit in the four-minute speech. While having credible sources to back up your claims is important, you may quickly notice that people – experienced debaters or not – have a much easier time understanding your arguments when it consists of a good balance of both analysis as well as carded information. Additionally, practice reading your case to another debater, asking them to flow it. The purpose of this drill is to ensure that even experienced judges can easily follow your case. Your arguments may be the stronger ones in the round, but you are at a disadvantage if your judge cannot flow your case easily! You may notice simple fixes here that make your case easier for the judge to flow; for example, it is easier to flow author name, date then content of the card. You will also likely notice that standardizing formatting

and slowing down for tag lines are good practices!

To find loopholes in the case

Once you feel as if your case is round ready, the next step is to identify flaws in the line of argumentation or strategies to make the case even stronger. An easy way to do this is to read your case to your partner or another debater and have them do two things. First, ask them to question you (such as in crossfire) about the case. Crossfire questions can be helpful in not only identifying inconsistencies but also in helping you know your case better. Second, ask the debater you are working with to give a mini-rebuttal against your case. This will help you to both prepare for responses teams will make against your case and identify any missing links in your line of argumentation. Often times teams forget to terminalize the impact – drills like these can be helpful in finding such issues!

5 Crossfire by Alina Shivji

Often, when people hear the term "debate", they imagine two or more people yelling at each other in an attempt to prove their opponents wrong. In other words, they imagine participants engaging with each other's arguments, also known as clash. This process begins with an exchange of questions and answers. In Public Forum, this exchange is known as crossfire. This chapter is broken into five sections. The first section will examine the structure of crossfire and then delve into the purpose of each crossfire. The second section emphasizes the importance of crossfire and what you should do to ensure your judge's ballot. The third section covers an in-depth guide on how to construct a good question. The fourth section focuses on how to construct an answer. The last section features a Q & A where we answer the major challenges teams deal with in crossfire and how to overcome them. While the first four sections are crucial to understanding the nature of crossfire, the last section is vital because it paints a realistic picture of what teams will undergo in round and accordingly, it hints at good practices.

5.1 Structure

Public Forum Debate has three crossfire periods. The first crossfire involves the first speakers whereas the second crossfire involves the second speakers from each team. The third crossfire, known as "grand crossfire," involves all four participants. The team that speaks first has the right to ask the first question in every crossfire. After the first question is answered, either team can ask questions or provide answers until the crossfire period is over. While the structure of crossfire is the same, the purposes of each differ drastically.

The first crossfire occurs right before the rebuttal speeches. As a result, this crossfire is intended to set up the rest of the round, particularly the rebuttal because, without a fundamental understanding of each other's cases, the rebuttal speeches are rendered

ineffective. Consequently, during the first crossfire, it is essential that both teams first understand each other's cases. As discussed in Chapter 2, the crux of each argument comes down to its warrant or reasoning behind the claim.

The second crossfire happens right after the rebuttal speeches between the second speakers from each team. It often focuses on late round strategy. As discussed in previous chapters, each side has a narrative that should ideally provide each team with some sense of direction. Second crossfire, in particular, can aid this process and make argument selection easier. You can ask your opponent: "if we prove x do we win the round?" These kinds of questions can indicate to you and your judge what the most important arguments are, and accordingly tell you what you need to collapse on. In other words, you can set up every speech thereafter to focus on how you are winning x argument instead of worrying about other irrelevant arguments. If you decide to go this path, remember to bring up your opponent's response to the question in a speech since most of the time, your judge will not flow crossfire.

Grand crossfire occurs after the summary speeches and involves all four debaters. The purpose of grand crossfire can vary depending on the round. Grand crossfire primarily serves as a period of clarification in a muddled or messy round. You can ask clarification or weighing specific questions to help crystallize and finalize the final focus, the last speech in the round. Also, you can keep telling your opponents that they can have a question while you sit back and answer each one in detail for three minutes. The point of this strategy is to advance your arguments and clarify them to the judge before the next speech. It works very well when your opponent misconstrues your argument. Again, this is one of many strategies you can employ during crossfire, so you do not have to adopt it. The key is to find what works for you and stick to it.

5.2 Why Crossfire is Important

Winning an argument is only a portion of the battle. It is important, but if judges do not see you as perceptually dominant, they are less inclined to vote for you. Similarly, if you are perceptually dominant and you do not have round vision, or the ability to know how the round will break down on your side of the flow, the judge will be less likely to vote for you. In order to guarantee a win, a debater needs to show the judge they are better perceptually and argumentatively.

So, how do you win? You get your judge's ballot by balancing perceptual strategies with

argumentative ones. Perceptual strategies pull judges to vote for you primarily due to your strong presence in the debate whereas argumentative strategies push your arguments forward and highlight the narrative of your case. The only part of the round that displays both of these skills simultaneously is crossfire. A person's composure when they're asked a question speaks volumes about their control or lack thereof in the round. Now that you know how to win (hopefully), what does it look like in implementation?

First, we'll discuss perceptual strategies because these are the tendencies that a judge will immediately notice. Most of you are either already in high school or beginning your high school journey. Accordingly, crossfire can easily become an aggressive and unproductive exchange. To avoid this scenario, you need to avoid eye contact with your opponent during the questioning period. Instead, you need to look at the judge in the back of the room. The reason is simple: you are not trying to persuade your opponent rather you should be convincing the judge to vote for you. When you make eye contact with your opponent, it takes the judge out of the equation and keeps them less engaged. Remember though, your judge is human, so excessively staring at them may creep them out. Do not glare at them. Try to maintain just enough eye contact to keep them engaged. A good rule of thumb is to look at your judge(s) when you are answering a question especially when the question you were asked serves a significant purpose in the round.

Beyond eye contact, it is important that everyone remain calm and composed in the round. While speeches are often polished and practiced, crossfires are not. Most teams will complain that a judge voted off crossfire, but half the battle in Public Forum debate is *looking* the part. If you look like you're winning, the judge will probably vote for you. Therefore, crossfires are a significant factor in the judge's decision. Losing your patience and yelling at your opponents sends a signal to your judge that you are immature and consequently, unknowledgeable. Once this happens, your judge won't view you in a favorable way even during your speeches resulting in a loss.

Looking like you are winning the round is critical, but making logical arguments can bring you one step closer to attaining that ballot. A question can seek to accomplish two argumentative goals: clarifying or dismantling.

Clarify an argument: you may not understand everything your opponent says in a speech because they were difficult to understand or the argument is unnecessarily complex in nature. That is normal. Often, debaters think that if they do not understand a certain argument, it's their fault and not a fault in the argument. But, more than likely that is not the case. If you think there's a fault in the argument, then there likely is. Trust your

gut. Even when the argument does make sense and you missed parts of it, you cannot answer an argument if you do not understand it. After asking clarification questions, at least you can better refute it.

Dismantle your opponent's argument(s): the speeches in Public Forum are short, so that leaves little time to effectively develop clash in a debate round. Crossfire provides you with the time to probe for weaknesses. This is particularly strategic in second crossfire. Summary is only three minutes, so there is very little time to cover all of the arguments such as delinks and turns. So, in order to save time, you should attack their evidence, the logical reasoning behind their arguments (warrants), and contest the significance of the argument in the context of the round. Also, you should draw comparisons between previous arguments you read and any new arguments presented by your opponents. Crossfire is three minutes. Use that time to focus on your opponent's most important and threatening arguments. By this point in the round, you should have a good idea as to what those arguments are. Consequently, use that to your advantage, and probe for weaknesses in the ways discussed above.

5.3 The Art of Questioning

The types of questions you may ask can vary based on what happens in round. For example, you might completely understand your opponent's case during first crossfire and accordingly may ask zero clarification questions. That is perfectly fine. Questions are never set in stone because rounds are never the same (most of the time). So, the question remains: "what makes an effective question?" A good question has five characteristics:

First, they have a *purpose*: a purpose does not have to be complicated. You might want to ask a question because you're simply confused about your opponent's argument. As long as you have a reasonable justification behind your question, it will be somewhat effective.

Second, they are *concise*: if you ask a long question, then there is a greater chance that you will lose your opponents and the judge. If the judge doesn't understand your argument, you won't win the round.

Third, they are *narrowed down*: if the thought of asking concise questions seems difficult, it's because you are thinking too broadly. When asking questions, you need to make

sure your questions are focused and only address one idea at a time. This guarantees that your opponents clearly and effectively answer the questions they're asked.

Fourth, they are *simple*: the questions you ask should not be complex. Let's use an example:

> "According to wikipedia (do not cite wikipedia in your rounds) bullying includes aggressive behavior in the form of 1) malicious intent 2) imbalance of power and 3) repetition of hostile behavior. If that's true, how are cyber threats not a form of bullying?"

The purpose of this question is to make your opponents agree that cyber threats are a form of bullying. The way this question is presented makes it harder for you to get a concession. The reason is that it is unnecessarily complex. The question above is really two questions put together. If your opponents don't agree with the Wikipedia definition, will they agree with the highlighted portion of your question? Probably not. Instead, try these scenarios:

Scenario #1: "Do you agree with our Wikipedia definition?" If they respond with no, then you can force them to define bullying in crossfire, allowing you to preempt it in the next speech. While these kinds of questions are effective, keep in mind that your opponents will likely never concede an argument they see as important. So, the key is to ask a series of close-ended questions that build on top of one another (see the fifth characteristic for more details).

Scenario #2: "How do you define cyberbullying?" Forcing your opponents to defend an advocacy is direct and concise. In this instance, depending on how they answer, you can mix components of their answer with parts of your definition to end the definition debate. Sometimes asking questions like this can give your opponents the opportunity to ramble on, making you seem unconfident or confused. So proceed with caution.

Both of the scenarios provided above make the highlighted question simpler with a clearer direction and purpose. Don't worry if you can't get this when you start debating. The more you practice, the easier it will become.

Fifth, they are *close-ended*: remember, the goal of the round is to win your judges' ballot. Having control during crossfire is one of the ways you can attain that goal because it displays perceptual dominance. So how do you gain control in crossfire? By asking the right questions. You can either ask open-ended or close-ended questions. Open-ended questions allow your opponent to expand on an idea (in some cases you may want them

to). Close-ended questions, on the other hand, force your opponent to answer in a limited number of ways, often in the form of a "yes" or "no."

Now that we've defined the types of questions, what do these questions look like? The two tables below illustrate a weak and a strong example of each type of question. For this purpose, we will use the topic, *Resolved: The United States should require universal background checks for all gun sales and transfers of ownership.*

Strong close-ended question(s)	Weak close-ended question(s)
Will universal background checks prevent the construction of ghost guns? Why is this a strong question? You already know how your opponent will respond. They'll likely pivot because UBCs don't solve for that problem	How much did gun violence decrease after universal background checks were introduced? Why is this a weak question? • Allows your opponent to cite critical evidence and explain its significance • Lacks foresight - once your opponents give you a number, they're not going to concede that the number is small.

Strong open-ended question(s)	Weak open-ended question(s)
How do universal background checks prevent someone from illegally getting a gun? Why is this a strong question? • Specific • It limits what your opponent can say • Backs your opponent into a corner: it forces them to solve the problem. Otherwise, at best, universal background checks are only a temporary solution. • Purposeful	Why do universal background checks work? Why is this a weak question? • Broad • Not purposeful - it does not accomplish anything

Different situations yield different types of questions. Depending on what you seek to accomplish during crossfire, the type of question you ask will vary. Open-ended questions give the opponent a chance to thoroughly explain themselves and fill up time. Use these questions primarily when you know your opponent is contradicting themselves or is unaware about a specific area of the topic. Close-ended questions do not give your opponent that opportunity; it places more control in your hand as you can ask a series of questions to achieve your desired result. Let's use a different example to display this concept:

Questioner: "Your case supports universal background checks right?

Opponent: "Yes"

Questioner: "Do you have any empirics?"

Opponent: "Yes that's the Schneider evidence."

Questioner: "How many cities does Schneider take into account?"

Opponent: "One, but it's representative"

Questioner: "Sure, you can ask a question."

The purpose of this question is to set up the weighing or explanation of why you're argument is better. The evidence supporting universal background checks only takes one city into account. While your opponents will contend that it is representative, you can outweigh on magnitude because you take more people or cities into account. This chain of questions was enough to set up the weighing. Continuing with more questions would not yield any benefit because at this point your purpose for asking the question is clear.

5.4 The Art of Answering

Answering questions has a few of the same components as asking a question. When asking questions, you don't need to initially understand your opponent's case. However, in order to answer effectively, you need to know what you are being asked. Once you comprehend what your opponent is attempting to ask, you can answer in three primary ways:

- *Answer the question*: this may seem shocking, but if someone asks a question, answer it. The objective is to answer in a way that is always favorable to you.
- *Pivot to another issue*: sometimes you don't know how to respond to a question, and that's okay. In that situation, try to turn away from the subject your opponent is discussing and focus on a different, but related issue.
- *Vague answers*: crossfire is all about trapping your opponents and establishing your dominance over the other team (in an *assertive* manner). But, often you can sense when your opponent intends on setting you up. Giving imprecise answers to the questions can help you avoid being backed into a corner. This strategy is useful and provides you with a way to weasel out of a situation where you may need to change a previously said response. The vagueness of your answers can help you tread carefully while finding out the purpose of your opponent's question(s). Do not always rely on broad answers in every situation though because it can indicate to the judge that you are behind in the round. Instead, think of the purpose associated with your opponent's question prior to answering it. If the stakes are high and it is a setup, answer vaguely. If not, then don't.

The purpose of each question and how knowledgeable you are about the topic can make

the process of answering questions a lot easier. Having an in-depth understanding of the topic issues will discourage your opponents from asking open-ended questions because they do not want to give you the opportunity to show off and gain control of the room. So, people are much more likely to ask close-ended questions, demanding a yes/no. When you are pressed with these questions, you should explain that question is more complex than a yes/no and proceed to explain why. However, before doing so, make sure the question isn't something as simple as "you're advocating for x right" because those questions are very straightforward.

5.5 Common Questions

Crossfire is a period within the debate that everyone can continue to improve on. Practice makes perfect. Below are the most common questions debaters have about crossfire once they begin practicing:

I'm short how can I seem perceptually dominant?

You do not have to be tall to display perceptual dominance in the round. It's all about composure. Displaying professionalism during crossfire can work wonders on a judge. When you stand up for (first or second) crossfire, move towards the center of the room. Do not stand behind your desk, laptops, or podiums. It places a barrier between you and the judge. Remember, you want the judge to stay engaged the entire time. Additionally, as you move to the center of the room, take baby steps forward to be slightly ahead of your opponent. Taking baby steps towards your judge and standing slightly ahead of your opponents makes you seem bigger and more in control. You do not want to leap forward because that destroys the professional image.

How do deal with jerks?

What's great about dealing with jerks is that the entire room knows it. You do not have to go out of your way to make them look like rude human beings. As mentioned above numerous times, composure and respectful behavior are critical. If your opponents want to constantly cut you off and attempt to make you seem incompetent, politely ask if you can finish answering in the beginning. Do not ever try to talk over your

opponent because you want to finish your answer. That will shift focus away from your rude opponents and place blame onto you. If the actions persist, become more assertive and explain that crossfire is intended to be an exchange and having a one-sided yelling match is counterintuitive.

How do you cut someone off when they start rambling?

In order to cut someone off while maintaining a hint of professionalism, you need to subtly interrupt your opponent. Do not talk over them rather open your mouth to indicate to the judge that you are trying to speak, but your opponent will not let you. Not making any overt sounds conveys the message to your judge but not your opponent since your judge is sitting in front you looking at the round as a third party. Your opponent, on the other hand, is so engrossed in their train of thought that they don't notice what you're doing. From here, either interrupt your opponent when they pause for a second or wait it out and make your judge forcibly stop them. Nine out of ten times the judge in the back of the room has stopped the opponent from continuing if their behavior persists because they acknowledge the rude behavior.

Do I sit or stand during crossfire?

The typical rule of thumb is to stand during first/second crossfire and sit during grand crossfire. However, it is up to your judge. Your judge's preferences can change every round, so you should adapt accordingly. Sometimes your judge may not give you a direct answer and say something like, "it doesn't matter to me" in which case you should still stand during first/second crossfire. Sitting down with all your flows, laptops, pens, etc. laid out can look messy and places many barriers and distractions in between you and your judge. Standing up displays a clear cut connection and reminds you to become more cautious about your body language. Remember, if you *look* the part, you are winning half the battle. While it is good to stand during first/second crossfire, do not stand during grand crossfire (unless instructed by your judge) because the situation can get aggressive and messy very quickly, since all four debaters are talking instead of just two.

How do I get better at asking and answering questions?

A GOOD MINDSET

If you continuously doubt your abilities and think "I can't do this on my own" you probably won't. Debate is not about being the smartest or most informed person. Instead, it's about critical thinking. Relying on your partner to write information down for you will only get you so far. Try it one step at a time. Tell yourself that the doubts you have about an argument are right and act on those during crossfire. The beginning will be difficult, but giving up is easy. Pushing yourself is the real challenge. No one immediately understands how to be great at debate. It's a process and step one is acknowledging that.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE. Doing a number of 3-minute crossfires can dramatically change your skills because you will start to notice what works for you and begin to feel more confident in yourself. But, to ensure you're adopting the right skills, do a 2 minute first/second crossfire (depending on your speaker position) where one person only asks questions and the other only answers. The one answering should defend ONE argument and the questions should only revolve around that ONE argument. Forcing each other to discuss one argument means your questions and answers are focused and in-depth. Repeat this drill at least twice a week.

6 Rebuttals by Ellie Singer

This topic covers the second type of speech given in a Public Forum round, and the first given by the second speaker: the rebuttal speech. The rebuttals can be kind of intimidating at first since they are the first chance as a team to respond to the opponent's case, and sometimes rebuttal speakers might be worried about hitting arguments they aren't familiar with. But if you work hard at the core skills in this chapter and the rest of the book, giving a rebuttal will come more easily -- even with the increasing number of surprising arguments making their way into PF cases.

6.1 Purpose

The rebuttal speech is a very important part of the round. It is more than just a chance to show why the opponent's case is not going to win them the round, but it is also a chance to not only show why your offense outweighs but to add new offense and turn the opponent's case against them. A good rebuttal should do a few things:

1. Frame the round. A good rebuttal speech should illustrate to the judge what does and does not matter in the round. You can set or remind the judge of the burdens both sides have in the rebuttal speech, and start to do some weighing (which will be covered in a later chapter).
2. Thoroughly respond to the arguments in the opponent's case. Even if the argument seems unintuitive or silly, it is important to address it so the opponent can't blow it up and make it seem better than it was.
3. Add substance to the round. The job of the rebuttal is not just to respond, but to try and produce offense off of the opponent's case as well. No argument is perfect, and it is possible to generate reasons why that argument is better for one's own side in most cases.

4. Compare. Not just arguments, but evidence and warrants as well. A good rebuttal speaker not only responds to case, but frames why their arguments are more compelling at the level of the evidence and the claims – beyond just basic weighing – so the judge has a reason to prefer what they said instead of just two arbitrary contrasting claims to evaluate at the end of the round.

It is important to keep in mind all these roles when preparing and giving rebuttal speeches. Even after a strong case, a good rebuttal can do a lot to turn the tides of the debate and can help a team pull the perceptual battle strongly in their favor.

6.2 Structure of a Speech

The best rebuttals are clean, clear, and easy to follow. If debaters are hard to track, their opponents might miss something, but the judge might as well; by being unclear or disorderly debaters primarily put themselves and the strength of their own arguments at risk. Furthermore, even if a judge is able to follow a somewhat unclear rebuttal, it is likely to hurt the debater's perceptual strength and could lose them the win or risk lowering their speaker points.

Before the rebuttal speech, some speakers may or may not give an off time roadmap. Essentially, an off time roadmap just explains the order of things in the speech. It is important to know that a lot of judges are actually kind of touchy about off time roadmaps – some judges always want to hear them, some judges never want to hear them, some only want to hear them if the rebuttal speaker is about to do something weird. In any case, if a judge is touchy, it'll probably be in their paradigm. Whether a speaker needs to give a roadmap every time is context dependent, but speakers should definitely warn everyone if they are going to be doing things in a weird order – but in most cases, they probably won't be doing that.

In almost every single case, a good rebuttal speech goes straight down the flow. This just means starting the top of the opponent's case and responding to things in order: respond to the first link first, the second link second, the first impact first, so on and so forth. Sometimes, newer debaters will be tempted to skip around the flow, but it's really important not to do that for the reasons illustrated above: it is harder for the judge to follow, it is perceptually weaker, and the rebuttal speaker themselves might miss some arguments if they move around too much and lose track of where they were and what they were doing.

The one broad exception to this is if the rebuttalist want to give an overview at the top of the speech to frame the burdens or any pre-emptive weighing. For example, if the debate topic is about elections and the entirety of the case is about one person one vote, a rebuttalist might read an overview on why that is the most important issue in the road citing an author that says as much. This sort of framing does not have to happen every round, but it can sometimes help to clarify the debate and frame it in the speaker's favor.

No matter what order the rebuttal ends up taking, it is very very important that debaters remember to signpost. That means saying where the speech is on the flow and carefully numbering each response. If there are two responses to their first link, be clear: "I have two responses to their first link: first, X, and second, Y." Start the counting over on the next. It is very important to be easy to follow not only so the judge can flow the speech, but also so it is obvious how many answers to arguments there were. A bunch of clear, concise responses are much more impressive and much more difficult to muddle and misconstrue than one, unclear mega response.

The rebuttal can also be a good place to do some evidence comparison that is easy for later speeches to extend. If your evidence is from 2018 and theirs is from 2015, it is easy to explain that you should prefer yours on the basis of recency, especially if some defining event happened between the time periods the evidence was published (this is often the case on topics that are changing quickly, for example, international relations or domestic politics). If it is the pharmaceutical prices topic and their author is a reporter but yours is an economics professor, you can say to prefer your evidence because the author is more qualified. You should definitely discuss evidence quality when calling out opponents for evidence that is explicitly bad and unethical, but you should also feel free to start comparing why your great evidence is better than their good evidence so the judge knows what to pick if they are left with two competing claims to evaluate later.

In general, something that 2nd speakers (and 1st speakers too, really) should keep in mind when responding to any argument is to always take it at its highest ground. Even if an argument sounds kind of silly or ridiculous, do not belittle it, but respond to it carefully as if it were better than it sounds. This is important to do for a few reasons. First, being dismissive towards an argument can make a debater look rude, which can be very perceptually harmful and cost them speaker points or the round. Second, even if an argument is unclear at first, sometimes a good team will spin it to sound much better and use the other team's lack of response to their advantage towards the end of the round. Third, even if the argument is genuinely bad, sometimes judges will overvalue

it and the other team will have no idea until they've been told they lost. In that case, teams should definitely still put effort into responding to the argument, even if it seems like it would never win a round. What does taking an argument at its highest ground look like?

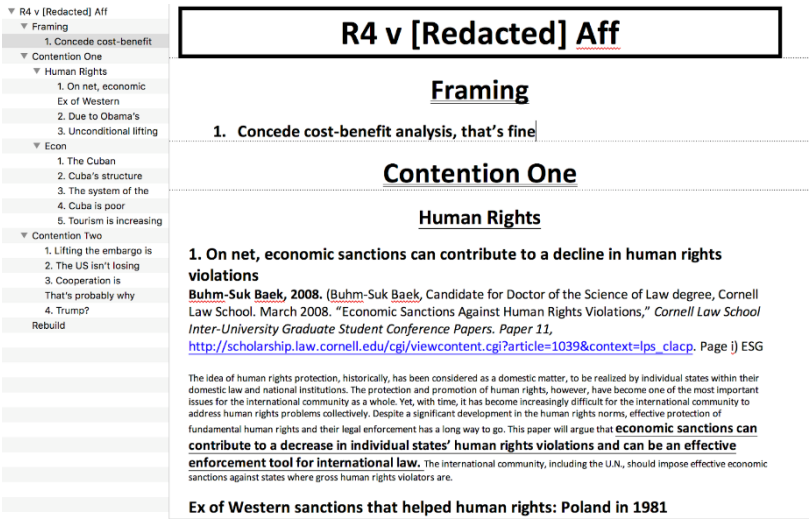
> Let's say the topic involves arguments that link to climate change and global warming impacts. Team A says that doing X thing is bad because it leads to increasing global temperatures and climate change. Team B says climate change is actually good because CO2 can increase crop yields. Team A could just blow this off, say it is really obvious that climate change is not a good thing, and hope that the judge buys common climate change wisdom. While this might seem obvious at first glance, that is actually a risky strategy because the literature saying what Team B is arguing really does exist. A very technically oriented judge might vote on the argument if Team A does not properly refute the response, even if it seems outlandish. Instead, Team A should further their impacts when responding to Team B's claims, arguing things like: First, increased temperatures actually make it much more difficult to grow crops and end up severely decreasing crop yields. Second, climate change causes flooding in some areas, especially coastal areas, and desertification in others – not only do both of these destroy agriculture, but they cause massive amounts of human suffering as well. Third, climate change destroys a lot of fragile and endangered species, causing the loss of mass amounts of biodiversity that ends up hurting the dwindling food supply as well.

Examples like these help illustrate why it is important to respond to things with dignity. Even if they do not sound compelling, there is often a reason they are being run, and something that backs them up that debaters can spin to win a round. It can be tempting to laugh off an argument to look more confident in a round. Do not give in to this temptation. It will probably never win the round, and it may very often lose it.

Lastly, for debaters that debate off a laptop (which is by no means necessary – back in the day people used to keep all of their evidence in gigantic bins and carry those around), it can be really helpful to keep speech docs of every round. Some computer apps like Verbatim allow you to do this super easily (and are also really helpful for making evidence and files). Basically, a speech doc is just all the evidence you used in the round. It is way easier to use this than skipping around a massive block file and it helps you remember what you read in that round so you, your partner, your coach, or

anyone else who might be helping you have an easier time critiquing the speech and learning from it later.

This is (part of) a speech doc from the 2017 topic about lifting the US embargo on Cuba, along with a sidebar that shows the basic structure of what the speech doc contained. The answers to each contention and subpoint are clearly labeled and numbered so it's easy for the speaker to remember their place and not lose track, and easy for the judge to flow. Speech docs can be very helpful for giving rebuttals and for critiquing them after the fact. If second speakers have blocks well prepared, in many cases, they can simply copy and paste their blocks from their master file over into a speech doc and be good to go, making whatever tweaks they need in the speech doc itself so they don't have to change the master file with each individual case.



6.3 Blocks

In order to prepare for rounds, the second speaker should have prewritten blocks to any argument. Blocks are sets of answers to all of the arguments that second speakers might expect to see on a given topic. The basis of any block file is doing research and understanding the literature that makes up the topic. Even if it sounds overly simplistic, even just looking up scholarly articles on "(whatever the topic is about) good" and "(whatever the topic is about) bad" can be a good place to start. Cut cards or highlight as you go and try and grasp the heart of the topic and what the main arguments are. Start by making incredibly basic blocks and get more specific and improve on them from there.

There are two very basic categories of answers one can put in blocks: evidence-based answers and analytics. These are pretty self-explanatory. Evidence-based answers use cards (well, often just one card per answer) and analytic answers do not use evidence but carefully explained logical arguments. If the average block is about five answers long, in most cases, three or four of those should be evidence-based. Still, debaters should not be afraid to use analytical answers, and should not over-rely on evidence to make a point without doing enough to explain the logic behind it.

When making evidence-based arguments, try to diversify which authors you use in each block: you do not want to rely on one author for three out of your five answers. Not only does this leave you vulnerable to author indicts (which basically just means reasons that the author is unreliable and should not be considered), but it also just can make you look like you have not done a lot of research and have only read a few authors on the topic. Just as in the case, it is paramount that the evidence in the rebuttal also be reliable and accurately presented. Nobody wants to lose a round on an evidence challenge and nobody wants to gain a reputation for being unethical in rounds.

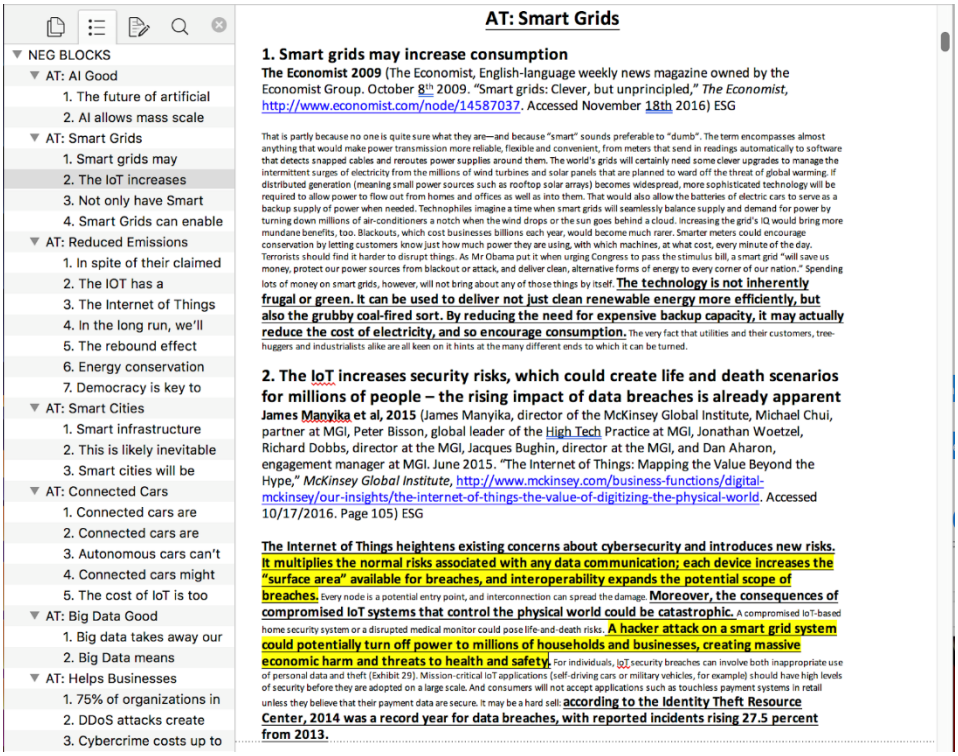
Analytic arguments are logical responses. While they are not backed by cards, they are backed by general intuition and logical warrants or often by common knowledge that you should not need to cite. So for example, if a team had made an argument on the aforementioned Cuba embargo topic that lifting the embargo would substantially heal the US's relationship with Latin America, it would be entirely reasonable for a team to include an argument that relationships cannot be completely remedied because of President Trump's negative remarks about Latin Americans, his hostility towards NAFTA, and/or the country's history of abuse towards Latin American immigrants. While there should be other evidenced answers, use of common knowledge such as this is also perfectly within a rebuttal speaker's grounds to use.

Blocks should be clearly labeled with what argument they are addressing so they are easy to navigate. Different debaters have different preferences on how to do this. Some prefer to label the block with what it is answering, some people prefer to label the block with the argument that the block is actually making. Say a block is for the Nationals topic that argued whether counterterror assistance or humanitarian aid to East Africa is better for the US to provide. If a team is writing a block to the argument that drone strikes decrease the power of terror cells, their block is probably going to say drone strikes increase the power of terror cells or otherwise just do not work. Some debaters prefer to label that block as "AT or A2 (both shorthand for"answers to") Drone Strikes Good," some prefer to just label it "Drone Strikes Bad". The former is probably more

common, but you should feel free to do whatever system makes more sense to you since you will be the one reading the block file.

Within the block file, you will have a number of responses. You should generally prioritize the most important responses – so generally turns or disads – at the top of the block. There are a couple of reasons you should do this. First, because it will be the first thing the judge hears. Judges should be attentive the whole time, but they are honestly sometimes not, so you will want to lead with what grabs their attention. But second, sometimes you are going to have to cut responses. Sometimes you realize you are running out of time on the fly. It happens. If you are going to have to skip the last answer or two, you want those to be the less important arguments, not the super powerful round-winning turns you have prepared.

Carefully label each response. Generally, you will have a block that looks something like this example of part of a block and the index of some other blocks on the side from the internet of things debate topic in November 2016:



So you should have a number for the response, a very short tagline summarizing what it will say, a citation (you only have to read part of it, but you should have the whole thing on hand in case somebody asks to see it), and then the rest of the evidence that

you plan to read or cite. In the above example, the numbering is clear, "smart grids may increase consumption" is the tagline, the part of the cite that should be read is bolded outside the full cite, and the part of the card the speaker wants to read is bolded and underlined (or highlighted). The block leads with turns explaining why smart grids are bad. This block certainly is not perfect, but it can help provide an example of what you might find effective to do.

While you definitely want lots of powerful offensive arguments within your blocks, it is very important that you avoid double turning yourself. A double turn is when you read both a link turn and an impact turn. Here's how that might look.

> It is the topic on prioritizing the humanitarian needs of refugees above a country's national interests. Team A, advocating for higher acceptance of refugees, reads an argument that accepting refugees is good because it increases economic development, and economic development is good because it decreases poverty. Team B first reads a link turn that accepting refugees constricts economic growth, then reads an impact turn that economic growth is actually bad because it leads to environmental degradation and increased risk of conflict over limited resources. In isolation, these responses might work, but together, they actually work against Team B: if increased acceptance of refugees constricts growth, but growth is bad, those increased influxes are still good, so a smart Team A will point out that Team B's rebuttal actually still works for them.

Be very, very careful to avoid reading link and impact turns together like that. In some cases, where you have a lot of link turn cards and a lot of impact turn cards, it is helpful to simply have two sets of blocks: one for link turns, one for impact turns. That way, you do not risk double turning yourself, and can simply select which one to go for based on the round and what you think the judge is more likely to buy.

In many cases, you will also have both terminal defense and some sort of link or impact turn in the block file. This is fine since reading defense and a turn together is not something that will instantly *lose* you the round. But in some cases, especially if you have a very flow-centric judge, you may want to omit a piece of defense from a block for a given round. As an example:

> It is the topic about abolishing the electoral college. Team A, on the negative, says abolishing the electoral college would likely require a constitutional convention that would allow Congress to ram through a bunch of really bad

> amendments. Team B, on the affirmative, first says a convention would not be required and would never happen and then tries to impact turn by reading a bunch of amendments that might be pushed through that are actually good. If Team A wanted to, they could just concede that a convention would not happen, and then Team B's turns are gone and the debate just moves elsewhere.

In some cases, it is strategic to not read defense and just go for offense so the opponents can't kick out of it by just conceding the defense. This strategy works better in front of very flow-centric judges when you have a lot of offense. If you are in front of less flow-centric judges who are more likely to buy safer defense, or if you do not have enough offensive turns or disads that you feel comfortable relying on, you might want to still read the defense just to be safe. It is a very case by case (ha ha) situation, and you will want to always have defense available in your blocks but decide strategy based on what suits the round best.

Eventually, more intricate arguments will reveal themselves as the topic goes on. In many cases, it helps to cut many cards from each article rather than just taking one card (unless you are pressed for time) so you can go back and put cards that you have already cut in new blocks more quickly instead of having to start at square one with every single new argument. Some arguments are unpredictable, and that can feel scary, but it is not the end of the world. There are a few ways you can handle arguments that come out of nowhere.

First: weigh and extend your own arguments! There will be more explanation on weighing in a later chapter, but the basic gist of it is to explain why your argument is more important even if you have literally no other answers to their argument. It might be helpful to keep a set of extensions and weighing in your block file, even if you do not end up using it in the rebuttal and save it for later speeches. These can add extra impacts to your argument or generically explain why they are super important. How might this play out?

> In January 2017, there was a topic arguing for a substantial increase in US military spending. Let's say that Team A has an argument about improving the US's nuclear weapons arsenal and thus strengthening nuclear deterrence. Team B makes an argument in their case about how increased military spending looks like threatening posturing, and gives an ultra-specific scenario about a specific country being more likely to want to attack the US.

> Even if Team A does not have responses to that specific scenario, they can generally extend arguments about how the power of nuclear deterrence and fear of a strike deters all attacks – even conventional ones – and outweigh with arguments from case in order to mitigate the argument that the opponent is making.

Scenarios like these show how it is possible to use one's own case material to undercut an argument or demonstrate why their own is even more important, even if they are not able to think of other responses. It is important to think of reasons that your arguments outweigh other arguments and have them written both for winning late in the round and for getting an edge in the rebuttal.

Second: use a lot of analytics! In many cases, if an argument is so shocking you have literally no cards that apply, it probably just is not that good. Keep a calm, clear head and think of logical reasons that the argument is weak or does not make sense. Combine this with some good even-if weighing – "even if you buy their argument, here is why ours is more important" – and you should be just fine.

6.4 Controversies

Public Forum is an event made up of people of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and styles; its debaters and its coaches often have very different preferences on different aspects of strategy. Some of those controversies will be discussed here.

The first thing to discuss is whether the second rebuttal needs to cover the first rebuttal, sometimes also called doing a split. Some speakers and judges prefer that the second rebuttal spend all their time attacking the opponent's case. Some speakers and judges prefer that the second rebuttal also spend time rebuilding their own case after the first rebuttal. Note that specifics here can diverge a little: some people might even want to see a half/half split, while some just want you to cover important turns and disads from the first rebuttal. What might be some pros and cons of each strategy?

Arguments in favor of doing a split	Arguments against doing a split
• Puts less pressure on the summary speaker to cover responses • Makes it harder for the opponents to pull through offense from responses without much effort • Makes the round clearer by showing what arguments you prioritize	• Means you have less time to cover the opponent's case in rebuttal, so it is easier for them to pull through things from case later • Sometimes you use up time on responses to things the first team was never planning on going for, so it is easier for them to suck up your valuable speech time

The second thing to discuss is offensive overviews. An offensive overview is an overview done in the rebuttal that adds a new (supposedly) round-winning argument to the round. It is not in response to the opponent's case and is meant to be new offense. Sometimes these can be pretty long and amount to an entirely separate argument, basically like a new contention. For example, on the topic about increasing military spending, an offensive overview for an affirmative team might say: "X author argues that presidents will go to war even if they do not have the money to do it, which makes the number of conflicts the same but failure rates even higher. The negative team has to prove this wrong to win the round, otherwise, we prove that conflict will continue… but will just be worse for everybody." An affirmative team might read this even if the negative does not make an argument about spending increasing the number of conflicts the US chooses to enter. What are some arguments for and against this strategy?

Arguments in favor of offensive overviews	Arguments against offensive overviews
• They can add new arguments to the round and create new advantages for teams that read them	• Many judges consider adding this to be unfair, especially if it is done in the second rebuttal • Can make the round super messy by adding new extraneous arguments to the debate

The third thing is paraphrasing evidence, particularly in cases and blocks. This just means reading a summary of the piece of evidence instead of quoting it directly. Most debaters and judges are probably in agreement that after you read a piece of evidence for the first time, it is okay to paraphrase it when you extend it, especially since you have less time in the later speeches. What is more controversial is whether you should be allowed to do this from the beginning. A lot of judges have very strong opinions about this, so remember that when you go into round! If you do decide to paraphrase, it is very very important that you try your best to accurately represent the claim that the evidence is making. It is also very important that you have the evidence you are paraphrasing easily accessible in case it is called for. Some people do this by keeping an appendix of the cards at the bottom of the block, or tucked in the file they can easily find. Different things work for different people, but the original evidence must be easily accessible (in any block, really, but especially here). Why do people feel so strongly about this issue?

Arguments in favor of paraphrasing	Arguments against paraphrasing
• It is more efficient than reading direct quotes, so people can read more cards per speech • Students already paraphrase evidence for essays and such in school, what is important is quoting the original source and trying to stay true to the argument	• Students can easily wrongfully represent arguments when they paraphrase - whether purposefully or by accident • It is impossible to check back all abuse of paraphrased evidence since you can't read every single card in just a few minutes of prep time

One final controversy applies to all evidence and is more of a personal choice than a choice you need to make in a given round. It is whether teams should share their prep with other teams or do all of their own evidence and preparation. Note that prep trades can take different forms: some teams will share their cases and blocks, some will just share files of evidence that people can use how they wish, some will just share their contention tags or an index of blocks but not the details so people can get an idea of what arguments exist without having every piece of evidence that the person they are trading with does. Some teams and coaches will have rules about this, some don't. Why might you want or not want to do prep trades?

Arguments in favor of prep trades	Arguments against prep trades
• They can help smaller teams that don't have massive armies of debaters to produce a bunch of files • They can help you conceptualize arguments you may not have thought of, but your friends did • They can help you discover new authors and articles or learn better ways of articulating your arguments • They can help you know what to expect from other teams	• Since you didn't produce the evidence or files yourself, you may not know what you are getting - it could be low quality evidence that you get in trouble for • Since you didn't produce the work, you might just generally be less familiar with it and perform worse • Unfortunately, sometimes people will break the terms of their trade and send your evidence to other people without your permission • They sometimes can favor more well-connected teams who have access to more trading partners

There really is not one right answer to any of these, and this section is not meant to completely convince you any are right or wrong. Rather, just remember that it is important to consider the pros and cons of each before deciding what strategy you prefer. Keep in mind that for some of them, judges do have strict beliefs that can impact what they decide in a round, so definitely check their paradigm or ask before you act.

6.5 How to Prepare

Actually preparing for the rebuttals that might be expected is really important, hence why mastering blocks matters so much. But preparing to give rebuttals goes way beyond just preparing the block file. There are lots of other things that you can do to improve your skills.

First: do lots of practice rounds! You can do these within your team or with friends

you trust to not leak your cases. It is really valuable to get in practice and see how your blocks actually play out in a debate. Also, practice rounds may alert you to arguments you weren't aware of, or holes in your argumentation that you did not see before. They are a super valuable tool for all debaters in the round, and even better if you can get feedback from each other or from a coach or parent.

Second: do analytic rebuttal drills! This just means giving a rebuttal without any evidence at all. It is a great way to practice logic and warranting in general but is also helpful for learning how to generate arguments on the spot against things you may not have thought of. There are a few ways you can do this: both against hypothetical case arguments on the topic that it is, and on old topics or topics you have not debated. The first is useful because you can apply your drill responses as analytics to your blocks later. The latter is useful because it means you are thinking completely fresh and won't be basically just giving a drill with analytics you took from cards but not using cards. Do a mix of both to practice your rebuttal skills.

Third: efficiency drills! You can do this with any speech, not just the rebuttals. Give a speech like you normally would. Then cut that speech time sharply (cut a minute off, or cut it in half) and give the speech again, but try to not go faster or sacrifice any arguments - instead, get rid of unnecessary filler words and fluff. Then cut the speech again and repeat.

6.6 Conclusion

While the rebuttal can seem like a lot to handle, it really is just about nailing the basics and then learning to apply them in different situations. A good rebuttal interacts heavily with a lot of other things this book discusses - argumentation, weighing, sometimes including events from a good and strategic first cross. There is no one perfect way to give a rebuttal or to write blocks, but rather, there are general rules that you should follow while you find your way and make your own style. Good luck and happy rebuttaling!

7 The Summary Speech by Lawrence Zhou

After the second crossfire between each team's second speakers, the debate moves into the second half of the debate. These speeches are much shorter than the speeches in the first half, being only three minutes long instead of four minutes. The summary speech is given by each team's first speakers, the 3rd set of speeches in the debate. The purpose of the summary speech is implied in the name. This speech ***summarizes*** *the existing arguments in the debate. Unlike previous speeches, it is intended to focus the debate as opposed to expanding the debate. This chapter will outline the purpose of the summary speech and provide some tips and techniques for properly executing a technically proficient and persuasive summary speech.*

7.1 Differences From The Rebuttal Speech

In order to understand how the summary speech works, it is best to contrast it to the constructive and rebuttal speeches because the summary speech is quite different from the previous speeches. These differences also explain why the summary speech is generally considered the most difficult speech in a Public Forum debate. This speech was formerly two minutes long

First, the most obvious difference is that the summary speech is much shorter than the previous speeches at just three minutes long. This is perhaps the single most important difference between the rebuttal speech and the summary. It also is the single greatest contributing factor to the difficulty of the summary speech. While beginning debaters typically struggle with filling the rebuttal speeches with four full minutes of unique content, the difficulty with the summary speech is figuring out how to address all of the important issues in a debate round in a single short three minute speech.

To get a grasp of the difficulty of this speech, it is crucial to recognize that the speech is intended to summarize approximately 16 minutes of speeches and 6 minutes of crossfire or 24 minutes of arguments in just three minutes. It has to summarize the arguments

presented in the constructive speeches as well as summarize the various rebuttals in the debate. Summarizing 24 minutes of arguments in just three minutes is a daunting task and is still incredibly difficult even for advanced debaters. Summarizing 24 minutes of arguments in a calm, collected manner is even more challenging, as many debaters struggle with including all the necessary content without talking incredibly fast. For this reason, the summary speech is a difficult speech to master.

Second, the summary speech is focused on narrowing as opposed to expanding the debate. The constructive speech is supposed to introduce several arguments supporting either the pro or con side of the debate. As a result, the judge will have heard many contentions in the first half of the debate with no easy way to judge which of the many contentions is the most important. The rebuttal speech typically contains a wide variety of different new responses or arguments to support each side. Consequently, the judge will be left with easily dozens of arguments that can quickly become difficult to sort through and understand. In contrast, the goal of the summary speech should be to make the debate simple for the judge to understand. This process of narrowing the debate is known as "issue selection" and will be discussed in greater detail in its own chapter.

Instead of attempting to introduce new arguments, the summary speech should focus on picking and choosing the most important arguments and discarding the unimportant issues. To this end, the rules generally prohibit new arguments from being introduced in this speech. This doesn't mean that teams are barred from making new responses to arguments, but judges will typically ignore any argument they feel is an argument that should have been introduced in a constructive or rebuttal speech. Similarly, reading new evidence in this speech is also highly discouraged. Since debaters are not expected to introduce new arguments into the debate, they should focus on extending and elaborating upon the arguments that already exist in the debate.

Third, the summary speech is usually less prepared than the previous speeches. The constructive speech is supposed to be merely reading an already written four minute case. The rebuttal speech is supposed to be mostly prepared, with teams relying on blocks they have worked on before the tournament to fill the content. However, the summary speech is typically not as scripted or prepared as the previous speeches. It's not uncommon to see debaters only reference their flow during this speech and not read any prepared files from their computer. Since it is difficult to anticipate every possible combination of arguments introduced into a debate, it is difficult to script out the summary speech. This forces debaters to rely on their own skill and understanding

of an issue to win a debate instead of merely reading from a computer. This is another contributing factor to the difficulty of the summary speech.

Ultimately, the summary speech is what separates the good from the great debaters. While debates are rarely won in the summary, they are frequently lost. Failing to properly allocate time, select the important issues, and respond to the key rebuttals often results in debates that cannot be salvaged. Giving an effective summary speech can clarify the round for the judge and give a team a strong competitive edge. On the other hand, a poorly executed summary speech can result in drops and concessions that give the opposing team a decisive advantage. Good debaters can survive the summary speech. Great debaters dominate it.

7.2 Structure of a Speech

Just like a good rebuttal speech, the best summary speeches are clean, clear, and easy to follow. This is especially important in such a time-constrained speech where organization typically suffers as debaters tend to get sloppy in such high-pressure situations. However, unlike the rebuttal speech which tends to simply go "straight down" on the flow, the summary speech has to make decisions about which arguments to prioritize and which arguments to ignore. Additionally, the summary speech also must cover both sides of the flow, extending their own arguments as well as responding to their opponent's arguments. For this reason, organization is much more complicated in this speech. Many debaters elect to provide an off-time roadmap that addresses which flow they will start on, either the pro or con side.

Some teams prefer to start by attacking their opponent's arguments first. However, unless the split has occurred, this is usually not recommended because the other team hasn't had the opportunity to respond to the objections against their case. In this case, attacking the opponent would merely be repeating arguments just mentioned in the previous speech, which is inefficient and unnecessary, or it involves making new arguments against their position, which is highly discouraged. For this reason, many debaters choose to start on their side of the flow and defend their arguments. If the split has occurred, it might sense to start by attacking the opponent's arguments.

After a decision has been made about which side to start on, organization becomes a little more complicated. Because the summary speech cannot hope to (adequately) address every argument made in the previous speeches, it might be forced to "jump

around" on the flow. This is acceptable so long as the signposting, or labeling of which argument on the flow the debater is addressing, is clear.

The bulk of the summary speech will be dedicated to extensions and crystallization.

7.3 Extensions

As mentioned above, one of the differences between the rebuttal and summary speech is the emphasis on extensions. While the second team's rebuttal speech may contain a few brief extensions, extensions are not a primary goal of the rebuttal speech. However, making proper extensions is an incredibly important part of the summary speech.

An extension can be broadly defined as a summary of an argument that a debater or team wants a judge to remember in the round. The purpose of an extension is to label and define what arguments from the previous speeches are. Failure to properly extend arguments makes the debate much messier for the judge since they must vote what they have heard in a speech and have on their flow. If a team doesn't extend an argument, then the judge cannot fairly evaluate it. Summary speeches must contain proper extensions in order for them to be considered by the judge in the decision.

For this section, suppose that the pro has is attempting to extend a contention about how the pro benefits the economy.

Before examining how to properly extend arguments, it is important to recognize what an extension is not. An extension is not merely addressing the refutations against a previous contention. Take the example pro contention above and suppose the con has responded to the pro contention with the following: "The pro evidence is from a blog so the judge should ignore it." The pro might respond with: "The evidence is from a blog but it is written by a professor at the University of Chicago so the judge should still evaluate it." This is a reasonable response to the con's rebuttal. However, it is not an *extension* of the original pro contention. Recall that the definition of an extension is a summary of an argument that a debater or team wants a judge to remember in the round. Demonstrating that the pro's evidence is indeed qualified fails to summarize the original argument about how the Pro side benefits the economy. Yet, many teams assume that merely responding to the opposing side's rebuttals constitutes a complete rebuttal. This is a key mistake that teams should be conscious to avoid.

An extension, properly understood, contains at least 4 primary components.

Signposting. Signposting refers to informing the judge where on the flow a particular extension is occurring. This is similar to signposting when in the rebuttal speech. For example, the pro might say: "Extend the first pro contention that..." This is crucial for ensuring that judges are on the same page as the speaking team and for organizing speeches.

Claim. Just like an argument consists of a claim, an extension should also contain a claim. This briefly tells the judge the general idea of the argument being presented. For example, the pro might say: "voting pro benefits the economy…"

Warrant. As explained in previous chapters concerning argument construction, a warrant is a reason or evidence that the claim is true. For example, the pro might say: "because it increases employment as per the Smith evidence…"

Impact. This explains why the truth of the claim matters. For example, the pro might say: "which greatly improves the quality of life and wellbeing of everyone in the country." Just like the warrant, this section can be shorter than the original.

Put all together, a complete pro extension might read as follows: "Extend the first pro contention that voting pro benefits the economy because it increases employment as per the Smith evidence which greatly improves the quality of life and wellbeing of everyone in the country."

Notice that these extensions are much shorter than the original argument. A contention in the constructive can easily be over a minute long, full of evidence and analysis, yet the corresponding extension of that contention is only about 10 seconds. Extensions are generally allowed to be relatively short, especially in the summary speech. However, short does not imply incomplete. An extension must still signpost and have a claim, warrant, and impact.

This is generally considered the minimum necessary for a complete extension, although it is more than possible to make the extension more word efficient. However, excellent extensions typically contain 2 more elements which will be discussed in the following sections.

7.4 Frontlines

High-quality extensions usually also contain frontlines. Frontlines are responses to blocks. Whereas blocks are responses to the other side's arguments that they might

make in their case, frontlines are responses to objections the other side might make against one's arguments. They can be thought of as "blocks against blocks." Frontlines are necessary because defending an argument against objections is just as important as constructing a well-warranted argument in the first place.

Good teams are well prepared with frontlines, that is, they know all of the popular objections to their arguments and they are prepared to defend their original argument. There are a few steps that many successful teams follow in order to be well prepared with their frontlines. First, before debate tournaments, good teams will write responses to their contentions as if they were debating themselves. They will then frontline those responses or write responses to those responses. Second, good teams will see what authors in the literature supporting their position have said. They will then see if those authors have responded to objections against their positions and incorporate those responses into their frontlines. Third, good teams will update their frontlines after each debate round they have, including practice rounds. Every time they encounter a response to their position, they were previously unaware of, they will quickly frontline those out.

Once teams understand what arguments to frontline, they should begin the process of writing them down and incorporating them into their files, just like they would do with blocks. When debaters are just beginning, there is a tendency to write too much into their frontlines. However, the length of the summary speech means that word economy is at a premium and frontlines should be kept relatively short in order to cover the other important issues in the debate.

Deploying frontlines using the standard extension formula is quite simple. After they finish explaining the impact of the argument they are extending, a debater simply moves on to answer the objections to this position. This can take many forms, but one of the most popular ways to execute this in round is as follows, "they say x, but y." For example, "they say our evidence is from a blog, but our author is a professor at the University of Chicago, so he's qualified to make these arguments."

Put all together, a complete pro extension with a frontline might read as follows: "Extend the first pro contention that voting pro benefits the economy because it increases employment as per the Smith evidence which greatly improves the quality of life and wellbeing of everyone in the country. They say our evidence is from a blog, but our author is a professor at the University of Chicago, so he's qualified to make these arguments."

However, advanced debaters know that incorporating frontlines *into* extensions as opposed to after is the better method for deploying them in round. Incorporating frontlines into extensions means that the frontlines are deployed while debaters are extending their arguments.

Using the above example extension, it is easier to see this in action. It could read something like this: "Extend the first pro contention that voting pro benefits the economy because it increases employment as per the Smith evidence, who is a professor at the University of Chicago writing on his academic blog, which greatly improves the quality of life and wellbeing of everyone in the country." This example shows how debaters can incorporate frontlines, such as defending the quality of their evidence, into the extension itself.

This also works for more complicated examples as well. Say the con has made an argument indicting the quality of the study for failing to take into account certain variables. The pro could respond as follows, "Extend the first pro contention that voting pro benefits the economy because it increases employment as per the Smith evidence, which is the best study on this topic because it controls for x, y, and z variables. This greatly improves the quality of life and wellbeing of everyone in the country."

Incorporating frontlines into extensions is usually difficult because it usually cannot be scripted out in advance. This requires debaters to know their frontlines well and be able to make decisions on the fly about how to incorporate the frontlines into their extensions. However, the benefit is typically worth it. Incorporating frontlines into extensions as opposed to making them after increases word economy, is more natural sounding since it deals with objections where they logically belong and increases the quality of argument comparison.

One might wonder what the purpose of writing down frontlines in advance is if the goal is to incorporate frontlines into extensions in a way that cannot easily be scripted. That is because the process of writing the frontlines helps immensely and they still form a good foundation for refutation. Even if the exact words from the prepared frontline aren't repeated in round, they are still useful as a guide for understanding what arguments can be read to defend a position.

Understanding frontlines is an incredibly important part of the summary speech. Without effective frontlines, teams cannot defend their contentions against attack and will be at a disadvantage when the judge is evaluating the debate.

7.5 Crystallization

Good extensions also contain crystallization. Crystallization is the act of making the round clear, as implied by the name. Just like a crystal is clear and polished, a debate round should be just as clear.

Crystallization differs from the summary to the final focus so a more in-depth discussion of crystallization can be found in the following chapter covering the final focus. Crystallization in the summary speech is defined by two primary traits: issue/argument selection and weighing. Argument selection is simply the process of determining which arguments are the most important and so the ones that should fill the time of the speech. This applies both to contention arguments as well as rebuttals made against the opponent's case. Since argument selection is an entire subject on its own, it will be discussed on its own as a separate chapter.

Weighing is also a complex subject, so the theory behind weighing is also its own separate chapter. However, the importance of weighing cannot be impacted enough. Weighing, or the process of argument comparison, is what makes or breaks debates. As mentioned above, it usually doesn't make sense to start the summary speech by answering the opponent's case first because it would add no new information to the debate, it would merely be repeating blocks that have already been said. However, that isn't a reason to ignore the opponent's case. Instead, the blocks that are extended in the summary speech should be incorporated into comparison. For example, instead of repeating a response against a con contention, the pro could say something like, "We have demonstrated that we significantly benefit the economy whereas the con has shown almost no environmental harm as we have proven with our 3 responses." This comparison avoids the mere repetition of blocks and instead allows debaters to properly compare the important issues in the debate.

Though the point of the summary speech is to narrow the debate into a more focused series of arguments, there is a possibility that debaters will overcompensate and approach the debate as only the big picture. This would be a mistake. The summary speech is still a technically challenging speech because it must get into the details of the important issues in a very efficient manner. Effective summary speeches still focus on the line by line. Only debating the big picture results in technical concessions that can cost teams the debate.

7.6 Grouping

One of the primary techniques that debaters must master in order to give effective summary speeches is "grouping." Grouping is answering multiple arguments that share similarities at once. For example, a pro team may have presented several contentions that deal with the economic benefits of the resolution. In the summary speech, the con team is not required to deal with each contention on its own. Instead, they may "group" all of the contentions and arguments having to do with the economy and answer them all in one place. It is important to note that debaters don't just have to group contentions. They can group warrants, subpoints, impacts, cards, and contentions. Any set of points or arguments that share similarities can be grouped together in the summary speech. This is useful for two reasons. First, it increases the efficiency of the time-crunched summary speech where it would otherwise be inefficient to make the same argument or response over and over again when answering the opponent's arguments. Second, it helps with organization. Instead of jumping around the flow to multiple similar but separate contentions where it is easy to get lost, smart debaters can group those contentions together and make the debate easier to follow.

7.7 Controversies

The same controversy over the split in the rebuttal is also present for the summary. As discussed earlier, the split is when the second summary speech also addresses the first summary speech. A lot of the same arguments for and against the split apply to the summary speech as well. Given the time-constrained of the summary speech, many debaters prefer not to split the summary. However, many successful debaters do split the summary, effectively utilizing preparation time to give a summary speech that addresses the first summary speech. The choice is ultimately up to the debaters and the particular partnership.

7.8 Practice

As mentioned earlier, the summary speech is where debates are frequently lost. Hopefully, this chapter has provided the necessary toolkit for understanding what core skills are necessary for effectively executing a winning summary speech and preventing the

debate from being unsalvageable. However, it is difficult to overstate the importance of practicing these skills. Understanding the theory and being able to give a technically proficient summary speech are quite distinct. While understanding how to properly write an extension, how to frontline an argument, and how to crystallize are all important, they are no substitute for giving speeches. There are many suggestions for improving argument selection skills in the corresponding chapter.

The same suggestions in the rebuttal chapter also apply here. Having practice rounds, doing analytic rebuttal drills, and doing efficiency drills are all just as, if not more, important for the summary speech as it is for the rebuttals. However, these suggestions for drills and practice should emphasize the mastering the difficult balance between time management and sufficient explanation. Many debaters sacrifice depth of explanation for time efficiency and vice versa. Going towards neither end of the extreme is advised and practicing this speech helps ensure the proper balance between time and explanation is present in the summary speech.

8 The Final Focus by Lawrence Zhou

The final focus is, as the name suggests, the final speech in the debate, occurring immediately following the grand crossfire. It is 2 minutes long, presented by each team's second speaker, and the 4th set of speeches in the debate. The purpose of the speech is also implied by the name. The final focus is the final opportunity at the end of a 40-minute debate for each team to detail their best and most important arguments for the judge to consider. It is supposed to focus the debate on just a few key issues and provide a ballot story for the judge to consider. This chapter will outline the purpose of the final focus speech and provide some tips and techniques for properly executing a technically proficient and persuasive summary speech.

8.1 Purpose

As mentioned above, the purpose of the final focus is to sum up the key issues in the debate. Whereas the summary speech is still relatively focused on specific defenses for their position, the final focus should look more broadly at the round. This is commonly referred to as the *big picture*. In short, the goal of the final focus speech should be to write the judge's ballot for them.

Judges are not identical, and they do not judge debates exactly the same as the next judge. This might frustrate some competitors who desire more predictability in their decisions, but it is ultimately a good thing because human beings do not think exactly alike and having a diversity of thought is good. As a result, judges will not make decisions the same as other judges and their ballot will be unique. However, many judges will still decide rounds by focusing on the significant issues of the round and consider why each contention outweighs the other. A sample ballot might read as follows:

"Both sides agreed to using simple cost-benefit analysis as the framework. While the pro demonstrated that they would benefit the economy, the con's responses were effective in convincing me that the benefit would be small. Meanwhile, the con proved that the

pro would seriously damage the environment and the pro did not adequately address this contention. Because of this, I voted for the con."

While the vast majority of ballots will not be written so robotically, the general thought process that many judges use to make decisions mirrors the one outlined above. Judges are looking for some way to resolve the many issues present in the debate and are looking for debaters to make that job easier for them.

The following is a vast oversimplification of the subject of judge psychology, but judges can be broadly divided into categories: flow and lay. Flow judges, usually former debaters or debate coaches, typically render decisions based on a rigorous reading of the flow whereas lay judges, usually inexperienced judges, typically make decisions on a variety of persuasive factors. To reiterate, this is not an accurate description of the way that all judges make decisions and does not account for a lot of the variation between and within the two categories. Judge psychology and adaption is a subject in itself for advanced debaters and the distinction made here should not be considered a comprehensive introduction to the subject. However, the distinction is relevant because it highlights that there are two very important components to constructing a winning final focus: technical proficiency and general persuasive appeal.

Technical proficiency refers to how the art of argumentation was executed. Flow judges try to evaluate who won the debate by evaluating who did the better debating on the flow. Did a team drop warrants, drop arguments, properly extend warrants, adequately compare impacts? These are the types of questions that flow judges will look to when attempting to render a decision.

General persuasive appeal refers to the intangible aspects of persuasion. Lay judges typically are persuaded by a variety of factors, such as confidence, speaking tone and eloquence, the emotional resonance of an argument, and how closely an argument aligns with their preexisting beliefs. Some of these factors are difficult to predict and adapt to, but some of these factors are also controllable by the debaters.

A good final focus will blend aspects of both technical proficiency and general persuasion into a winning speech that helps secure a victory. In order to accomplish this, good debaters will spend the vast majority of the final focus crystallizing.

8.2 Crystallization

Just like the summary speech, an effective final focus will also contain crystallization. To recap, crystallization is the act of making a round clear and understandable for a judge. It is the process of simplifying and clarifying the round down to just a few major issues of themes and clearly explaining the reasons the judge should vote for their team. Whereas the summary speech was more focused on argument selection, technical argumentation, and frontlines, the final focus is more focused on effective crystallization. Since it is the final opportunity for the judge to hear about the arguments presented in the debate, the final focus must perform the difficult task of making the round easy for the judge to evaluate. Failure to properly crystallize results in poor decisions as judges are unable to discern what is important and what is not.

When crystallizing, the question a debater should be asking to themselves is, "What do I want the judge to write on their ballot?" Whatever their answer to that question is should be how the final focus is organized and structured. The aim of an effective final focus should literally to script out the majority of the judge's ballot out for them. It should answer every nagging question the judge has about the arguments, clearly lay out the issues for the judge, and resolve tensions in favor of one side.

There are a few notable common misconceptions of effective crystallization. Dispelling these misconceptions also helps to explain exactly what effective crystallization.

First, crystallization is more than one team only focusing on their own argument while ignoring the opposing team. While crystallization will involve one team talking more about their own offensive arguments than their opponent's arguments, it doesn't mean that they should do so while completely ignoring the opposing team's arguments. Rather, debaters should take care to compare their arguments to the opposing team's arguments. It is understandable that debaters wish to primarily discuss their own arguments and explain them more. That is, in fact, encouraged. The key is ensuring that the discussion of those arguments properly takes into account the context of the debate round. Recall that the purpose of crystallization is to make the round clear and understandable. Failing to discuss the way that a contention interacts with or compares to an opponent's contention does not help the judge when they are making a decision. At the end of the debate, the judge will understand that a team has an important argument, but, crucially, they won't know if that argument is more important than the argument made by the other team. Crystallization, properly understood, does involve a team mostly focusing on their own arguments but also taking care to properly weigh

those arguments against the argument's the other team has made.

Second, crystallization is more than just repeating past arguments. Some debaters think that crystallization is just repeating the argument over and over again until the judge finally understands it. Such a misconception is likely born out of the fact that some debaters don't think there's anything important for them to add in the later speeches and that merely repeating the argument over and over again is the best they can do. This is incorrect. Crystallization involves explaining arguments in a way that is clear to the judges. This both involves stripping away unnecessary information and adding new information. Stripping away unnecessary information means getting to the heart or core of an argument without wasting time on extraneous fluff or unimportant information. There's a reason the argument explained at the end of a final focus is not the same two-minute long contention presented in the constructive. Adding new information involves explaining how this argument now interacts with new arguments on the board.

Third, crystallization is more than just summing up the round. Crystallization isn't just a neutral summary. It should be a summary in favor of the presenting team. Crystallization should aim to persuade the judge. Presenting arguments in a way that makes it easier for the judge to vote for the other team should not be the goal of effective crystallization. It should always be focused on making the presenting team seem like they are winning the debate.

Now that it is more clear what crystallization should not look like, it should be easier to explain what effective crystallization does look like.

Effective crystallization should attempt to answer the following three questions:

First, what are the most important issues in the debate? Second, how am I winning those important issues? Third, why are these issues more important than my opponent's arguments?

The first question should not be that difficult because the summary speech should have already dealt with the difficult choice of argument selection, which will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter. The final focus will be forced to narrow the debate slightly more than the summary speech, however, most of the hard choices should have already been made.

The second question just relies on demonstrating that one team is actually winning their arguments. This usually involves extending an argument and beating back any defensive arguments against the argument.

The final question is perhaps the most difficult. It must answer why one team's arguments are better than another's. This is known as weighing, which is the focus of Chapter 9 and so will be discussed in greater detail there.

A good rule of thumb for effective crystallization is to try and present a speech that matches, word-for-word, what a hypothetical judge would write on their ballot. An effective final focus will try and present what is sometimes called the *ballot story*. This is where it will attempt to construct the narrative that the judge will recall when they make a decision and justify their decision on the ballot. Since judges have to render a reason for decision, they will usually seek the most cohesive ballot story possible, one that tries to blend all the relevant arguments into one, easy to understand story. Judges, and people in general, tend to like stories, since humans find humans easier to recall and explain to others. The more that the final focus reads like a narrative that takes the floating issues in the debate and places them in the right place, the easier it will be for the judge to evaluate the debate.

Outside of debate, crystallization may be one of the most beneficial portable skills one can learn. In classrooms in high school and in activities beyond, crystallization still will be a valuable tool that enables debaters to persuade a wide variety of people.

Unfortunately, crystallization is not a skill that is easily imparted through a textbook. It is situational and very rarely looks exactly the same across speeches. Just like a debater can learn all of the search operators for Google and still lack effective research skills due to a lack of practice, a debater can also read all that is written about crystallization and still fail to effectively crystallize in round. Crystallization is a skill that is internalized through practice and observation. Even though the reader can read about all the mistakes of crystallization, they may still be prone to committing these errors without effective practice to help them along.

8.3 Common Mistakes

The final focus is a difficult speech to execute because it relies on debaters having excellent in-round awareness, the ability to discern which arguments matter the most, the quick thinking necessary to explain arguments in the context of all of the other important arguments still present in the round, and the persuasive ability to succinctly explain arguments to the judge in a compelling way. These are skills that difficult to glean from reading a textbook because it requires significant practice and experience in order to

internalize these skills in a deep sense.

However, there are several common mistakes that debaters make when approaching the final focus that can be addressed and curbed before they develop into bad habits.

First, debaters tend to go for too much. While the common phrase "less is more" is not always right, it carries a surprising amount of truth when it comes down to the final focus. More often than not, judges lament that debaters attempted to have 3 key voting issues instead of 2 or 2 voting issues instead of just 1. Recognize that a 2-minute speech is very time constrained and that choosing to go for more arguments trades off with explaining those arguments in the depth required for judges to feel comfortable voting on those arguments. Judges typically seek one or two well-developed arguments that explain how those one or two issues interact with the other important issues in the round. Debaters that go for too much tend to lose rounds, as will be explained in greater depth in Chapter 8.

Second, debaters sometimes are too defensive. Recall the distinction between offense and defense presented in Chapter 2. By definition, offense is the only type of argument that can win a round. Defense can only prevent a team from losing but fails to provide a reason for why the judge should vote for them. However, teams tend to be quite defensive in the last speech, poking good logical holes in their opponent's arguments or persuasively communicating how implausible the arguments against their position are, but failing to ever offer their own reason for why the judge should vote for them. While defense is important, it should very rarely take precedence over developing an offensive argument.

Third, debaters assume the judge is on their side. Debaters tend to think that the judge is agreeing with them on most issues in the debate, especially on issues that debaters are passionate about. While there is some truth to this, most judges are not really on the side of any particular team. They are being forced to judge two teams and each team thinks that the judge is on their side. The judge is looking for a team to agree with, but that team needs to provide reasons for why the judge should agree with them. Many teams treat crystallization as preaching to the choir and fail to justify underlying assumptions or premises that the judge may not necessarily already agree with. Crystallization should aim to persuade a skeptical audience, that is, it should aim to persuade someone that doesn't already agree with the argument.

Fourth, debaters tend to engage in the practice of argument description as opposed to argument comparison. There is a difference between "our contention is really im-

portant" and "our contention is *more* important than our opponent's contention." Yet, many debaters act as they are equivalent or, worse, treat the former statement as better than the second statement. Judges tend to agree that the contention being presented is important. What they're really looking for is the reason why it's *more* important than the opponent's arguments.

8.4 Practice

The final focus is the speech that sums up the entire debate. It is a daunting task. Executed poorly, the final focus will do nothing more than further confuse the judge. Performed well, the final focus will provide the judge a moment of clarity that enables them to effectively compare the arguments in the round. This is, like the summary speech, not a speech that can be mastered by merely reading about it. Practicing giving this speech is crucial to consistent success.

Thankfully, the skill of crystallization can also be gleaned by observation. Watching both academic and non-academic debates will provide useful insights into how crystallization works in practice. The art of summarizing an argument in a way that distills the essence of the core issues in the debate down into a few simple statements understandable to the judge is difficult to master but greatly improved by watching and trying to understand the thought processes of other debaters.

9 Argument Selection by Chris Conrad

This chapter is on argument selection, a vitally important skill that distinguishes great debaters from good debaters. The chapter will seek to answer a few questions about argument selection, before concluding with a few drills for students to practice and apply the ideas contained within this chapter. The questions covered by this chapter, in order are: First, what is argument selection? Second, when should I do argument selection? Third, (and crucially) why does argument selection matter? And fourth, how do I actually do argument selection? The third and fourth sections are the most important to understand.

9.1 Argument Selection Defined

Put simply, argument selection is when you choose which argument(s) you will go for in the second half of the debate. It's also often referred to as strategic choice or collapsing. In almost every high-level public forum debate, both teams "collapse" on one or two arguments to go for in summary and final focus. Instead of trying to extend all of the Pro or Con case in a mere two minutes, it makes sense to pick and choose what issues you want to make important.

Even in mid-tier or novice debates, the structure of public form speech times tends to force teams to do some kind of argument selection, whether they like it or not. It's nearly impossible to extend four minutes (or eight, if you're also trying to extend content from the rebuttal to answer the other team's arguments) of content from your own case in three minutes. Even if you were able to cram four minutes of content into three minutes, that leaves no time for answering your opponent's rebuttal arguments (frontlining) or weighing your arguments against your opponent's arguments.

So, collapsing on a few arguments is somewhat inevitable – you only have three minutes in summary and two minutes in final focus and will have to narrow down the debate

regardless. Given this, it's important to understand how to do argument selection in a way that maximizes your chances of winning the round (covered in the how section).

Before that though, it's worth pointing out that even though the structure of speeches pushes teams towards argument selection, a huge portion of debaters don't consciously think about argument selection in a deliberate sense. In other words, you will be forced to collapse regardless, but many debaters don't think about argument selection strategically – they simply go for the argument they want to go for regardless of what makes sense for that specific round. You haven't really done argument selection if your process for picking what to collapse on is just going for the same argument you always go for on a given side.

Thus, collapsing is inevitable, but deliberate argument selection is not. To explain what this means, let's imagine an example. Suppose a team has three contentions in their Con case – the first contention is one minute long, the second one is one minute long, the third one takes up the remaining two minutes. In that team's head, the third contention is what they want to go for – they've gone for it in every round on the Con, they know how to explain it relatively well, and they just feel more comfortable going for what they're used to.

Now, imagine this team is in a round on the Con, and the other team spends a minute and a half in rebuttal answering contentions one and two and spends the remaining two minutes and thirty seconds answering the third contention. Our imaginary team now faces a fork in the road – what argument should they go for?

This fork in the road is where argument selection happens – or doesn't. In a huge portion of debates, the team won't even consciously think about what argument they should go for – they simply go for the third contention because they're used to going for it. However, in a second scenario, the team might look at their flow after the other team's rebuttal and realize it will be much more challenging to answer two and a half minutes of rebuttal content (by going for the third contention) compared to the relatively light coverage of contention one or two.

Put simply, teams often face a choice between going for what they're used to and what they strategically should go for, and inexperienced (and even experienced varsity teams) often choose incorrectly. Argument selection is the process of correctly choosing which argument to go for.

9.2 When Argument Selection Happens

Argument selection typically happens in one of two speeches – summary or rebuttal. As explained in-depth later, good argument selection often involves looking at the other team's rebuttal and figuring out what argument is the most strategic choice to go for. As a result, argument selection can only really happen after the other team's rebuttal. This means, if you're speaking second, you can do argument selection in your second rebuttal. If you're speaking first, you'll just have to wait until the second rebuttal and do argument selection in first summary.

It's worth noting that there are different strategic benefits to doing argument selection at different points in time. Put simply, you sometimes don't want to show your hand too early. It would be silly, using the three contention example above, for the team to say "we're probably not going to go for the first two contentions" in the first crossfire. Saying this would give the other team to edit their rebuttal to spend more time on the third contention.

Similarly, argument selection that happens in second rebuttal often signals what a team is going for, allowing the first summary to have a clearer picture of what they need to answer from the second-speaking team's case, as well as what they need to weigh against. In some cases, it might make more sense for a second speaking team to deliberately not signal what argument they plan on collapsing on until second summary, leaving the first summary in the dark.

That said, high caliber teams are increasingly choosing to select which argument they will go for in second rebuttal because doing so gives them much more time to answer the first rebuttal's arguments, instead of making second summary do all the work. This advantage (having more time to frontline) tends to be more important than the disadvantage (giving the first summary more information).

Finally, it's worth noting that there are ways to do argument selection in second rebuttal that don't give away what argument you're going for. As you become a more efficient speaker, it may be possible to quickly answer the entire first rebuttal (or most of it). If you frontline most/all of the case instead of only the argument you actually plan to go for, your opponents will have no idea what you plan to go for until second summary.

9.3 Why Argument Selection Matters

It cannot be overstated how crucial smart argument selection is in Public Forum. To become better at Public Forum, it's certainly important that you spend time and effort writing good cases, cutting evidence, creating large block files, and practice summary and final focus. But argument selection is probably the single skill (along with weighing) that can singlehandedly win or lose a round, regardless of how much prep you or your opponent have done.

Imagine a race between two horses – doing lots of prep, spending hours agonizing over cases and blocks, having endless practice rounds, being well read on a topic – that makes the metaphorical horse marginally stronger, faster, more likely to win. But in a horse race, just as in debate, your opponents are also training their horses to be faster, stronger, etc. So while putting in the extra work to be better prepared than your opponents will sometimes help you win, you'll eventually run into a horse that has done just as much, if not more preparation than you.

Argument selection is like being behind in a horse race and suddenly being allowed to take a shortcut to the finish line. It can seem like you're behind in a debate, but if you correctly pick what to go for, you'll have the best possible shot of winning a round, even if your opponents are better prepared than you are.

The returns on investing more time into prepping, writing cases, blocks, etc, become smaller the more prep you've already done – the difference between having 40 cards cut for a topic and 100 is really noticeable, but the difference between say, 340 cards and 400 cards cut for a topic is probably relatively small. While this is a bit of a simplification, most good/great Public Forum teams have relatively equivalent amounts of prep, such that doing more prep doesn't win them rounds.

If you put two of these teams with roughly equal prep in a round against each other, who will win? If one team has noticeably better argument selection than the other, regardless of whether the quality of the cases and rebuttals, the team with better argument selection will almost certainly win. After all, rounds don't end after rebuttals – the second half of the debate (and the argument you choose to go for during the second half) plays an outsized role in determining the winner.

Why is this? To explain, let's look at an example of poor argument selection. Take the example from earlier in this chapter – a team has three contentions, and their opponents spend two and a half minutes of rebuttal putting a lot of responses on the third

contention. In most rounds like this, going for the third contention is likely the wrong choice, because the summary will have to answer two and a half minutes of content from rebuttal in a short amount of time, and likely won't have time left to do weighing or to extend answers to the other team's case. If this hypothetical team's opponents select the most strategic argument to go for, they'll have an easier time in summary/final focus, and will likely win.

However, if the team from our example chooses to go for the first contention, suddenly, they have plenty of time to answer the two, maybe three arguments made in their opponent's rebuttal, and still have a huge amount of time remaining to weigh their first contention against their opponent's case and extend answers (or turns) on their opponent's case.

Thus, argument selection has two benefits. First, it makes you much more likely to win the piece of offense that you're going for, as you don't have to answer as many arguments from the opponent's rebuttal and are less likely to drop answers to your case. Second, it frees up time to explain why even if your opponents win their case, you still win the round (assuming you win your offense).

Let's imagine another, even more, simple example. A team has two contentions (each two minutes long), and their opponents' rebuttal spends two minutes on each contention. In scenario one, this team chooses to go for both of their contentions in summary and final focus. In scenario two, they choose to only go for contention two. However, their opponents have three contentions, and successfully choose to go for the one that was under-covered by the rebuttal. Who will win?

In scenario one, our team will probably lose the debate. As mentioned above, it's nearly impossible to, in a three-minute summary speech, answer a four-minute rebuttal, let along have high-quality weighing or answers to the other team's case. So, in going for both contentions, our team has basically doomed themselves to dropping a few arguments from their opponent's rebuttal. A decent opponent will notice this, extend those dropped arguments, and our team will suddenly find themselves losing their own case, and the round.

In scenario two, our team has a good shot of winning the debate. Suddenly, our team has enough time in summary to answer the relevant rebuttal arguments, and hopefully do some weighing and answer the other team's case. Because both teams are doing at least some argument selection (our team chooses to go for only part of their case, instead of the whole case, the opponent does the same), the thing that will determine the round

is likely which team does better comparative weighing (see the weighing chapter for more on this).

To summarize, why does argument selection matter? Because it gives you crucially important time in the short summary and final focus speeches to guarantee that you're winning your case, and explain why your case matters the most. Poor argument selection will doom you to going for your entire case and winning none of it, instead of collapsing and winning some of it. In contrast, good argument selection will let you pick the best strategic option in a given round to maximize your chances of winning in the second half of the debate.

9.4 Properly Executing Argument Selection

Hooray! You know what argument selection is, you know when it happens, you (hopefully) understand why it's so important, now you just need to figure out how to do it. Unfortunately, this is the part that's hardest to learn, and hardest to put into practice.

Most debaters can intellectually understand that they need to collapse, but when faced with an actual round, they fall to their habits and go for everything. It takes a lot of practice and forcing yourself to do something you aren't totally comfortable with to become good at argument selection. Often, there's a strange time gap between when someone first learns about argument selection and when it finally really clicks in their head and they start doing it in round. If this happens to you, despair not! Sometimes, it just takes time, and a bit of work, to really get the concept, but once you do, you'll notice your debating improving a lot.

So, given that caveat, how should you go about argument selection? Let's explain this in steps.

Step one – get into the right mindset.

This might sound extremely generic, but it's also the most important step. The largest barrier to good argument selection is your own bad habits that you've built up over your entire debate career. There's always a huge temptation to go for what you're familiar with, even if your opponents have deliberately spent more time on it because they *know* you want to go for a specific contention.

There's also a huge temptation among newer debaters to go for everything (the whole case) and try to win it all, likely grounded in the idea that it's good to stress that you're

winning everything to the judge, not just one issue. This temptation, while potent, is counterproductive. As mentioned above, it's functionally impossible to give a good summary going for the whole case, even harder to go for the whole case and frontline everything, even harder to have good re-explanation and extensions of the case while going for all of it, and even harder to weigh and answer the other team's case. Probably nine of ten summaries that go for the whole case underexplain each case argument, don't frontline everything that needs to be frontlined, and don't weigh.

Thus, the first step on the path to good argument selection is getting over the mental hump and realizing that first, you must NOT go for everything (pick one, *maybe* two pieces of offense to go for), and second, that you have to *adapt* what you go for to the round, instead of just going for the same argument in every debate. This is much harder than it sounds, but it's crucially important – you can't improve if you don't change your habits, and in actual rounds, most people sink to whatever they've habitually trained themselves to do.

It's hard to explain how to go from the mindset of "go for everything" to the "collapse on one argument (and maybe a turn) and weigh" mindset, other than just forcing yourself to do it in repeated practice rounds. The drills at the end of this chapter should help with this step as well.

Step two – analyze the opponent's rebuttal to see what's been under-covered.

This might seem a bit self-explanatory, and most of the hypotheticals explained earlier in this chapter allude to this as the crucial metric for good argument selection. If a team under-covers (or completely drops) an argument, that should (almost always) be the argument you collapse on.

What does under-cover mean? Take the example from earlier in this chapter – a case with two one minute contentions and a two-minute long third contention. If an opponent's rebuttal spends proportionally more time on the third contention (ie, spends two and a half minutes answering a two-minute long argument), chances are, it'll be extremely easy to go for one of the first two contentions. In contrast, if the opponent's rebuttal spends three minutes combined on the first two contentions, the third contention is the easiest option to collapse on.

Put simply, the simplest and easiest rule for figuring out argument selection is to take the path of least resistance. If your opponents allocate more time to answering one of your contentions in rebuttal, that means more resistance, because you have to answer more arguments in summary if you go for that contention.

But how do you know what the path of least resistance is? Well first, time allocation (mentioned copiously above) isn't that hard to track and is usually a pretty good proxy for what argument will be easiest to win. Second though, and probably more importantly, is to just look at your flow. Is there a lot of ink next to one of your contentions (ie, lots of ink from your opponent's rebuttal)? Does one of the contentions have noticeably less ink next to it? If someone gives ten responses to the first contention and three to the second one, your flow will probably look have a giant mess next to your first contention and nearly nothing next to the second contention. Go for what's easy.

Step three – figure out which argument can be easily weighed.

This is both a complementary step to step two, and an exception to step two. What does this mean? It's a complementary step in that, once you figure out the path of least resistance, you should also think about how the argument you're going for can be weighed against the opponent's arguments.

If you're going for your favorite argument, you've likely already thought about this. However, in some cases, you'll have your favorite third contention like the team from our example, but the opponent will spend a ton of time in rebuttal refuting the third contention. The path of least resistance is to go for one of the first two contentions, even if you're not as comfortable going for them. At that point, you'll have to spend time to figure out how to weigh these arguments against the other team's case (see the weighing chapter for more detail). So in this way, weighing is the final step of argument selection, and you weigh the argument that has the path of least resistance.

This brings me to an important note about case writing as it pertains to argument selection – write your cases such that you don't have a contention with a non-existent impact. You never want to be stuck in a situation where the path of least resistance is going for a contention that clearly can't be weighed against the other team's arguments, so write your cases such that you could at least theoretically go for any argument in the case and weigh it.

Strategic cases can also be written such that a single contention has "hidden" arguments – be they sneaky link arguments or impacts that aren't explicitly labeled as impacts. This can often allow you to circumvent rebuttals that load up on one contention – if someone spends three minutes answering a contention, but misses one link argument and one impact, you can often ignore large portions of their rebuttal. Sometimes the path of least resistance is pointing out that even though the opponent said a lot of words to "respond" to a contention, none of those words answered the argument you're going

for.

This caveat about case writing also explains why it's sometimes strategic to not take the path of least resistance. If your case is written such that one of your contentions is pure fluff/filler and doesn't have an impact that you could ever realistically weigh and win off of, it doesn't matter if going for the fluff contention is the path of least resistance. Don't go for arguments that can't win you the round, even if they're easy to go for. Ideally, you'll write cases such that this never becomes a problem, but if you run into it, you'll often want to go for the argument that outweighs, even if it's a bit harder to frontline.

9.5 A Note Concerning Turns

First, most of this chapter has been written with the underlying assumption that in most rounds, you will be collapsing on an argument from your case to win the round. This will not always be true. Sometimes, it will make strategic sense to go only for one or two turns that were in your rebuttal and weigh them to win the round. If the path of least resistance (and the path to the most weighable argument) is to go for a turn or piece of offense from your rebuttal, by all means, go for the turn.

However, keep a few caveats in mind. First, going for turns is risky, because often, your opponents still have a chance to answer them. If you're a first speaking team, going for turns in summary might be the wrong call if the second summary can just frontline all of the turns (you may have to justify why the second speaking team must answer turns in rebuttal if you choose to do this). If you're a second speaking team, it makes more sense to go for turns in second summary, assuming the first summary dropped them (or severely under-covered them). Second, make it clear with your time allocation that the turn is where you'll win the debate – judges often have a hard time voting for a quickly extended turn (even if it was completely dropped). You need to invest time in your summary and final focus to make it a real voting issue (weigh!), or you're unlikely to win off of it.

Second, part of argument selection involves dealing with turns on your case. When you're doing argument selection, be sure that you spend a bit of time to kick out of turns if possible. What does it mean to kick out of turns? Suppose a team reads a delink to your first contention, and then reads three turns to the impact. You plan to go for the second contention, which was under-covered by the rebuttal. It's worth spending the five seconds to explicitly concede the delink, and say that because there's no link to

the first contention, your opponents can't access the impact turns anymore. This is an underrated, but often devastating strategy, as it quickly eliminates large portions of the offense your opponents may have generated in rebuttal.

However, sometimes, this isn't possible. Suppose your opponent *only* reads impact turns to your first contention (this is called straight turning). There's nothing for you to use to get out of those turns. If an argument is straight turned, it usually hijacks your argument selection. Since you have to answer the turns somehow, and you can't concede a defensive argument (such as a non-unique or a delink), you have to just frontline each of the turns. At that point, the path of least resistance is just to go for the argument your opponents straight turned, since you've already answered all of their arguments against it.

9.6 Conclusion and Drills/Practice

To summarize the advice of this chapter: Collapse strategically, and weigh. Do not go for your entire case or the argument you know best, rather, pick one argument to invest your time in, answer your opponent's arguments, and weigh the argument you've selected against your opponent's case. To pick which argument to go for, look at your flow to find the path of least resistance (the argument your opponents under-cover), and go for it, unless it can't be weighed, in which case, go for an argument that can be weighed, even if it's a little harder. Don't hesitate to go for turns if they've been under-covered (or dropped) and can be weighed, kick out of turns on your case, and if your opponents ever straight turn a contention (a rare occurrence), answer the turns and then go for that argument.

If you'd like to practice argument selection, here are a few drills you can do on your own time:

1. Watch a high-level PF round on YouTube and flow it up until the first summary. Before the first summary, decide what case argument you would go for as the first speaking team, and give a summary where you frontline that argument, extend it, and weigh it. You can repeat this process for the second summary. Then, watch the rest of the round and see if the debaters' choices matched your own.
2. Have a practice round where you give yourself extra prep time before the crucial argument selection speech – first summary, or second rebuttal/second summary (depending on your preference). Use all of this extra prep time to talk with your

partner about what the path of least resistance is, what argument is most strategic to go for, etc.

3. Have a practice round (or watch a full round on YouTube). After the round, give redo speeches where you go for every argument, and afterward, evaluate which was the easiest to go for. In other words, if you have a three contention case, give three summaries, one going for each of the three contentions.

4. As an addendum to the first drill, try making it harder for yourself over time. If you give a summary going for what you think is the path of least resistance, but it takes you three full minutes to frontline, extend, and weigh, take a few minutes to think about two things. First, are you actually going for the path of least resistance? If not, give a redo going for a different argument. Second, are you speaking efficiently? If you're going for the path of least resistance, give repeated redo speeches, taking twenty to thirty seconds away from your total speaking time for each redo. So, you'd first have three minutes, two minutes and 30 seconds, etc, until you become really efficient at going for one argument.

10 Weighing by Matthew Salah

This chapter covers one of the most difficult yet important debate skills: weighing your impacts. In Chapter 2 you learned that impacts are an essential part of any argument; in this chapter, you will learn how to utilize impact analysis to win rounds. Weighing, broadly, is the practice of comparing arguments to each other, and this chapter will explain why weighing is so essential, teach you how to do effective weighing in rounds, cover common weighing terminology, and provide tips on preparing excellent weighing strategies in advance of the tournament. Out of any of the sections of this textbook, in my experience, weighing is the part that debaters seem to struggle with the most. While debaters are often instructed by coaches and judges to do more "impact calculus" (another term for weighing your arguments), competitors often balk at such an intimidating phrase. This chapter aims to demystify the often elusive tactic, and by the end, you will hopefully realize that weighing is not as difficult as calculus! Weighing, after all, is just like any other argument: it simply requires a clear explanation, persuasive presentation, and lots of critical thinking.

10.1 Why Weigh

In almost any good round, both teams will win some arguments. Because debaters' always know their own case better than their opponents, judges will often find themselves persuaded by arguments made by both teams. Unless one team completely dominates, the flow will reflect this as well: by the end of the round, each team will be ahead on some arguments. In this case, how will the judge know who to vote for? If neither team does any weighing, the judge will find themselves completely lost: they thought each team won their own argument, so who should win? The judge will have to pick an argument in order to vote for someone, and if the debaters in the round don't inform them on how to make that decision, the judge may decide in unpredictable ways. They may vote for the argument they thought was presented the most cleanly, the argument that resonated with them the most, or simply vote for the team that did better in cross-fire.

Sometimes decisions like these may feel erratic, but they are reasonable in rounds where arguments were never compared to each other. More importantly, seemingly arbitrary decisions like these are completely avoidable: all it takes it explaining why your argument is more important than your opponents'. The technique of weighing will be explained in more detail in later parts of this chapter, but it is as simple as saying "even if my opponents are correct about their argument, we should still win the round since our argument is more important because…" If either team had made such a statement in the example above, the judge's decision would be much easier: vote for the team with the most important argument. As you'll learn in later sections, weighing is far more than simply a tiebreaker in close rounds: it can reshape entire debates. Nonetheless, the example of our undecided judge demonstrates how essential weighing is to winning rounds.

Despite the apparent importance of weighing, many debaters often fail to make effective argument comparisons. Several justifications are usually given for this. Some competitors have said they do not want to appear as if they are conceding their opponent's argument when they claim that they should win the round even if their opponents are correct. While the resistance to making implicit concessions is laudable, it's far from a reason not to weigh: an effective weighing strategy will emphasize the importance of your argument while continuing to contest the legitimacy of your opponents'. Debaters will also claim they did not have time to weigh, or that they simply forgot. But knowing that weighing is central to winning rounds, why did they not make time to weigh or write themselves a reminder? The primary reason debaters fail to weigh, then, is that they have not fully internalized the usefulness of weighing.

Thus, before diving into the techniques of weighing in the next two sections, it is worth expanding on the value of argument comparison. For starters, you can't reliably win without weighing! If you don't explain why your argument is more important than your opponents, then the only surefire way to win is to convince the judge that every single one of your opponent's arguments is meritless—hardly a dependable strategy, especially if you face particularly talented opponents. Weighing also enables you to win rounds against arguments you were unprepared for or were not able to answer. All you need to do is know your own argument well enough to explain why its impact dwarfs your opponents'. Finally, effective weighing can force your opponents to allocate way more time responding to your argument because they will realize you will win the round if you win your argument. This takes already limited time away from your opponents' attempts to advance their own arguments. Weighing, therefore, improves

your chances of victory in numerous ways and should be central to your strategy in every round.

10.2 Weighing Basics

Weighing is far from formulaic. While some may think that weighing simply requires listing off weighing mechanisms to show that their impact is bigger than their opponents', successful weighing actually requires in-depth critical analysis and is a far more creative enterprise than going through a checklist. In fact, the best weighing is often done by thinking outside of the box.

Fundamentally, weighing is about argument interaction and comparison. Any argument that claims that you should win the round even if your opponents wins a given argument is a weighing argument. The start of a weighing argument might sound something like: "If we win our first contention we win the round because it far outweighs all of their arguments because…" The rest of the statement should be filled in with reasons that your argument outweighs your opponents'. This can be as many or as few reasons as you'd like to give—often one will suffice, but some rounds will call for more (this and other weighing strategy questions are addressed more fully later in the chapter). It is essential to note here that weighing arguments must always be comparative. It is insufficient to prove that your argument's impact is very large since your opponents' impact might be even bigger. To make a weighing argument, you must always consider your opponent's argument as well to show that yours is more important when compared to theirs.

The rest of this section and the next is dedicated to helping the reader generate reasons one argument outweighs another. This can be achieved in a variety of ways: there is no single approach that defines effective weighing. Competitors often think weighing only concerns impact size and is simply a comparison of which team's impacts are bigger. Certainly, having "bigger" impacts is an important and persuasive way to execute weighing, but the entire category of weighing arguments is much more expansive. Weighing, done properly, takes into account the entire argument: the uniqueness claim and the link story as well as the impacts.

The next two examples seek to illustrate that weighing requires holistic and thoughtful analysis of entire arguments and how they interact.

The topic "Resolved: The United States federal government should increase

its quota of H-1B visas" is being debated. H1-B visas grant entry to highly skilled foreign workers; the resolution is asking if there should be more of them. The affirmative team makes the common argument in favor of more high skilled immigration that the United States faces a severe skills shortage in STEM workers, and that more H1-B visa holders can fill these vacancies. On the other hand, a negative team, arguing against raising the quota, says that enabling more high skill immigration exposes American workers to even more competition, driving down wages and costing many workers their jobs. Both teams persuasively advance their arguments throughout the constructive and rebuttal speeches, so the affirmative team realizes they need a weighing argument to win the round. The affirmative summary speech begins by weighing. Among other things, they make the argument that, if they can prove that their claims about the skills shortage are true, then there is no way American workers are harmed by the resolution, since immigrants are filling positions Americans weren't qualified for, to begin with. The negative team contests this in their summary speech by claiming that even still, it affects the Americans who are qualified for the positions, even if there aren't very many of them. The affirmative retorts in their final focus that companies won't turn to sponsoring an immigrants' visa if there are qualified workers for the position domestically.

While the above example may not seem like a traditional weighing argument, the affirmative noticed an exemplary instance of an argument interaction and used it to their advantage. By arguing that the very premise of their argument—that immigrant workers will fill positions Americans can't—disproved the negative's main argument, the affirmative attempted to show that winning their skills shortage argument wins them the round. This is the essence of weighing. When told to weigh the skills shortage argument against the negative's harms to American workers, many would immediately begin brainstorming reasons why hurting the STEM industry development is worse than depressed wages and job loss. Doing so would certainly be a good start, and one would hope the debaters in the above example supplemented the described analysis with direct impact comparisons of that sort, but conceiving of weighing solely in this way overlooks potentially round winning arguments. The example immigration debate also reinforces the centrality of weighing to effective round strategy. Since both teams continued to advance their own arguments in every speech, whoever won the weighing layer of the debate should win the round. Both teams noticed this, and rather than weighing serving as a brief afterthought towards the end of the late speeches, it became

a central part of the back half of the round, with both teams thoroughly contesting just one of the presumably several weighing arguments made in the round.

This next example demonstrates another case where weighing is about more than just impacts:

> The topic is "Resolved: In United States public K-12 schools, the probable cause standard ought to apply to searches of students." In the status-quo, public schools in the United States use the reasonable suspicion standard to evaluate whether it's legally permissible to search a student. Outside of schools, law enforcement uses the probable cause standard, which requires more evidence of wrongdoing before a search is initiated. The affirmative team, arguing in favor of limiting the ability of teachers and law enforcement to search students, contends that searches by teachers and school police breed mistrust and alienation amongst targeted students, leading them towards more delinquent behavior, crime, and ultimately incarceration. The negative team argues that if schools cannot use searches to deter potential criminals, they will turn to harsher punishments for school infractions, resulting in more school suspensions and referrals to the criminal justice system for students who commit even the most minor infractions. Both teams agree that incarcerating students for minor offenses is deplorable, but the affirmative claims that reducing the number of searches will result in fewer unfairly incarcerated students, even if the punishments become harsher. First, the affirmative argues that most crime happens outside of schools, so even if in school punishments become worse, incarceration will still go down, since the status-quo of searches is pushing otherwise well-behaved students towards delinquency once the school day ends. Second, the affirmative points out that searches affect the entire student body—even completely innocent students. This impacts more students and is more repugnant than harsh punishments, which almost exclusively affect students who have already committed an infraction. The negative responds by arguing that while searches could theoretically affect everyone, in reality, they happen infrequently, and the infractions punished under punitive disciplinary regimes are so minor that the students are practically innocent. Moreover, the negative argues that harsh school punishments are primarily responsible for the incarceration of students, without them, very few students would be referred to law enforcement at

all.

This example debate is very dense, so it's worth examining in detail. The first thing worth observing is that both teams impact to the same end result: less incarceration. From that it would be easy to conclude that weighing is unnecessary: if the impacts are the same, how can they be compared? Nonetheless, the weighing debated unfolded on two distinct axes. First, they debate whose argument prevents more unjust incarceration by comparing the size of their links. For example, the affirmative tries to show their link into incarceration is bigger by noting that searches increase the likelihood of crime outside of school, which accounts for most crime, and can affect the entire student body, while punishments can only affect students already found guilty of something. Note here that the affirmative's weighing arguments are comparative: they aren't just saying that their argument affects lots of students, but that it affects more students when compared to the negative's argument. Second, the affirmative tried to differentiate their impact by saying that searching an innocent student is a worse evil than punishing a guilty one. Even though both teams impact to the same final outcome of incarceration, the affirmative still managed to contend that the form of incarceration their side prevents is more severe.

These examples have demonstrated a number of the most central principles of weighing. First, that weighing is always comparative. It's not about how your argument stands alone, it is always in the context of an opponent's argument. Second, weighing requires thinking outside the box about ways the arguments interact. No checklist could have easily generated the weighing arguments described in our two examples; instead, they required critical thinking and deep analysis. Third, weighing is not only about the impacts. In the immigration example, the affirmative's argument disproved the link to the negative's argument; in the school searches example, both teams impacted to the same outcome and instead chose to weigh the size and severity of their links. Finally, weighing is often the deciding factor in competitive rounds. As a result, it becomes an additional layer to the debate, rich in clash and analysis. Effective weighing must be much more than an afterthought—it's often the centerpiece of the debate.

10.3 Ways to Weigh

While weighing is far from formulaic, it is nonetheless helpful to cover the different types of weighing. This section presents four different methods of weighing. This is far

from an exhaustive list: as established above, weighing requires hard thinking about the specific arguments in question. Referring to a list of weighing strategies is dangerous in that it can derail original thought and refocus attention to a narrow checklist. In fact, none of the weighing arguments advanced in the previous section's examples fit cleanly into any of these categories. The four approaches presented below are instead intended to help the reader to envision a few of the various directions in which weighing can proceed.

1: Turns Case

Turns case arguments are among the most powerful tools available for weighing. A turns case argument is any claim that your argument links into your opponents'. This is an effective weighing argument, because voting for you accesses both your impact and your opponents', while voting for your opponent only accesses their impact.

For instance, if your opponent impacted to more humanitarian assistance in East Africa, while your argument concerns the risk of a bioterror attack in Sudan, you might argue that in the event of a pandemic, resources across East Africa will be redirected away from aid and towards combating the disease, essential regional NGOs will have to relocate to avoid infection, and international attention on the terrorist attack will undermine political support for foreign assistance in Western countries. These effects will combine to reduce the amount of humanitarian aid flowing into East Africa, so averting the bioterror attack both saves lives from disease *and* prevents large reductions in aid flows.

While many turns case arguments are directly causal—it is claimed that one impact directly triggers another, such as in the example above—turns case arguments can take many forms. You could also argue that your argument precludes theirs: that without your impact happening, theirs cannot occur. As an example, suppose one team was impacting to economic protectionism and a decline in trade, while the other team impacted to interstate war. The team with the trade argument might read evidence that strong trade ties prevent war by aligning economic interests with the status-quo, so only in a world of trade decline is the war their opponents speak of even possible.

Another way of framing a turns case argument is to contend that your argument is the root cause of your opponents'. For example, if your opponent impacts to more income inequality, but your argument is about increasing union membership, then you could claim that weakened unions are the primary reason inequality has soared over the past

several decades. Your argument, therefore, is much more important because it can solve the underlying factor driving our widening income gap. This type of framing is useful when the impacts are trends, such as economic inequality or union membership, rather than one time events, like war or a terrorist attack.

2: Timeframe

Timeframe arguments represent another weighing approach. Any claim that analyzes when an impact occurs fits into this category. Because it is not immediately obvious what timeframe should be prioritized—now or the future—timeframe weighing must always be accompanied by warrants that explain why the judge should prioritize arguments of a given timeframe.

One way to approach timeframe weighing is to assert that your impact happens first, and therefore we should prioritize addressing it first. One reason for this is that someone else—an intervening actor, such as a government, NGO, or individual—might solve your opponents' argument before the impact can occur. It is always helpful and persuasive to name a specific intervening actor, although that is not always necessary. As an example of where a timeframe argument of this sort might be useful, imagine a round where one side impacts to a rogue state building a nuclear weapons program, while the other side impacts to a cyber attack that shuts down our power grid. The team with the cyber attack impact might point out that the attack could come at any moment, so we need to prioritize power grid security over nuclear proliferation, which can take decades, and other factors, including multilateral action through the International Atomic Energy Agency, have been shown to prevent nuclear breakout at later stages of development.

It's also possible to weigh your arguments on timeframe through a nearly opposite approach: by contending that your argument plays out over a much longer timespan than your opponents'. This approach is not traditionally considered timeframe weighing but is included in this section because it also analyzes chronology. It only goes to further demonstrate how many different potential approaches there are to weighing. This approach might be useful in a round where one side impacts to an oil price shock, while the other side impacts to structural reforms in international lending agencies that can reduce global poverty. While the oil price shock is likely to occur first chronologically, the team with the lending reform argument would be smart to point out that the oil shock will come and go, but the changes to international banking are permanent, and

therefore will have a much larger effect on poverty given that they last multiple periods.

As a final note, the existence of time frame weighing also exemplifies how weighing is about much more than impacts: how those impacts are generated matters as well. The entire story of an argument comes into play during time frame weighing—focusing only on stacking up the size of the end result would be myopic.

3: Impact Size

Despite all the time this chapter has spent reminding its readers that impact size is not all there is to weighing, in many circumstances, impact size comparisons are nonetheless a useful tool. If you impact simply affects more people in more severe ways than your opponents', it is certainly worth pointing that out to the judge. There are many debate buzzwords associated with impact size weighing, such as scope, severity, and magnitude, and it is worth knowing what these mean even if they are not always useful to say in rounds. Scope refers to how many people an impact affects. Is it the mentally ill in the United States? The entire population of Brazil? Babysitters in San Francisco? Clearly, affecting more people makes for a larger impact. But that's not the only thing that matters. That's where severity comes into play: how intensely does it affect that people in its scope? The more serious grievances an impact creates, the more it should matter in the round. The term magnitude is meant to encompass both the scope and severity of an argument. Magnitude refers to the overall size of an impact and is often conceptualized as the product of scope and severity.

Scope and severity always remain relevant because sometimes it is unclear which impact has a higher magnitude. Say you are comparing a terrorist attack to an economic recession: which has a bigger magnitude? The terrorist attack is far more severe in how it affects its victims, but an economic recession conceivably impacts the entire nation. While, in this instance, both teams should continue their attempts to persuade the judge that their impact is bigger, it is easy to see how quickly such a debate can devolve into a stalemate. For that reason, despite serving as many competitors go-to strategy, direct impact size comparisons can sometimes be an unreliable approach. One should always consider weighing on impact magnitude, but not at the expense of other, often more surefire tactics, such as finding turns case arguments.

4: Probability and Strength of Link

This last category of weighing focuses entirely on the link level. By asserting that your impact is more likely to occur, or that your links are significantly stronger, you give the judge a reason to prefer voting for you.

When doing probability weighing, it's worth pointing out all the places your opponents' argument could prove false, rather than making blanket statements about the likelihood of their argument. For instance, exclaiming "a nuclear terrorist attack is super unlikely, so we outweigh on probability" is much less persuasive than saying "for their argument to be true, a terrorist group has to seek the potential end of civilization, acquire a massive bomb from some of the most highly protected facilities in the world, and then find a way to detonate it in the target country. Not only that, but my opponents' argument does not even guarantee that we stop them! Our argument, on the other hand, requires no such leaps of the imagination because…" Rather than assuming that your judge already shares your doubts about your opponents' argument, you should spell them out explicitly.

It's also possible to do strength of link weighing based on how the arguments unfolded in the current round, rather than the arguments themselves in the abstract. For example, if your opponents' conceded your argument while you have plenty of defense on theirs. In this case, you might want to argue that the judge should vote for your uncontested argument rather than doing the work to discard all the answers you have put on your opponents' case.

Probability weighing and strength of link weighing can have a significant shortcoming, especially if done poorly. Since it is very easy to simply assert that one's opponents' argument is unlikely, or to mention that there seems to be more defense on their case than on yours, teams will often pursue lazy probability weighing despite leaving more effective strategies on the table. Such an approach can be easily trumped by an opposing team simply reiterating why their argument is plausible and doing impact weighing themselves.

One situation where link weighing is paramount, however, is when both teams impact to the same final outcome. In general, if the impacts are the same, the link stories are the only aspect left to consider. As seen in our school searches example from the previous section, link weighing of this sort can get far more complex than simple probability analysis: size and type of link must also be considered.

10.4 Resolving Weighing Stalemates

There are many times when pursuing the strategies above might still result in a weighing stalemate. Perhaps it's unclear who's impact has a higher magnitude, or perhaps one team's argument outweighs on probability but the other team's impact is larger. In some instances, there are clear tiebreakers to be found. If both teams make turns case arguments, timeframe weighing could be used as a tiebreaker: if my argument turns your case before your argument turns my case then the judge should probably vote to prevent the more imminent threat. In many cases, however, weighing stalemates are hard to resolve absent complicated and sometimes inaccessible reasoning for why one type of weighing should be preferred over another. The debate over which matters more, probability or magnitude, always rages on.

A simpler way to address stalemates is to utilize effective rhetoric. The way you present your argument matters and is itself a useful weighing strategy. For example, consider a weighing debate between improving a developing country's human rights record or growing its economy. One team might exclaim "if people don't have enough food to eat, whether they have freedom of speech is the last of their concerns: growing the economy is far more important." The other team might argue: "money can come and go, but our rights are inalienable. A marginal change in my income doesn't matter if I don't have the basic guarantee of personal security from the government." Here, both teams managed to frame their arguments to make them feel pressing while simultaneously discounting their opponents' argument as superfluous. While they did not actually make any formal weighing arguments, they gave compelling narratives about what their impacts mean to everyday people. This sort of effective rhetoric is more likely to stick with judges than buzzword heavy and overly technical comparisons.

10.5 Weighing Strategy

When should one start to weigh their arguments? This question has been hinted at in other chapters, and the answer is as early as possible! Weighing can begin as early as the constructive speech: many teams might choose to read impact framing analysis in their cases. It also might happen in the rebuttal speech: while the speaker dissects their opponents' arguments, they might also choose to make direct comparisons to their own case. It can also happen as late as the summary or final focus speeches, although at that point it is often too late for effective weighing to develop.

Regardless of the precise speech in which weighing begins, it is essential to remember that weighing is a central layer of the debate, not an afterthought reserved for the last 15 seconds of your late speeches. Because weighing often frames the round in the judge's mind by dictating which argument they evaluate first, it should almost always be done at the beginning of the speeches. This also helps to make sure you do not become too crunched for time and forget to weigh at the end of an already time-pressed summary or final focus. The only exception is possibly the rebuttal speech, where sometimes it makes sense to weigh as you address each argument in turn, rather than at the beginning of the speech.

10.6 Preparing and Practicing Weighing

While much of weighing concerns in round critical thinking, it is also worth preparing before a tournament. One way to do this is to make a table with all the arguments you will be making at the tournament on one side, and all the arguments you anticipate your opponent's making on the other side. In the intersections, you can write down reasons your argument outweighs your opponents'. Although the table might not apply exactly to the specifics of each round you debate, it will be helpful in frontloading a lot of the tough thinking weighing requires.

To practice coming up with weighing on the spot, practice debates are the most helpful. Try doing a practice debate where neither team is allowed to read any direct refutations of opposing arguments, and you will quickly learn the necessity of weighing. Having to fill an entire round exclusively will argument interaction and comparison will quickly improve your weighing technique. There is also a drill known as "impact wars" where participants are assigned an impact and told to debate which is bigger. While incredibly fun, a careful reader of this chapter will note that such a drill does not instill good weighing practices, because it forces participants to only examine impacts, when in reality the entire argument matters.

10.7 Conclusion

We are constantly prioritizing all sorts of things in our daily lives, so even though weighing may seem difficult or complex at first, you should remember to use your intuition. If you think creatively and remember to weigh at the beginning of every speech, you

will excel at weighing. If you ever find yourself in a round where you feel like you are losing, you should resist any urge to give up or simply muddle the round and hope the judge makes a confused decision for you. Instead, you should simply weigh! All you need to win a round is to win one argument and weigh it effectively. If your opponent is winning every argument except for one, capitalize on it and weigh; weighing should be your crutch in every round.

11 Tournament Procedures by Matthew Salah

Now that you have read about Public Forum debate, you are ready to attend a tournament! This chapter covers what to expect from a tournament: what to bring, what it will be like when you arrive, advice for in-round etiquette, and tournament rules to be aware of.

11.1 What to Bring

The most important thing to remember before attending a tournament is to bring everything you need to compete in a debate round. This should start with all of the prep you have worked hard on over the previous several weeks: your cases, blocks, frontlines, and weighing. You can choose to print this work, or to bring it on your computer (assuming that is allowed by the tournament—more on tournament rules later). Having your work on paper often has the advantage of persuasion, since it is easy to find your head buried in your computer screen while giving a speech. The computer, however, is sometimes easier to organize, and also allows for seamless updates to your prep during the tournament. Many will choose to store some prep on their computer and print out others: it is generally a good practice to print your cases, but blocks and other supplementary evidence might be best kept electronically. However, it is important to experiment with different arrangements and find the balance that works best for you.

You should also bring a device to time your speeches (in most cases, a phone will do a fine job at this), and material to flow the round. Different debaters have different approaches to flowing, but it is most common to use 8.5 by 11 printer or lined paper. Some people prefer to have longer, legal sized paper so they can fit more information on the page or write bigger. Others will flow on their computer, typically using an Excel spreadsheet. Like with storing prep, you should figure out what works best for you through trial and error.

Finally, remember to dress nicely, to bring your phone and computer charger, and carry snacks.

11.2 When You Arrive

At its most basic form, a tournament is just a series of debates or rounds that takes place over the course of one or more days. Although many tournaments are somewhat different from each other, most competitive tournaments across the nation follow this basic structure.

Prior to the tournament, teams are entered or registered to attend the tournament anywhere from 1 week to 3 months before a tournament. This is typically the responsibility of the team's coach. If a team does not have a coach, they will have to register or enter themselves. At some point in time before the tournament, usually around 2-3 days before the tournament for smaller tournaments, and 1 week before the tournament for larger tournaments, teams are committed to the tournament and cannot drop, or remove themselves from the tournament without paying a penalty. All the teams who are still entered and registered to debate now make up the "pool".

Each tournament can be divided into three main parts: preliminary debates, elimination debates, and the awards ceremony.

Preliminary debates, also referred to as preliminary rounds or prelims, are when all entries in a division compete against each other. Most tournaments have between 4-6 preliminary rounds although some smaller tournaments have 3.

After prelims, the teams with the most wins advance to elimination rounds or elims. Most tournaments have between 3-4 elimination rounds although some smaller tournaments may only have 1-2 and some larger tournaments can have as many as 6. These rounds are "single-elimination" where teams debate until they lose. The winner of the tournament is the winner of the elimination rounds.

At the awards ceremony, the top performing debaters and teams are recognized in front of the entire tournament and usually presented with some medal or trophy for their accomplishment.

Before a round, teams will receive pairings, sometimes called schematics. Many modern tournaments will send out, or blast, pairings over text message and email. Some older

tournaments may announce pairings verbally or release them on paper in a centralized location. Pairings usually contain the following important information:

Round: this announces what round it is, e.g. Round 6.

Opponent Code: this announces who the opponent is. Some tournaments have opponent codes labeled as a school and the initials of the debaters on the team, e.g. American School AZ, whereas some tournaments have opponent codes labeled as a series of numbers and letters, presumably to avoid providing information as to which team the opponent is from.

Judge: this announces who the judge is, either in the form of their name or occasionally in the form of a series of numbers and/or letters. This provides information on how a team can adapt to the particular judge.

Time: this announces the start time of your round. Make sure to arrive at the room early!

Flight: this announces whether a team is flight A or flight B. Most tournaments "flight" rounds to save time. That means they split a round into two halves and call the first flight A and the second flight B. Each flight lasts about 45 minutes.

Location: this announces what room or location the debate is occurring in.

Additional Information: on text and email blasts of the pairings, the tournament directors may include additional information specific to the round. The nature of these messages varies, but they most frequently reference the need for rounds to finish in a timely manner.

Some tournaments, mostly those at the local level, allow cross-entering or entering other events at the tournament. Usually, a debater is not allowed to enter another debate event, but they can enter speech or drama events. If a tournament allows this, the schedule will typically reflect it, with speech and drama events scheduled at different times than debate events.

One common question by novice debaters is how much free time or downtime there is at a tournament. Fear not, as most debate tournaments contain lots of free time! For tournaments that have flighted debates, the flight that a team is not debating is another 45 minutes of free time. Most tournaments have time in the schedule in between rounds, usually for the directors to pair new rounds. Many tournaments also, unfortunately, fail to follow the posted schedule and falls behind. You should try your best to take

advantage of this free time by either bringing entertainment—music, a book, or a game—or, if you find yourself with the requisite energy, using the time to do additional prep.

11.3 In Round

Each debate, or round, consists of two Public Forum debate teams and one or more judges, also referred to as critics or adjudicators. If there is more than one judge, they are collectively referred to as a panel. If a debater were to ask, "who's your panel?" They are asking, "who are the judges that are judging your round?"

Each judge is given a ballot which can either be in electronic or paper form. The ballot is the document that shows which teams competed against each other in a debate round and who the winner of that round is. The ballot will also contain space for the judge to assign speaker points: a score—typically between 25 and 30—awarded to indicate your individual proficiency as a speaker. While these points do not factor into wins and losses, they may be used for seeding in elimination rounds, and awards are presented to the debaters who finish with the most speaker points. Finally, the ballot will have additional space to show speaker rankings, provide a reason for decision (RFD), and write judge feedback for each individual team.

You may hear teams refer to different kinds of judges, such as "lay," "flow," or "flay" (the combination of lay and flow). While these categories are far from fixed, it is important to know the orientation of your judge before the round begins. A judge is referred to as "flow" or "tech" (short for technical) if they follow the round closely by flowing it and are familiar with the more technical principles of debate: jargon, extensions, offense/defense, and so on. A "lay" judge is someone less familiar with debate's technical aspects—they are often parent volunteers and it might even by their first time judging! A "flay" judge is anyone somewhere in the middle: maybe they are a parent volunteer who has been judging for a long time or a debate coach who dislikes jargon and overly technical debate.

All types of judges are legitimate arbiters of the round; their decisions are final, and it is on the debaters to adapt to the judge rather than the other way around. After all, the point of Public Forum debate is to give you the skills to persuade the general public, no matter how experienced your audience is with the subject matter at hand. It is also worth noting that a judge's familiarity with debate is not a measure of their intelligence, so you should never talk down to a judge in round. In general, speaking at an understandable

pace and limiting your jargon use are good practices no matter who is in the back of the room.

There are many ways to find out what type of judge you have. First, you can look up on tabroom.com to see if they have a paradigm. A paradigm is a write-up of how the judge evaluates rounds, and in a judge's paradigm, you can find a lot of important advice on how to debate in front of them. If the judge does not have a paradigm, they are likely a lay judge, since most judges familiar with the activity will have a paradigm. Second, you can ask other debaters who have had your judge in previous rounds. They should be able to tell you what type of judge they are. Finally, you can ask the judge a question before the round to gauge their experience with debate. Be sure to make these questions specific and non-condescending. If you ask a judge directly "how much debate experience do you have" you are likely to offend both a very experienced judge and a judge that is completely new to debate. Instead, you should ask something like, "how do you feel about speed?" This gives the judge an opportunity to speak to their opinions about technical debate: whether they love it, tolerate it, or don't know what it is.

The round begins with a coin-flip. The winner of the flip gets to choose either side they would like to debate on (pro or con) or which order they would like to speak in (first or second). The team that lost the coin flip gets to take their pick of the other category. Once the coin flip is finished, the round is ready to commence as soon as all debaters and judges are ready. Speeches and crossfires proceed one after another with minimal interruptions.

In each round, both teams will be given a certain amount of prep time to prepare in between speeches. Typically both teams get three minutes to use throughout the entire round, although some tournaments have started to use four minutes. It is a good practice to confirm how much prep time you will be given before the rounds begin. Prep time can be used in any way you find helpful, whether it is organizing your next speech, talking to your partner about strategy, or thinking about how to respond to the arguments your opponents presented. Prep time will go by quickly, so do not waste it! It is also the only time you have to communicate directly (in a whisper) with your partner, so use it to ensure that you are on the same page.

Teams may also request to view evidence in between speeches. The rules that guide this process vary by tournament, but the general process is simple: one team asks to see the evidence the other team has referred to, and the team that read the evidence provides it on paper, on their computer, or via email or flash drive. Keep in mind that you may be

asked to show evidence to your opponents (and sometimes even the judge), so always ensure you are able to retrieve any evidence you reference in a timely manner.

11.4 Essential Tournament Rules

Different tournaments can operate completely differently. While most follow the same basic structure, they have diverse approaches to specific tournament issues. Below is a list of some of the most relevant tournament rules that you should be aware of:

Evidence Rules: As noted above, tournament rules dictate how the evidence exchange proceeds. Some tournaments will allow both teams to prep while evidence is being retrieved, while others strictly forbid it. Additionally, every tournament has its own process for submitting formal evidence challenges, if you think your opponent has distorted or fabricated a piece of evidence. Evidence challenges are incredibly serious accusations and should only occur when absolutely necessary. That said, you should always read up on a tournament's evidence rules before entering rounds since some will require you to file the evidence challenge in the middle of the round.

Technology: Some tournaments are more friendly to technology than others. Almost all tournaments now allow the use of computers and smartphones so long as they are not connected to the internet. At the local level, however, a few tournaments continue to ban the use of electronics. At the other end of the spectrum, some tournaments have even begun to allow internet access during debate rounds. You should be sure to consult these rules before arriving at a tournament.

Prep Time: As noted above, most tournaments give three minutes of prep, but a select few allow for four minutes.

Late Penalties: Familiarize yourself with when the tournament expects you to arrive at a round. You should always attempt to arrive early to round, but be sure to arrive even earlier to tournaments that have strict penalties for being late. Some tournaments, for example, might grant your opponents the coin flip if you are late to the round.

Judging Requirements: How many judges are you required to bring? What is the fee for hiring a tournament provided judge? Are there any restrictions on who you can bring as a judge? These are questions that vary by tournament and are usually addressed by coaches, but if you find yourself without a coach, you should be sure to look into this yourself.

Meals: Does the tournament provide meals? If not, plan accordingly.

11.5 Conclusion

Whether it's your first tournament or your 20th, your approach should be the same: go in with an open mind, do your best, and have fun! Over time, you will become more and more comfortable in a tournament setting and will develop your own practices for managing nerves, organizing prep, and filling downtime. The details provided in this chapter are simply a jumping off point: there is more to discover about tournaments once you arrive. While some of this chapter might sound confusing at first, the process of attending a tournament is the best experience for learning about tournament procedure, so get out there and learn by doing!

11.6 Key Words

To end this chapter, here is a list of essential terms to help you navigate tournaments:

Round: A debate!

Preliminary Round: One of several rounds before elimination begins, like the regular season in a professional sport.

Break: The break marks the end of prelim rounds and the beginning of elims. Not all teams will make the break: only the teams with the most prelim wins will move on at this point.

Elimination Round: All rounds after the break.

The Coin Flip: This is done at the beginning of the round to determine speaking order and side.

Pairings: The announcement of the next round, including who will debate who in front of which judge, and the time and location of those debates.

Power-matching: The practice of pairing teams with similar records against each other.

Preset: The rounds that aren't power-matched and are instead randomly assigned. At most tournaments, this is typically only the first two prelim rounds.

Bracket: The organizing method of elimination rounds. Like in March Madness, whoever wins moves on to face the winner of the adjacent debate on the bracket.

Judge: The adjudicator of a round.

Panel: A set of judges who preside over a round.

Speaker Points: Points assigned to every debater, representing their individual performance in a given round.

Ballot: The place, either on paper or online, where the judge records their decision and speaker points.

12 Appendix

12.1 Index

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Ballot: The place, either on paper or online, where the judge records their decision and speaker points.

Flow: The flow is a method of note taking to keep track of the round. If you need a refresher on how to flow, please refer to Chapter 2.

Contention: An argument made in the constructive speech.

Warrant: A reason something is true.

Impact: The reason an argument matters—what good or bad thing is the resolution ultimately going to cause to happen?

Terminal Impact: The final impact in a link story. For example, if I argue the resolution grows the economy, which provides jobs, in turn reducing poverty, poverty is the terminal impact.

Magnitude: How big an impact is. Usually thought of as the product of its scope and its severity: how many people does it affect, and how intensely does it affect them?

Probability: How likely an impact is to occur.

Status-quo (or "squo"): A simple way of saying "the way that things are now." Plenty of topics make one side (usually the affirmative) argue some sort of shift away from the status quo, meaning the aff usually ends up defending a different world and the neg defends the status quo.

Uniqueness: Any claim about the nature of the status-quo. It usually describes a problem that exists now that the resolution will arguably solve, or it explains a problem that does not exist now that the resolution will create.

Link: A link is the way the resolution connects to some other outcome in the world. A link story is a set of links that make up an argument. For example, if the resolution causes X which causes Y, resulting in Z, the arguments tying the resolution to X, X to Y, or Y to Z are all links.

Turn: A response to a link or an impact that "turns" it around for your side. A link turn, for example, would invert the direction of the link, so that the resolution actually reduces outcome X rather than increasing it. An impact turn would be any claim that your opponents' terminal impact is actually a good thing, when they are claiming it is a bad thing, or vice versa.

Disadvantage: A disadvantage, or "disad" for short, is like a turn, but it does not disprove the original argument being made. For example, your opponents might argue that the resolution increases outcome X. You might grant them that, but contend that more X leads to Y, which is a bad thing.

Offense / Defense: Offensive arguments are those that provide a reason to vote for you—typically your own contentions or turns—while defensive arguments are those that provide a reason not to vote against you—typically responses that disprove your opponent's contentions or turns.

Terminal Defense: Defense is terminal if it completely disproves your opponents' argument. If defense is not terminal, it is simply mitigatory, meaning that it makes your opponents' argument less impactful, but you opponents can still garner some offense from that argument.

Topicality: Whether an argument is relevant to the topic. If two teams have different interpretations of the resolution, the one side might argue that their opponents' understanding of the resolution is not topical.

Framework: A framework provides the scaffolding for the round. It might be an interpretation of the resolution or an argument about what impacts to look to first.

Overview / Underview: At the beginning or end of the speech, debaters might provide an overview or underview respectively. These arguments are usually related to other content in the round, but often do not fit directly anywhere specific on the flow.

12.2 A Note on June 2019 PF Rule Changes

This textbook was completed shortly after the NSDA voted to modify the rules of public forum. In specific, the NSDA board has agreed as of the 2018-2019 season to add an "additional minute to each summary speech for a total a three minutes per speech" as well as an additional minute of prep time to each team. Before the rule changes, two minutes were given for both summary speeches and prep time.

While this textbook was completed prior to the full implementation of the rule changes, the authors believe that the information presented remains relevant and the advice this book offers was not impacted by the slight modification in the rule times. The additional prep time will give partnerships more time to think and converse but should not impact public forum strategy or best practices in any substantial way. Similarly, the longer summary speech will grant teams more time to cover their arguments in depth but does not change the general principles of the summary speech. Argument selection—as covered in Chapter 8—is still necessary since three minutes is still not enough time to cover the entire debate.

Of course, There is no sure-fire method for predicting the consequences these changes will have on the activity; thus, we cannot provide specific advice regarding the new rules. Nonetheless, we believe that students of debate will still greatly benefit from the information provided in this book regardless of any changes related to speech or preparation time.