

Debate Reasoning Rules & Logical Fallacies (Medium Complexity)

SECTION 1 — Argument Quality Rules

R1 — Evidence Relevance Rule

An argument must use evidence directly related to the claim. Irrelevant or loosely connected data reduces reliability.

R2 — Evidence Strength Rule

Arguments supported with credible, independently verifiable evidence hold higher weight than anecdotal or speculative claims.

R3 — Completeness of Reasoning Rule

An argument should acknowledge key assumptions and avoid ignoring critical factors that affect the claim's validity.

R4 — Logical Consistency Rule

Arguments must avoid contradictory statements or internal inconsistencies that weaken the reasoning.

R5 — Transparency of Uncertainty Rule

If evidence is incomplete, limited, or weak, the argument should explicitly acknowledge uncertainty instead of overstating confidence.

R6 — Proportional Claim Rule

The strength of the conclusion must be proportional to the strength of the evidence. Strong claims require strong evidence.

SECTION 2 — General Debate Conduct Rules

R7 — No Personal Attacks Rule

Arguments must challenge ideas, not the character, intelligence, or motives of the opposing party.

R8 — Fair Interpretation Rule

Arguments must represent the opponent's reasoning accurately without exaggeration or distortion.

R9 — Burden of Proof Rule

The side making an assertion must supply adequate justification; lack of contrary evidence does not validate an unsupported claim.

R10 — Use of Counter-Evidence Rule

Critics should reference contradictory evidence when available, and clearly indicate whether the evidence is strong or uncertain.

R11 — Independence of Arguments Rule

Each argument must stand on its own and should not depend solely on the failure of the opponent's argument.

SECTION 3 — Logical Fallacies

R12 — Strawman Fallacy

Misrepresenting an opponent's argument to make it easier to attack.

R13 — Ad Hominem Fallacy

Attacking the character or motives of the person instead of the argument.

R14 — Circular Reasoning

Using the conclusion as a premise without providing independent support.

R15 — Hasty Generalization

Drawing a broad conclusion from insufficient or unrepresentative evidence.

R16 — Appeal to Ignorance

Claiming something is true because it has not been proven false.

R17 — False Cause (Post Hoc)

Assuming causation from correlation without establishing a real causal link.

R18 — False Dilemma

Presenting only two options when more possibilities exist.

R19 — Slippery Slope Fallacy

Claiming without evidence that one event will inevitably lead to catastrophe.

R20 — Overgeneralization

Extending a claim beyond what evidence supports.

R21 — Red Herring

Introducing irrelevant information to divert attention from the central issue.

SECTION 4 — Reliability Evaluation Guidelines

R22 — Evidence-Backed Reliability Rule

Arguments tied to strong, independently verifiable evidence should be rated higher.

R23 — Moderate Reasoning Rule

Arguments with plausible logic but limited or indirect evidence fall into moderate reliability.

R24 — Weak or Speculative Reasoning Rule

Arguments relying on assumptions, anecdotal evidence, or low-quality sources should have low reliability.

R25 — Fallacy Penalty Rule

Any argument containing a fallacy must have a significant reduction in reliability score.

SECTION 5 — Recommendation Rules

R26 — Balanced Weighing Rule

Final recommendation must balance pros and cons based on their evidence strength and fallacy presence.

R27 — Confidence Calibration Rule

Confidence in the verdict should reflect clarity of evidence, not subjective certainty.

R28 — Neutrality Rule

Judge must remain neutral and rely strictly on evidence and reasoning.