**Debate Formats**

*Introduction*

A debate has 2 sides:

* Proposition – to advocate the adoption of the resolution
* Opposition – to refute the resolution

*There is a judge present in the debate whose job is to decide the winner*

*6 Popular debate formats****:***

1. **Team Policy Debate** – considered the oldest, and still probably the most popular format of debate practiced by middle school or high school debates.

Proposition = Affirmative or Aff.

Opposition = Negative or Neg.

* *Participant* - Each side is a team composed of two debaters so that there are four people participating in the debate (not including the judge and audience)
* *Format* – eight speeches, four constructive speeches, four rebuttals, four periods of cross-examination.
* *Resolutions* – always of a policy nature, usually governmental policy.
* *Style ­*– is focused on evidence gathering and organizational ability. Persuasiveness is not considered important or at least not as important as covering ground and reading plenty of evidence.

1. **Cross-Examination Debate** – a new type of two-on-two college debate. Has a period between speeches. The opponent debaters ask questions to clarify and understand each other’s points of information.

* *Resolutions* – consist of resolutions that are not related to policy. This kind of debate is based on values where evidence can be presented.

1. **Lincoln-Douglas Debate** – An open style of debate. Inspired by the debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas in the 1850s. A one-on-one debate that focuses on arguing for or against a topic.

* *Participants* – agrees on the time limits and topics beforehand.
* *Purpose* - to speak persuasively, clearly, and logically. Structured in nature and allows people to express their viewpoints openly.
* *Format* – five speeches, two cross-examination periods.
* *Resolutions* – stated as propositions of value. Unlike in team debate, the debaters are expected to debate the resolution as a whole, not just a particular example.
* *Style* – mission of restoring persuasion and values. Evidence was considered important but it was not the be-all-and-end-all. Emphasis was on speaking clearly, logically, and fluently.

1. **Spontaneous Argumentation Debate (SPAR)** – This connotes the jousting and practicing that we think of as *sparring*. Includes two debaters that argue on a particular topic. Firstly, they take enough prep time for a debate topic and then present the argument.

* *Format* – two-person structure, each team divides speeches this way:

1A: affirmative case and affirmative closing statement (2mins)

2A: affirmative counter-arguments and cross-examination (2mins)

1N: negative case and negative closing statement (2mins)

2N: negative counter-arguments and cross-examination (2mins)

* *Case* – each team’s case should consist of two or three arguments.
* *Format*:

Cross-examination: it is a period of time between speeches where opponents ask each other questions to clarify and better understand each other’s case.

Counter Arguments: each team’s counter-arguments should be a rebuttal of the other team’s case (point-by-point refutation of their two or three arguments)

Closing Statement: the closing statement should be an evaluation of the competing arguments in a manner that puts all of the arguments in the debate together, favoring the speaker’s side.

1. **Public Forum Debate** – One of the newest forms of academic debate. Was designed to enable debaters to discuss current events in an accessible, conversational format. Public forum rounds feature polished delivery, exciting clash, and fast-paced refutations.

* *Participants* – Two teams that consist of two debaters each team that argues on monthly controversial topics. The round begins with a coin toss between the competing debate teams. It is required to determine which side (pro or con) will present their argument first.
* *Format:*

Constructive speeches – the teams’ first opportunity to deliver and establish their prepared arguments, also called a case.

Crossfire – following the constructive speeches, the speakers from each team engage in crossfire, a three-minute period during which either speaker may ask or answer questions.

Rebuttal Speeches – After the first crossfire, the second speakers on each team deliver the rebuttal speeches: this is the first opportunity for each team to refute, or answer, the arguments made by their opponents.

Summary Speeches – following the second crossfire, the first speakers on each team deliver their summary speeches.

1. **Parliamentary Debate –** Similar to the spontaneous types of debate arguments, parliamentary debates do not require thorough research. The resolutions are decided only 10-20 minutes before a round of debate starts. Greatly emphasizes logic and persuasiveness. Referred to as *parliamentary* because of their similar nature to the debates that occur in the British parliament.

* *Participant –* consists of two debaters. A round consists of one Government team debating against one Opposition team.
* *Format ­–* Fours constructive speeches, two rebuttal speeches.

**Investigation and Research**

*I. Research and investigation*

2 types of Research in Debate

* **Open-ended** – debates acquiring more information in general without a specific set of areas or topics in mind. Valuable for keeping up to date on current affairs and also on new areas of research. This is achieved by altering reading, listening, and viewing habits to include more current affairs and educational media.
* **Focused Research –** active acquisition of information about a specific area. Know something everything and everything of something.

*II. Importance of Evidence*

What is Evidence – The available facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid. Disprove or refute a fact or argument. Statistics and studies are expected because of the amount of time you have had to prepare.

*III. How and Where to find Evidence*

* Books – Synthesis of all the information in one topic to support a particular argument. Uses: put a topic in context, historical information, and summaries.
* Academic Journals – A collection of articles usually written by scholars in an academic or professional field. Articles in journals can cover very specific topics or narrow fields.
* Encyclopedia – collection of short, factual entries.

General: provide concise overviews on wide variety.

Subject: in depth entries focusing on one field.

* Database - contains citations of articles in magazines, journals, and newspapers. Some databases contain abstracts or brief summaries of the articles, while other contains complete, full-text articles.

**Case Development**

It discovers and analyzes the issues central to the controversy, identified by the wording of the proposition. It follows the steps of collecting, processing, and organizing.

*In developing the case you must:*

* **Locate the immediate cause** – why is there interest about the controversy expressed in the proposition? Was there a stimulus to inspire such attention? What are people saying about the issue?
* **Investigate the History** – will provide you with significant data, and comprehend the domains of argumentation, presumption, and proposition. Will strengthen the argument.
* **Define key terms** – defining terminology clarifies the meaning of the proposal. Be prepared to defend your definitions.
* **Determine the issues** – each type of claim (fact, value, policy) has certain *stock issues* that must be explored.

*Stock Issues* – briefly elaborate on what you want to discuss. This procedure enables a thorough analysis of ‘what you’ve got in terms of research burdens.

What questions must be answered? What evidence exists to support your case? How significant is the problem? What evidence exists to support the opposition?

*Affirmative Case Construction*

A debate team’s most vital choice is determining the argumentative content of the first affirmative case. The essence of oral argumentation is this antagonistic *tug-of-war*, the affirmative will propose, the negative will attack, and the affirmative must defend. With the duty of starting and ending the argument, affirmatives must explain the case’s philosophy and theme in a clear and unmistakable manner.

* Understand the affirmative case topic
* Figure out your stock issues
* Balance and outline your main arguments

When the affirmative meets all of the expectations of the burdens associated with the type of resolution (fact, value, policy), it is said that the affirmative case is prima facie, Latin for *on its face* or literally, *first face.*

Learning Objectives:

* To discuss the responsibility of the affirmative
* To explain the different proposition to justify the case

Responsibilities of the Affirmative

* Provide focus and structure to the debate
* If applicable, define key terms to clarify the meaning.
* Adequately represent the team’s position and prove the resolution to be true.

**Policy Proposition**

* A statement calling for an action
* Should and should not
* Action is desirable or undesirable

*To solve:*

* Harm – showing there is a significant problem in the current system.
* Inherency – current system is incapable and unlikely to solve the harm area.
* Plan – allows us to explain exactly what our solution is.
* Solvency – can solve or reduce the harm are
* Advantage – simply the extra mile our plan will go beyond just solving the problem.

*Three general categories of proposition of policy:*

* Formulation of new policies to guide decisions not covered by existing policy.
* Recommendation for amendment of existing policies that are no longer satisfactory.
* Repeal or abolition.

**Value Proposition**

* This style of proposition is concerned with ethics or aesthetics; right/wrong
* Laws and public policy originate from propositions of value
* Resolutional analysis
* Example of proof
* This style of proposition is trying to judge the acceptability of something and/or make an ethical claim.

1. Extra-judicial killing is bad; not effective to control illegal drugs.
2. Junk the terror-bill

**Fact Proposition**

* Focus is on whether or not something is tue.
* It/is not
* More objective approach

*What happened?*

*What information is needed to verify this?*

*What information is available?*

*Negative Case Development*

* This independent argument, or case, is called a counter-case
* You would recognize your thoughts with your own specific points.
* Developing a negative case may involve creating a counter-case with counter-observations to reject the affirmative resolution.