

Basic Debate Terminology

Ad hominem- attacking your opponent personally rather than her/his argument. Ad hominem is fallacious argumentation.

Add ons, Added advantages- extra advantages claimed by the Aff after the 1st Affirmative constructive. These may be entirely new advantages claimed from the Affirmative plan, significant extensions or expansions of smaller points barely mentioned in the first Aff. constructive (maybe only in a shell), or turn arounds of Negative arguments.

Advantage- a benefit accrued by the Aff. plan. The advantage may be qualitative or quantitative or both.

Affirmative- the side that advocates change through the adoption of the resolution. The Affirmative must present a reasonable interpretation of the resolution through an adequate definition of terms and/or operationally define the resolution in the Aff. plan. The affirmative must overcome the presumption for the status quo with a prima facie case.

alternative causality- others causes than those first presented for some consequent. This type of argumentation usually appears when someone wishes to claim that something has multiple causes and that the first causes mentioned are not primary causes or the main causes for some problem or consequent.

Alternative justification- a type of affirmative case that offers two or more parallel and independent Aff plans each with its own set of advantages within one overall Aff case supporting the debate resolution.

Analogy-method of reasoning based on comparisons. There are literal and figurative analogies.

Analysis- discovery and selection of key ideas; systematic inquiry into a proposition to locate the main issues.

Argument- a conclusion supported by proof. Proof consists of analysis and/or reasoning and/or evidence that supports the conclusion.

Assertion- an unsupported statement or claim

Attitudinal inherency- a type of inherency wherein the advocate claims that those in a position of power are so biased or prejudiced in a certain direction that action is impossible or extremely unlikely.

Ballot- the decision in a debate round. A judge casts a ballot for either the Aff or the Neg and gives her/his reasons for this decision. Often speaker ranks and points are also given on the ballot.

Block/brief- a set of prepared arguments to include analysis/reasoning and evidence on a specific point. Blocking is the process of preparing such arguments in advance of a debate or during a debate. A brief contains the blocked arguments (analysis + evidence specific to the issue issues involved)

Brink/threshold- point at which an occurrence is very likely to take place.

Burden of proof- the obligation of he or she who asserts to prove their points. The burden of the Aff. team to overcome the presumption for the status quo and so establish a prima facie case. Both sides have the burden of rejoinder meaning they must answer the relevant arguments of their opponents to keep the debate progressing.

Canned arguments/ blocks/briefs- prepared arguments applied to a specific contention or argument or case. Excellent when the analysis and evidence really are applicable and relevant to the debate but has a negative connotation because so frequently the analysis and/or evidence doesn't really apply or isn't relevant and the debater is using the "canned argument" instead of thinking and really clashing.

Causal link- analysis which relates a cause to an effect. Debate is dependent on a great deal of causal analysis. The affirmative must identify and remove the causes of a problem without creating significant new problems. Somewhere in the debate the Aff must link their problems to causes which they eliminate or mask and the Neg. must link its disadvantages to the Aff. plan by showing how the plan causes those disadvantages.

Circumvention- to get around or avoid; usually some loophole in the Aff plan or some problem in the Aff plan which will prevent its workability, practicality, or solvency.

Clash- consists of fundamental opposing arguments on the key issues. One of the most fundamental goals of the debate process is to promote good clash, the Aff and Neg taking opposite stances on key issues.

Comparative advantage case- criteria or goals case; a case admitting limited success for the status quo programs but calling for improvements in efficiency, coordination, speed, guarantees, enforcement, etc. The comparative advantage case compares the Aff solution to the status quo programs and claims "comparative advantage/s" over the status quo mechanisms.

Conclusionary evidence- opinions given without reasons for the opinions. Usually a weak kind of evidence.

Conditional argument- an argument made only on the basis of some given assumption. If the assumption is not given or does not sustain attack, the argument based on the assumption falls also. Applies to conditional counterplans et al.

Constructive speech- one of the first four speeches in an academic debate during which the Aff and Neg establish their fundamental positions and arguments. New arguments or constructive arguments are allowed in constructive speeches. New arguments are not allowed in rebuttals where the purpose is to clarify and/or extend previously made arguments not to construct new argumentation.

Contention- a statement of significance taking a definite stand on an issue. A contention is an argumentative statement or position supported by proof. Quite often this refers to Aff need contentions or advantages.

Contradiction- statements or arguments related to a given point which are in direct opposition to one another.

Cost-benefit analysis- analysis weighing the positive gains of an action versus the negative detriments of that action. The process of on balance analysis.

Cross-examination- a form of debate in which debaters are permitted to ask direct questions of their opponents during specified question periods, usually immediately following the opponent's constructive speeches. A title for the question periods.

Counterplan- meeting an Aff case by agreeing with the need for change or advantages but proposing a counterplan which it will be claimed will better meet the Aff need or better gain the Aff advantages without having to adopt the resolution. Some say the counterplan must be nontopical, competitive, exclusive, etc. Some say the counterplan must gain additional advantages. There are many types of counterplan(agent of change counterplan, studies counterplan, state vs. federal action counterplans, conditional counter plans etc.)

Debate- a process of inquiry and advocacy seeking reasoned judgment on a proposition. Debate allows for two or more sides advocating their positions on a given issues under some set of rules with some kind of judgment to follow from a judge or audience.

Deduction- arguing from a general principle-to a specific case. Opposite of induction which argues from specific cases or data to a general conclusion.

Definition of terms- explaining the meaning of the key terms or phrases in a resolution. Can be accomplished utilizing dictionary definitions, expert definitions, derivation, operational definitions, terms in context, etc.

Dilemma- an argument that presents an opponent with a two option forced choice neither of which offers desirable outcomes for the opponent.

Direct refutation- type of Neg attack in which the Neg denies the claims of the Aff pt by pt. The Aff can also directly pt by pt deny Neg argumentation.

Division of labor- division of responsibilities between the debate speakers esp. as applied to the Neg. Generally, the first Neg argues topicality, terms, inherency, significance, and methodological challenges while the second Neg. argues solvency and disadvantages. These traditional divisions of responsibility can be changed dependent on the needs of a given topic and debate.

Dropped argument- an argument which is never responded to by an opponent or which is not brought up again after an opponent's response to it.

Effects topicality- Trying to be topical indirectly through the effects of a plan or proposition analysis which itself is not directly topical.

Ellipses- Dots . . . used to indicate that material has been deleted from a quotation. Ellipses should be avoided or used extremely carefully by debaters lest there be suspicion that crucial material has been left out.

Emory switch- A Negative strategy where the 1st Negative attacks the plan and the 2nd Negative attacks the case instead of the more traditional method where the 1st Negative attacks the case side and 2nd Negative attacks plan side.

Enforcement- a plank or planks in the Aff plan seeking to ensure that the Aff mandates will be carried out. Enforcement can consist of carrots (rewards) for action or sticks (punishments) for inaction or malfeasance.

Evidence- anything used to generate proof or support for an assertion; facts, opinions, illustrations, examples, analogies, and statistics.

Extension- furthering an argument through additional analysis or evidence especially as related to such arguments given in the rebuttal periods of a debate.

Extratopicality- actions above and beyond those called for in the resolution taken by the Aff. The Aff cannot or should not be allowed to take credit for advantages gained by extratopical means.

Fallacy- a mistaken inference; faulty reasoning; a seemingly reasonable argument which is actually unsound or flawed.

Fiat power- the right of the Aff to demonstrate only that its plan should be implemented rather than that it will be. The Aff has the right to decree reasonable plan planks into existence but cannot exceed this reasonability.

Flip/turnaround- a claim that an opponents argument actually supports one's own position. A turned disadvantage would actually be an advantage for the Aff.

Flow-the gestalt of the debate or state of the issues in the debate.

Flowsheet- a systematic notetaking device for organizing (charting) following the arguments (issues) in a debate.

Generic argument- a common argument which can be applied to several cases or positions on a resolution.

Generic disadvantage- a disadvantage that applies to the resolution itself or to many Aff case analyses of the resolution.

Goals criteria Aff- a type of Aff comparative advantage case explicitly stating the goals, criteria, rubrics, or evaluative standards to be used for comparative purposes.

Grouping arguments (lumping and dumping)- handling several interrelated arguments simultaneously.

Harm- a problem in the status quo constituting a need for a change.

Hasty generalization- a conclusion based on too few examples or examples which aren't typical or representative of a class. A type of fallacious argument.

Hypothesis testing judge- a judge who accepts the scientific analogy for debate judges associated with Zarefsky and who will accept any Negative attack hypothetically or conditionally whether contradictory or not.

Implementation- the method for putting a plan or program into effect.

Independent advantage- an Aff comparative advantage that is supposedly simultaneously topical, unique, and significant enough unto itself to warrant adoption of the resolution or at least serve as a partial independent warrant for the adoption of the resolution.

Induction- the use of specific instances or examples to formulate more general conclusions.

Inherency- conditions inseparable from the status quo; problems calling for fundamental structural change. Problems calling for changes in the law or fundamental reorganization of the current system or policy.

A. Structural inherency- change of law, organization or structure of the status quo is necessary for proposition to be adopted and effective.

B. Attitudinal inherency- calls for change in attitudes, ways of thinking, ways of enforcing the law, etc.

Issue- a fundamental question involved in the proposition; an issue is an inherent and vital question within the proposition; each important contention of the Aff can become an issue when it is really of vital importance to the proposition and when it is clashed with by the Neg.

A. Pulling an issue- synthesizing, clarifying, and summarizing key pts in the debate.

B. Voting issues- the most important issues in the debate.

C. Debated issues- those important questions in the debate upon which there was significant clash.

Lincoln-Douglas Debate- a debate format involving only one speaker on each side as opposed to team debate.

Meatball- a common generic disadvantage

Methodological indictment- an attack demanding justification for a study's conclusion in terms of the reliability or validity of the study methods or procedures.

Minor repair- a negative position that a small non-structural change or modification in the status quo is all that is necessary versus adoption of the Aff.

Need or harm- an inherent problem or evil in the status quo which calls for or demands change.

Need Plan or Traditional Case- an organizational scheme and analytical framework for the Aff in which the Aff claims that certain significant inherent evils (harms) in the status quo can be overcome by adopting the Aff plan which meets the debate resolution.

Negative- the side that opposes the adoption of the resolution. The Negative must defend the status quo or the status quo with modifications (repairs) or counterplan in opposition to the Aff.

Negative block- the second negative constructive speech followed by the first negative rebuttal. With proper division of labor the Negative team should be "stacking up" Neg positions and arguments during this period of time making it difficult for the 1st Aff rebuttalist to respond.

Nontopical- An Aff case that fails to meet the resolution by failing to justify all terms included in the resolution.

A. Letter of the resolution- failing to meet the terms of the resolution.

B. Spirit of the resolution- failing to fall within the realm of reasonably acceptable interpretations of the debate resolution. Falling outside the parameters of the topic area.

Observation- a general preliminary remark usually concerning assumptions underlying various arguments.

On balance- net benefits versus disadvantages usual judging paradigm of policy maker judges and some others.

Operational definition- a definition through description of actions. In debate a definition through the provisions of the Aff. plan.

Overviews- preliminary observation concerning a number of arguments to follow. As opposed to underview, a concluding observation tying a number of previous arguments together.

Paraphrase- to restate something in your own words.

Plan- a specific program of action proposed by the Aff team to implement the debate resolution.

Plan plank- a step in the Aff plan. An action that will be taken by the Aff to meet their need or gain their advantage. Aff plan planks concern authority or agent of action, mandates (actions to be taken), enforcement, financing. plan interpretation, etc.

Plan spike- a plan plank meant to prevent or diminish the effectiveness of a Neg plan attack.

Plan attack- a solvency practicality workability argument or a disadvantage.

Power matching- a tournament technique matching teams of similar records. After 4 rounds for example 4-0 teams should meet one another, 3-1's, 2-2's, 1-3's, and 0-4's. This technique is often used to narrow the number of teams in competition. High high competition means #1 meets #2 etc. High low within brackets competition means top 4-0 meets bottom 4-0.

Practicality- the feasibility or real world possibility of the Aff plan. Often also called or mixed with solvency workability.

preemptive argument- an argument given in anticipation of another argument hoping to answer that argument in advance .

preparation time- time allowed to a debater for preparation before rising to speak. Usually a debate team will be given 5-10 minutes of "prep time" to be distributed between the two speakers as the team wishes before all their speeches in a debate,

Presumption- the existing state of affairs, policies, programs should continue unless adequate reasons are given for change. The status quo, the existing state of affairs, is given the benefit of any doubt. The status quo preoccupies ground. Presumption is in favor of the Negative in a debate unless the Aff has assumed the burden of proof and

established a prima facie case. Presumption is not that the status quo is good just that it should continue unless adequate reasons are given for change.

Prima facie case- a case that would convince the average reasonable and prudent person that a proposal for change is warranted; logical and convincing arguments for change, one strong enough to stand unless and until logical and convincing arguments are introduced against them. A case which is topical, inherent, significant, solvent (workable and practical), and advantageous is, in formal academic debate, a prima facie case.

Proof- logic/reasoning and/or evidence in support of a statement or conclusion.

Proposition/Topic/Resolution- a formally expressed judgment or opinion of a controversial nature; a statement to be debated or supported; a sentence in which the predicate affirms or denies something concerning the subject; the subject for debate. There are three basic types of propositions; fact, value, and policy. **TECHNICALLY PROPOSITIONS, TOPICS AND RESOLUTIONS DIFFER BUT ARE USUALLY USED INTERCHANGEABLY IN DEBATE.**

Reasoning- logic; the process of drawing correct conclusions based on premises.

Rebuttal- combined method of attack on opponents arguments with defense of your own arguments. Also, a specific time period in the debate after the constructive speeches in which issues are supposed to be clarified, synthesized, summarized, and highlighted for the judge/s.

Refutation- attack on an argument by attacking the underlying reasoning, or evidence in support of the argument or both. Often, technically incorrectly, but often used interchangeably with rebuttal.

Repair- a minor nonstructural change in the status quo which helps the present system to function better without changing its fundamental nature.

Sandbagging- holding off on presenting the bulk of an argument till later presenting the argument initially in cursory form or in a shell or in weakened form expecting later to very much expand the argument. Negative connotation is tricking the opponent via sandbagging.

Shift- to abandon an original argument and take an altered position.

Should- ought to but not necessarily will.

Should/would argument- the Aff only must show that their plan is desirable and should be adopted not that it will be adopted. If the Negative argues it won't be, that is the fallacy of should/would argumentation and the Aff need only answer it should be.

Significance- sufficiency of the importance of the contentions as related to the issues. The importance of the problems solved or the advantages to be gained either quantitatively or qualitatively or both. The Aff must meet significant needs (solve significant harms) or gain significant advantages. The Neg wishes to have significant disadvantages, disadvantages which have "impact" on the Aff.

Solvency- how much of the problem will the Aff meet with its plan. How much of the claimed advantages can the Aff gain with its plan. How practical workable are the Aff plan planks.

Spread or shotgun- the tactic of throwing out many arguments in a short period of time to force your opponents into a position where they cannot adequately answer or become confused; quite often a very bad strategy as it promotes shallow analysis and hurts good clash. Still, debate places a premium on a large number of relevant quality arguments in a brief given amount of time.

Squirrel case- a nontopical case or merely a very unusual interpretation of the resolution. Perjoratively used to describe a poor case.

Statistics- facts and figures that have been systematically collected and ordered to show relationships; a number that summarizes and signifies a large mass of numbers; figures which compress large amounts of data into more meaningful forms; figures which allow inferences to be made about a population based on a sampling of its members.

Status quo- the present system or existing order; the existing state of affairs.

Stock issues- major questions in any proposition of policy. Usually the classic debate stock issues are topicality, inherency, significance, solvency, and advantages versus disadvantages.

Study- a systematic investigation of a problem; an analysis utilizing prescribed methodology.

Study counterplan- a specific type of counterplan calling for study of a problem rather than the action/s proposed by the Aff.

Tabula rasa- blank slate; a judge who claims to be without preconception or bias vis the topic and often vis debate strategy/tactics.

Time allocation- strategic choices in use of time by debaters to emphasize key issues and cover important arguments.

Topicality- whether or not the Aff team advocates a policy system that meets the letter and spirit of the resolution.

A. Letter of the resolution- does the Aff case take those actions or affirm those positions

demanded by the resolution.

B. Spirit of the resolution- does the Aff case argue the issues on the topic that the average intelligent informed citizen would think should be the key issues within the context of the topic. Sometimes does the Aff case argue the issues that an expert in the topic area would think should be the key issues within the context of the topic.

Turnaround argument- reversing an argument by an opponent to show that the argument actually favors your side particularly taking Negative disadvantages and demonstrating these disadvantages are actually advantages favoring the Aff. position.

underview- observation made after a series of arguments summarizing some common assumption or trait of those arguments.

uniqueness- inherency for a comparative advantage or a disadvantage as the advantage or disadvantage inheres flows from the Aff plan or not.

voting issues- the key issues in the debate upon which the judge/s decision should turn. The most important issues in the debate.

Workability/solvency/practicality- whether the plan of the Aff is practical, Will the plan gain the advantages or meet the needs in the real world? Could the Aff plan work in practice as well as just theoretically?

A GLOSSARY OF DEBATE TERMS

Affirmative side: The speaker or team that undertakes to secure audience acceptance of the truth of the debate proposition, i.e., the affirmatives argues in favor of the resolution.

Analogy: A type of argument which asserts that if the facts relating to A and the facts relating to B are alike in certain known respects, they will be alike in another respect.

Argument: An assertion which is the result of reasoning.

Assertion: An unsupported statement.

Brief: A complete outline of one side in a debate.

Burden of Proof: A primary rule of debate which requires that the affirmative side bear the burden of securing acceptance of the Proposition; it also requires that every speaker must support his assertions.

Burden of Rebuttal: A primary rule of debate which requires that a team must reply to an assertion that is supported by sufficient proofs and relevant to a significant issue.

Case: All the assembled proof available for determining the truth of the proposition (for the affirmative) or the untruth of the proposition (for the negative). The brief developed in full.

Cause: A type of argument which asserts that if Fact A occurs, Fact B will necessarily follow from it.

Clash: The direct opposition between the affirmative and negative teams, created by narrowing the controversy down to its essential issues.

Comparative advantage Case: The affirmative case which, rather than suggesting that inherent problems exist and must be solved, suggests that the adoption of the proposal will produce significant advantages when Compared to the status quo or will further the goals of the status quo in a more efficient, effective (i.e., better) way.

Constructive Speech: The main speech in a debate for each speaker. It is in this speech that one employs proof to create belief in his/her case.

Counterplan: A proposal, advanced by the negative side, that the audience accept a solution different from that advanced by the affirmative. It requires that the negative first admit the need issue.

Criteria Case: An affirmative approach which establishes certain criteria to be used in evaluating the plan and advocates adoption of the plan on the basis of its meeting the criteria.

Debate: A formal oral controversy. Scholastic debate usually involves two teams of two persons each. Standard format calls for four constructive speeches of ten minutes and four rebuttal speeches of five minutes each. Other formats include cross examination, direct clash, etc. The affirmative always speaks first and last in a debate.

Desirability: The stock issue which asks whether undesirable side effects will accrue from the adoption of the affirmative plan.

Evidence: Statements of fact and opinion offered by a speaker in an attempt to produce in his auditors belief in a claim.

Example: A type of argument which asserts a generalization based on the qualities of a specific instance or instances.

Inherency: The issue which asks whether current problems result from structural defects within the status quo which cannot be repaired except by major revision.

Issue: Fundamental questions, the answers to which determine the truth or falsity of a given proposition

Negative Side: The speaker or team that undertakes to prevent the affirmative side from securing acceptance of the debate proposition.

Presumption: The term used to designate the fact that unless proved otherwise by the affirmative, the status quo is presumed to be adequate. Presumption rests with the negative while the burden of proof rests with the affirmative.

Prima Facie Case: A case which is sufficient to stand on its own unless attacked.

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Proof: whatever tends to create belief. In debate it consists of evidence and reasoning.

Proposition: A Judgment expressed in a declarative sentence. In debate it appears as an affirmative statement or the question to be resolved.

Proposition of policy: A proposition which declares that a certain future action should be taken.

Reasoning: In debate, the process of inferring relationships between evidence and assertions.

Rebuttal Speech: An additional speech allowed each speaker following the constructive speeches a speaker may attack his opponent's arguments and defend his own, but may not introduce new constructive arguments. He may introduce new evidence, however.

Refutation: The attempt to demonstrate the error or inadequacy of the opponent's case or arguments.

Satisfaction: The stock issue which asks whether the affirmative plan would, solve the problems cited by the affirmative. The same as plan meet need or plan meet advantages.

Sign: A type or argument which asserts that the existence of Fact A indicates the existence of Fact B. -

Status Quo: Literally "the state in which a thing is." In debate it refers to the situation in existence as the debate begins. The present system.

Stock issues: The standard or routine issues which occur in almost every debate. These are generally need, satisfaction, practicality, and desirability

Topicality: The issue which asks whether the affirmative plan goes beyond the resolution or, conversely, is short of what the resolution requires. In a comparative advantages case the question is whether the advantages flow from a plank in the plan which is extraneous to the resolution.

Uniqueness: The issue which asks, in a comparative advantages case, whether the advantages claimed by the affirmative are unavailable short of adoption of the proposition.