

Winning from OG

By Ron Leizrowice

Winning from OG

(or at least not losing)

By Ron Leizrowice

Some caveats

- ❖ Debating is not math's
- ❖ Debating is more of an art than a science
- ❖ The following is advice that works for me
 - ❖ It may or may not work for you.
 - ❖ If you don't vibe with it – don't do it

Some caveats

- ❖ There's no substitute for knowing stuff
- ❖ No guide can overcome shit judging
 - ❖ but it can help
- ❖ Practice this workshop

What are the difficulties with Opening Government?

1. “The Fear”
2. “The Unknown”
3. “The Void”

Part 1: “The Fear”

- ❖ Why do people find OG so scary?
 - ❖ Shortest time to prep / First to speak
 - ❖ Hey Siri, can I fire a CA?
 - ❖ What if we get it wrong?
 - ❖ Will they even remember me?
 - ❖ CO

“The Fear”: Advices & Reassurances



Indulge your vices:

- > Smoke?
- > Pee?
- > A nice glass of water?



PM is the best:

- You can't get screwed over
- You can define the debate
- No rebuttal!



“Silent Prep” is a codeword for “quietly panicking”

Talk to your partner!



Statistically:
2nd best position to be!

Part 2: The Unknown

- ❖ You have no idea what other teams will say, what the clash is, or even where to begin!
- ❖ Here's the dark secret OO don't want you to know:
 1. It doesn't matter, because what they say hinges on what ***you*** say.
 2. The clash is *largely* in your control
 3. Giving PM speeches is actually quite formulaic

Avoiding the Unknown: Prep

1. Read the motion.

- ◊ No really, read the fucking motion.
- ◊ Go back and read it again.
- ◊ Check your partner has the same understanding as you.
- ◊ ...read it once more to be sure you didn't miss anything.
- ◊ What does each word mean? Why is it there?

Avoiding the Unknown: Prep

2. Identify the debate

- ❖ What is the status quo, and what is the problem in the status quo?
- ❖ Where does this motion apply? To whom does it apply?
- ❖ What is the scale of this debate? (really important)
- ❖ Why did the CA's pick this motion?

Avoiding the Unknown: Prep

3. Be Relevant

- ❖ What changes? What *doesn't* change?
- ❖ What is uncontroversial?
- ❖ What can you sacrifice? What will they sacrifice?
- ❖ What are the alternatives?

Preparing well some case studies:

- ❖ THBT historically oppressed groups should prioritise campaigning for redistribution of wealth to poorer individuals, over claims to reparations for past wrongs, in their advocacy and activism.
- ❖ TH, as Joe Biden, would pursue the prosecution of Donald Trump.

“The Formula for All Debates”

- ❖ All debates are ultimately (even if not explicitly) organized around the following hierarchy of metrics:
 1. Legitimacy (is this ok? / can we do this?)
 2. Responsibility (who is at fault? / who should do this?)
 3. Efficacy (will it work? / what changes?)
 4. Evaluation (what is unique? / is this the best solution?)

Part 3: The Void

- ❖ By the time you finish, 5 more speeches and perhaps 40 minutes will have elapsed.
 - It is easy to feel like you will be “left behind” by the debate
- Luckily, you have three tools at your disposal:
 - Framing
 - Burden Pushing
 - POI’s

Avoiding the Void: **Framing**

- ❖ This is a pretty vague concept, but I encompass three points within it:
 1. Outline your entire case in 30s or less
 2. Characterize and contextualize the debate
 3. Define the parameters and metrics of the round

What is Framing?

Can be a few different things:

- ❖ Providing context in which the debate takes place
- ❖ Defining the area in which your arguments exist
- ❖ Painting a picture to make your case impactful
- ❖ Clarifying what matters in the debate
- ❖ Shift entrenched perceptions

Matching your Framing to your case:

- ❖ Are you making a principled/moral claim, or a more practical/utilitarian one?
 1. If your case is centred around a principle, start by clarifying your moral stance and try to dismiss or cast doubt on the practical aspect of the debate.
 2. If it is practical, explain the problem in the status quo and try and elevate it above moral qualms.

Avoiding the Void: **Rhetoric**

- ❖ If you are memorable, you escape the void
- ❖ Focus on the criteria I listed, but in an ideal world – deliver them in a powerful manner
- ❖ Your first 30s define the rest of your speech
 - ❖ Grab the judges attention right off the bat
 - ❖ Get them excited for what comes next

Avoiding the Void: **Rhetoric**

- ❖ Catchy phrases / visceral images work well:
- ❖ “Get paid, get laid”
- ❖ Angela Merkel in the shower
- ❖ The Benevolent Shopkeeper

Avoiding the Void: **Burden** **Pushing**

- ❖ There is no “fixed” comparative, and you don’t have to agree with the other sides framing of the debate (more on that later).
- ❖ Figuring out a tactical framing of the comparative can be used to absolutely demolish incompetent teams.

Avoiding the Void: **Burden** **Pushing**

❖ Here are two of my favourite examples:

1. THBT the protections of international law conventions and treaties should not apply to combatants from terrorist organisations
2. THBT oppressed groups should attempt to reclaim slurs that have been directed against them

Examples of Effective Framing

- ❖ Probably the most memed part of the most famous debating speech ever is just framing:
- ❖ “Madame Chair, the global poor all around the world, and no matter what country in which they live, currently live in a system of dictatorship. They live under a dictatorship known as no alternatives, shackled by capital that’s been unjustly acquired, constrained by landed gentry that have no incentives but to pursue their own interests, and chained by the fact that they can’t do anything but to look at the question of their own subsistence. They’re unable to reach out for the right to liberty and to self-determination that we think inheres in the human condition.”
- ❖ **Can you see what is happening now?**

Examples of Effective Framing

- ❖ THW create state funded schools exclusively for LGBT children
- ❖ THBT atheists should aggressively proselytize to persuade religious individuals to abandon their faith

Avoiding the Void: Clarity

- ❖ Don't spend 3 minutes on the perfect mech
- ❖ Don't provide 10 points of framing
- ❖ Don't run 15 arguments
- ❖ Don't give ambiguous definitions
- ❖ Run one argument and do it properly

Avoiding the Void: Examples

- ❖ THW dissolve the NCAA and allow all schools to independently set student athlete guidelines
- ❖ THW introduce a variable minimum wage

Avoiding the Void: Shock and Awe

- ❖ There will be motions that seem *insane*
- ❖ This is (usually) intentional – CAs don't set motions by accident
- ❖ Just bite the damn bullet, the judges want to be entertained
- ❖ If you run a seemingly insane case, taking on the highest burden possible, I promise you opp will fall apart.

Avoiding the Void: Shock and Awe

- ❖ THW arm women in the USA
- ❖ THW create an independent state for African-Americans
- ❖ THW legalize broadcast gladiatorial battles, with all laws suspended inside the arena

Avoiding the Void: Principled Arguments

- ❖ If the motion is extraordinarily broad, you probably won't anticipate every change resultant of the motion
- ❖ Even if you get the 1st order changes, you probably won't get the 2nd order ones (i.e. how do people respond to the changes)
- ❖ Principled arguments are definitionally going to “cut through this”

Avoiding the Void: Examples

- ❖ THW ban the development of Neuralink technology, or any other brain-computer interface
- ❖ THW enact an Immediate Democracy.
- ❖ THW introduce a Social Credit score system
- ❖ THW ban awards for creative works (e.g. the Oscars, Golden Globes)

Strategy: Partnership Dynamics

- ❖ Unless they're a nervous wreck, the person who doesn't "get" the debate, they go first
- ❖ It's easier to write your partner a speech, have them recite it imperfectly, and plug the gaps once you know the opp.

Strategy: Hit the ground running

- ❖ Please do not ever ever ever ever ever – read the motion out
- ❖ Don't analyze stuff no one will disagree with
- ❖ If the opp stance is unclear – extract it from them early

Strategy: Firing “down-bench”

- ❖ Sometimes (if you do everything right) OO will fall apart
- ❖ It's tempting (and fun) to beat them into the ground
- ❖ Don't.
- ❖ Take a POI from CO in the PM around 6 minutes.
- ❖ Demand CO's extension *early* in a POI during DPM

Strategy: Firing “down-bench”

- ❖ If you've followed my previous advice, CG will be gleefully writing out one of the 14 arguments you didn't run yet.
- ❖ Weaponize the DPM speech against them:
 - ❖ Watch for their POI to LO
 - ❖ Muddy the waters / contradict their arguments
 - ❖ Flag their arguments, then dismiss and/or weigh against them

Strategy: POIs

- ❖ You will get very little input on the debate through POIs
- ❖ Strategies:
 - ❖ “The DLO challenge”: if LO does not engage, make sure the DLO does
 - ❖ “The Framing Grenade”: if CO are outside your frame, explain why
 - ❖ “The Silver Bullet”: if you notice a deadly flaw, hold fire till minute 6 of OW
 - ❖ “We’re still here”: if other speakers seem to have genuinely forgotten you...

Summary

- ❖ Don't panic.
- ❖ If you run a crystal-clear, highly memorable, relevant argument, that is still being discussed during the OW – you probably won
- ❖ Attack the motion from the “bottom-up”
- ❖ Plan ahead, prepare for CG/CO
- ❖ Save your POIs for the opportune moment