

# Making Efficient Responses

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# Outline

- Important Reminders
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- Approach to Structuring a Set of Responses
- Responses that Disprove
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## Exercise: Let's Respond to this Argument

- Infoslides: The veil of ignorance is a thought experiment that details a hypothetical person before they're born. They have no idea of the traits they will be born with (class, gender, sexuality, etc.), the personality they'll achieve, or what their future will entail. They only know of the conditions of the world, i.e. the technologies that exist, the cultures people practice, that there is violence, etc.
- Motion: TH prefers to be born in a randomly generated Minecraft Hardcore world.

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- Pre-emptive Argument at Government: You are less likely to die in a Minecraft world
- Framing of the Argument: The preservation of life is the most important value in this debate because it is the precondition for achieving more opportunities for happiness
- Structural Reasoning for the Argument:
  - a) Survival skills are relatively intuitive to learn
  - b) No disease/disaster/climate change/existential threat in Minecraft
  - c) After surviving the first night, every proceeding night becomes easier to deal with (armor, shelter, etc.)

## Important Reminders

- Mindset: Each and every response is an opportunity to FORWARD your team's chances of winning the round
- Arguments and responses are not meant to be evaluated in absolutes, but rather in PROBABILITIES
- Like any other debate skill, developing responses comes with INTUITION, FORESIGHT, and PRACTICE

## Notes on Argument Construction

- The underlying structure of the argument (what makes it true) should be distinguished from its presentation and framing (how it is presented to be important)
- The “structural reasons” meta is an *attempt* towards creating multiple, independent reasons to prove a certain claim
- There are *more* important parts of arguments than other parts of the argument

## Approach to Structuring a Set of Responses

- Step 1: REFORMULATE the material to be responded to
  - The more true-to-word and charitable you are, the stronger potential responses you can make!
- Step 2: Present the STRATEGY in which you will respond
- Step 3: Develop the HEADLINE response and supporting COMPARATIVE reasons
- Step 4 (optional): Conclude with FRAMING of response for overall debate and connect to your case

## Responses that Disprove

- Be specific with the extent of your disagreement
- Example: THS the cult of productivity (The cult of productivity refers to a set of norms where being continuously productive and busy in both your professional and personal life is seen as desirable and virtuous)
  - Argument: Absent the cult of productivity, individuals will be even more coerced to work overtime (capitalist structures, competitive incentives/social comparisons, etc.) and cannot achieve this balance
  - Response: Individuals have natural incentives to pursue other forms of meaning in their life (family, hobbies), and it is the cult of productivity that enables this hyper-work culture
  - Extent of disagreement: The cult of productivity may reward work, but it certainly does not reward *balance*



## Responses that Concede

- Be specific with the extent of your concession
- Example: THBT it is in the interest of liberal opposition movements in authoritarian democracies to actively employ and embrace strategies of disinformation
  - Argument: Authoritarians have significant power and control over all branches of government (executive through presidential veto and military, legislative through strong one-party majorities, and judiciary through appointments), so liberal opposition movements cannot contest them in elections. Instead, we can put fear into the authoritarian's control by employing disinformation.
  - Response: Since authoritarians have so much control, this also enables them to put liberal opposition figures in jail for even the *prospect* of being affiliated with disinformation.
  - Extent of concession: Concedes to the conclusion of fear, but not necessarily to the claim that liberal opposition movements cannot contest them in elections.

## Responses that Mitigate

- Be clear with the *implications* of the mitigation
- Example: THBT religion is incompatible with social development
  - Argument: Religion is inherently coercive, indoctrinating followers to dogma that is counter-intuitive to social development
  - Response: Religion is not inherently coercive because there are a) competing religions, b) incentives for religious institutions to evolve with modern-day social values, and c) incentives for social organizations to appeal to multiple religions at the same time for more resources
  - Implication: It cannot be said that followers are *unwillingly* opting in to dogma that may or may not be harmful for them.

## Responses that Flip

- Tip for avoiding unnecessary contradictions: flip the *mechanism*, not the general argument in its vague entirety
- Example: THW impose carbon taxes on individuals
  - Argument: Imposing a carbon tax will likely encourage individuals to opt in to greener and more sustainable options (mechanism: a higher tax causes divestment from carbon-intensive activities)
  - Response: This incredible shift in demand will cause significant unemployment from carbon-intensive industries, worsening development prospects in the developing world and opportunities for the working class

# Reminder to Revisit Minecraft Example

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## Revisiting the Minecraft Example

- Strategy 1: Respond to Framing
  - Merely preserving life is not important if we can demonstrate that every day of living in a Minecraft Hardcore world will be life-depleting and horrific for the average person
- Strategy 2: Breaking down the Reasons
  - It is *most* likely that you will die on the first few nights in Minecraft
- Strategy 3: Flip the Best-case interpretation of the Argument
  - Immortality is worse than living an average limited life on Earth

## Concluding Remarks

- There are exceptions when you will need to respond to each specific structural reason, but this will be very rare
- Fun ways to practice making more efficient responses:
  - Record and repeat the response portions of your speeches
  - Watch debate videos and actively participate in creating responses
  - Learn from your opponents and build habits to discern the commonly employed strategies in responding
- Remember: Efficiency is judged on the ability of a response to weaken and/or strengthen your case for winning a round! It is not based on speedrunning!