

## **DEBATE: SPEAKER POSITIONS/ROLES**

The following speaker guidelines can be used for a debate with any number of speakers so long as there are 3 or more speakers per side. If, for example, there are 5 debaters per side, then debaters 2,3, and 4 should all follow the rubric for “Second Speaker” listed below!

### **FIRST/OPENING SPEAKER—AFFIRMATIVE**

- Introduce the topic of the debate and define all key terms
- Explain the general line of argument to be taken by your team
- Offer 2-3 substantive claims which you explain with data and warrants in support of your team’s argument
- Address what the Negative team’s likely line of argument will be and how your argument already takes such a position into account

### **FIRST/OPENING SPEAKER—NEGATIVE**

- Introduce the Negative team’s general line of argument
- Offer 2-3 substantive claims which you explain with data and warrants in support of your team’s argument
- Briefly explain the Affirmative team’s argument and offer a general line of response/refutation
- Identify specific claims made by the Affirmative team and explain how your team’s argument answers and refutes these claims

### **SECOND SPEAKER—AFFIRMATIVE**

- Extend (i.e., remind the audience and re-explain if necessary) the arguments made by the first speaker from your team; re-articulate the general line of argument
- Offer 1-2 new substantive claims in support of your team’s arguments
- Briefly explain the Negative team’s argument and offer a general line of response/refutation
- Identify specific claims made by the Negative team and explain how your team’s argument answers and refutes these claims

### **SECOND SPEAKER—NEGATIVE**

- Extend (i.e., remind the audience and re-explain if necessary) the arguments made by the first speaker on your team; re-articulate the general line of argument
- Offer 1-2 new substantive claims in support of your team’s arguments
- Offer point by point refutation of some of the Affirmative team’s strongest and most important arguments

### **THIRD/CLOSING SPEAKER—AFFIRMATIVE**

- Attempt to isolate and present to the audience the 2-3 key points of clash that have occurred in the debate. (Ask yourself: what has this debate come down to? What is the central issue that we have found ourselves debating?)
- Explain why your team has offered a solution to resolve to these points of clash
- Extend the key arguments that have been advanced by your team
- Offer refutation of the negative team’s over-arching argument
- Offer a final thought on how the debate should be resolved

### **THIRD/CLOSING SPEAKER—NEGATIVE**

- Present to the audience new/different points of clash that what the affirmative team has suggested (redefine what the debate has come down to, what the central issues are)
- Explain why it is that your team has resolved these points of clash
- Extend the key arguments that have been advanced by your team
- Offer refutation of the closing affirmative speaker’s arguments
- Offer a final thought on how the debate should be resolved

## **DEBATE: GENERAL TIPS**

### **Get your audience's attention!**

- You always want to start and finish strong. Plan what the first words you say will be. Think about the rhetorical difference between "Hello Ladies and Gentlemen. Today I am here to talk to you about human rights" vs. "The Essential nature of WHAT IT IS TO BE HUMAN: that is what I am going to talk about today."
- 'Attention-getters' can be anything from a powerful rhetorical statement to a statistic to a personal narrative to an anecdote or example. The point is to instantly get the audience and judge interested in and focusing in on your speech (and theoretically forgetting about all of the speeches to come before you)

### **Time Management**

- Always be aware of how much total time you have to speak and balance your time between rebutting the other team's case and setting up your own new arguments
- If you sense that you are running out of time, slow down and finish on a high note rather than rushing through your remaining material which gives the audience the impression that you have not covered everything necessary

### **Pick your battles**

- Do not attempt to respond to and rebut every argument made by the other side; rather isolate the strongest and most significant arguments that the other side has made and respond to those
- If the other side has made several repetitive arguments that all seem to be the same, then respond to it once rather than over and over again

### **Language/Voice**

- Your voice is a very powerful thing; use that to your advantage. Don't speak too quickly or too slowly but rather moderate the volume and pitch of your voice to indicate important moments and concepts in your speech
- Don't use crude language or ad homs; such language takes credibility away from you as a speaker and as an authority on your subject matter

### **Body Language**

- Stand or sit up straight; make eye contact with your judge/audience; use your body to show that you are confident and strong in your position.

### **Have Fun!**

- No audience or judge wants to watch a performance done by someone who is uninterested in his/her own subject matter or who seems to be miserable. Look like you are into your argument and it is likely that your audience will be into it as well. And be funny! Studies show that humor is one of the best ways to persuade people!

## DEBATE: ARGUMENTS/ARGUMENTATION

**An Argument consists of the following three elements: a claim, data supporting the claim, and a warrant explaining why the data supports and proves the claim.**

### 1. Claim

*Definition:* A claim states your position on an issue

*Example:* Women are better drivers than men

Claims should be:

- Interesting, not obvious.
- Engaging
- Specific, not overly vague
- Logical

### 2. Data

*Definition:* The evidence that you cite to support your claim. Like a lawyer presenting evidence to a jury, you must support your claim with facts; an unsupported claim is merely an assertion.

*Example:* Several studies show that men have a 70% higher risk of causing a car accident than women do.

Data can include:

- Facts or statistics
- Examples
- Expert opinions
- Personal anecdotes

### 3. Warrant

*Definition:* The warrant interprets the data and shows how it supports your claim. The warrant, in other words, explains why the data proves the claim.

*Example:* Because men are more likely to cause car accidents, men are clearly worse drivers than women.

A warrant should:

- Make a reasonable interpretation of facts
- Not make an illogical interpretive leap
- Consider and respond to possible counter-warrants

### Examples:

Let's consider the example above: women are better drivers than men

- How do the data and warrant support the claim?
- How would you attack this argument? What problems can you isolate in the data and/or warrant?
- Can you think of any 'Counter-Warrants'?

Let's consider the data and warrants for the following claims (claims that are central to some of the biggest current political debates):

1. Global warming is happening now
2. Human beings are the result of an evolutionary process
3. The Occupy Wall Street Movement is failing
4. War is a justified political measure

## DEBATING BOTH SIDES OF AN ISSUE

### Types of debates

- **Fact/truth debates** (Resolved: President Obama is not a US citizen)
- **Policy/action debates** (Resolved: The US should pull troops out of Afghanistan)
- **Moral/principle debates** (Resolved: Actions speak louder than words)

### Fact/Truth debate: being AFFIRMATIVE

When attempting to prove that something is true, the goal is to provide your audience with sufficient evidence and analysis in support of your claim that no one listening to you could possibly be inclined to think that the claim might be false. Your speech should likely contain the following elements:

- An explanation of the central claim you are trying to prove and the reason why this is important
- A series of sub-claims (designed to support the central claim) each supported by data and warrants
- An evaluation of your data
  - Where your evidence comes from, who your authors are, etc.
  - Why your examples are representative of the majority/norm
  - An established criteria by which the data should be evaluated
- An isolation of the principle of the debate
  - What is the impact or significance of resolving the truth/falsity of this issue
- An examination of likely counter-arguments and how you would answer them

### Fact/Truth debate: being NEGATIVE

When debating against a truth claim, you should use a combination of the following methods:

1. Refute the claim
  - Attack the viability of the claim (or any number of the sub-claims)
  - Attack the evidence (source, reliability, biased nature, date)
  - Attack the warrants (faulty logic, false conclusions, misinterpretation of data)
2. Explain why the claim itself is based on problematic assumptions
  - Consider the historical, cultural, intellectual circumstances in which the claim was first articulated: what is biased or troubled in this context
  - Consider mindset or worldview that one would need to accept to accept the claim: what is wrong with this mindset or worldview
3. Explain why accepting the claim as true has negative consequences
  - Remind the audience that it is their choice whether or not to accept this truth
  - Explain why the claim itself, if accepted, would necessitate the acceptance of other troubling claims and/or would lead to an inherently problematic view of the world
4. Establish a counter claim
  - Prove that if your claim is TRUE, the original claim would most certainly be FALSE