

POLICY DEBATE INTRODUCTION

National Federation of State High School Associations



A very brief introduction to policy debate, using some examples from the the Criminal Justice Topic, by Rich Edwards, Baylor University

THE FORMAT FOR POLICY DEBATE

Constructive Speeches

- 1AC: 8 Minutes
 - Cross-Examined by 2NC: 3 Minutes
- 1NC: 8 Minutes
 - Cross-Examined by 1AC: 3 Minutes
- 2AC: 8 Minutes
 - Cross-Examined by 1NC: 3 Minutes
- 2NC: 8 Minutes
 - Cross-Examined by 2AC: 3 Minutes

Rebuttal Speeches

- 1NR: 5 Minutes
- 1AR: 5 Minutes
- 2NR: 5 Minutes
- 2AR: 5 Minutes



THE STOCK ISSUES

- Topicality: Is it germane?
- Harm: Is there a significant problem?
- Inherency: What is causing the problem?
- Solvency: Can the problem be solved?
- Disadvantage: Will the solution create more serious problems than the ones it resolves?



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CONSTRUCTIVE SPEAKER RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1AC: Present a "Prima Facie" Case
 - Harm, Inherency, Solvency, Plan
- **1NC:** Present the Negative Attack
 - Traditionally attacked the 1AC
 - More recently: The "front-line" of all negative positions (Topicality, Disadvantages, Counterplans, Kritiks) then answer the Case arguments
- 2AC: Re-Defends Against 1NC
 - Follows 1NC point-by-point (Answer whatever the 1NC wanted to talk about)
- 2NC: Answer selected parts of the 2AC positions, leaving the rest for 1NR
 - Divide positions with the 1NR (division of labor)





- No new arguments in rebuttal (new evidence OK)
- 1NR: Answer remaining 2AC arguments
- 1AR: Answer all 2NC & 1NR arguments
- 2NR: Extend winning negative arguments
- 2AR: Answer all remaining negative arguments & claim all affirmative positions that are no longer contested





CROSS EXAMINATION

- The speaker completing the constructive speech remains at the podium for questions
- Both questioner and respondent face the judge
- The questioner controls the cross examination period
- What to ask?
 - Set up arguments for later speeches
 - Use all of your time (it's prep time for your partner)



KEEPING A FLOW SHEET

- I. The continued use of the death penalty is unwarranted.
 - A. The death penalty is cruel and unusual punishment.
 - B. The death penalty serves no deterrent function.
 - C. The means of administering the death penalty are problematic; drugs are unreliable.

States ought to be able to make their own choices about the death penalty.

The Supreme Court has consistently rejected the claim that the death penalty is cruel & unusual

Significant evidence — indicates that the death penalty does deter

Alternatives to the current drug regimens exist: several states have moved to the use of nitrogen gas

The Supreme Court, not the state governments, has the power to interpret the Eighth Amendment ban on cruel & unusual punishment.

The Supreme Court has acted to limit the death penalty in the past, but numerous legal authorities argue the Court should now issue a more sweeping ban.

Those studies that claim a deterrent effect are outliers – most studies find no deterrent effect.

This method is a throw-back to long-abandoned "gas chamber" approaches that carry echoes of the Nazi death camps.





FLOW SHEET TIPS

- Use abbreviations appropriate to the topic (CP=Capital Punishment, D=Deterrence, IM=Immigration, etc.)
- Use symbols for common claims: (up arrow for increasing, down arrow for decreasing, right arrow for "causes" or "results in", etc.)
- Establish priorities: 1. Contention labels first priority, 2. Subpoints second priority, 3. Evidence reference third priority (Davis '16), 4. Key words of evidence fourth priority.
- Ask for missed points (in CX or prep time).
- Use lots of paper (separate sheets for plan arguments and for case arguments; each big argument should have its own sheet).
- Line up flowsheet paper with debaters' "road-maps"





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