

## POLICY DEBATE INTRODUCTION

National Federation of State High School Associations



A very brief introduction to policy debate, using some examples from the Water Resources 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?





# 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)





#### REBUTTAL SPEAKER RESPONSIBILITIES

- 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. Lead pollution of drinking water threatens America's children.
  - A. The 2014-19 lead poisoning incident in Flint, Michigan proves the danger.
  - B. Flint is only the tipof the iceberg; millions of U.S. children impacted.
  - C. Lead poisoning causes permanent learning disabilities.

- 1. Follow-up studies have questioned whether the harm levels in Flint were actually that serious.
- 2. In any case, the problem has now been addressed.
- The level of lead pollution in drinking water has fallen significantly over the past several decades.
- Trace amounts of lead in drinking water are not significantly harmful.

- Efforts to minimize the harm are symptomatic of the problem that we face; there is no question that children were harmed. Any amount of lead pollution is damaging.
- The solutions were too little and too late to prevent the harm to Flint's children. The only lasting solution will come from the complete replacement of both municipal and
  ▶ residential water supply lines.
  - Our evidence shows that millions of children continue to be impacted by lead pollution.
- ➤ There is no safe amount of lead contamination; even trace amounts can continue to cause harm.





#### **FLOW SHEET TIPS**

- Use abbreviations appropriate to the topic (W=water; Pb=Lead pollution, CC=Climate Change, Wet=wetlands, 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 '21), 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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