

Learning Classic Debate

A Student's Guide to
Classic Debate Competition

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To The Reader:

Welcome to “Learning Classic Debate.” This guide is intended to help you prepare for Classic Debate competition. As you probably know, the 2000-2001 season is the first year that Classic Debate competitions are being held. So, this is the first edition of this book. While I have done my best to offer a complete, yet brief, guide, I know that it is far from perfect. As you come across errors, confusing parts, or think of things that you wish were added, please contact me. You can help next year’s edition much better. Also, if you have a question, please feel free to e-mail me at the address below. Thanks and good luck with your debates.

About the author:

Todd Hering debated for Stillwater High School from 1989-1991. After graduating, he served as an assistant coach at Stillwater from 1991-1994. In 1994, Hering became head debate coach at Stillwater, a position he held until 1997 when he moved to the new Eastview High School in Apple Valley, MN. Hering is currently in his fourth year as a teacher and head debate coach at Eastview. Currently, he is the League Coordinator for the Classic Debate League.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Competitive interscholastic debates have occurred in high schools for well over a century. Because debate requires students to formulate, research, and deliver persuasive arguments on a range of vital issues, many teachers find it to be an invaluable educational activity.

There are many different debate formats that have been used in competition. Lincoln-Douglas, parliamentary, student congress, model United Nations, and policy debate are all different formats in which students compete. Each debate format has unique strengths and weaknesses. A group of debate teachers from Minnesota recently designed a new debate format, Classic Debate.

Classic debate is designed to make competitive debate attractive to a large number of students. Teams of two students will clash over current issues. The debate season runs from October through December. During the season, students will debate two different topics. The first topic will be selected by debate teachers in August. The second topic will be chosen by participating students.

DEBATE BASICS

In chapter two, you will learn more about Classic Debate. First, here is some basic information about competitive debate.

Being On The Debate Team

Because debate is a competitive activity, participants are members of a team. The debate team is much like a typical sports team with practices, meets/tournaments, and coaches. A debate round (one full debate) takes about an hour. A judge picks a winner in each debate based on which side does the better job of upholding their position.

Classic debates are argued by teams of two (two debaters on each side for a total of four in each round of debate). Each member of the two-person team gives speeches and helps his or her partner the best they can.

The debate season consists of about 7 invitational tournaments which attract schools from around the state. Awards are often given out to the top teams based on record. The final tournament of the year is the championship tournament. Your coach will have more information on your competitive schedule.

Debaters practice each week.. Just like a football team runs through plays, talks about upcoming opposition, and generally sharpen their skills, the debate team uses practice time to prepare for competition.

How much time does all of this take? The best answer is “it depends.” The typical debater practices a few nights per week. Each competition is on Saturday and ends in the mid-afternoon. Time commitment really depends on each participant’s goals and desires. A team member can choose the tournaments that he or she wishes to attend. In other words, debaters are able, for the most part, to set their own schedules. This will vary depending on the specific requirements of your coach.

The Benefits Of Debate

Competitive debate is a challenging and highly rewarding activity for most who become involved in it. There are a full range of benefits associated with being on the debate team.

- Fun: The vast majority of the tens of thousands of students who compete in debate tournaments each year will tell you that it’s fun. For every person, the experience is a little different, but generally the thrill of competition, the camaraderie of teammates and the travel opportunities make debate fun.
- Teammates: An additional benefit of getting involved is building friendships with teammates who enjoy similar interests.
- Public Speaking Skills: Most people naturally avoid public speaking--debate provides a non-threatening environment to practice these skills so that down the road when you’re called on to speak in college or on the job, you’ll have the skills necessary to do a great job. This increases your chances of doing well in important interviews for jobs or scholarships.
- Analytical Skills: The ability to critically analyze a problem and propose workable solutions is invaluable. This is a skill that debate best teaches and high-level business people and professionals possess.
- Research Skills: From traditional library research to the Internet, debate teaches you to become a world-class researcher. Ask any college student and they’ll tell you how valuable this is.
- Listening & Note taking Skills: Debate requires that you become a careful listener and good note taker. This helps students get better grades and learn faster.

Many of this nation’s top lawyers, business executives, doctors, engineers, and elected leaders were involved in high school debate, and for good reason. Simply put, debate-related skills help one get ahead and stay there. The power to persuade is highly respected and there is no better way to master this art than through debate.

The Resolution

The debate resolution is the focus for the debate. A resolution is a controversial statement that can be supported or opposed. Resolutions can be statements of fact, policy, or value. The affirmative team always supports (affirms) the resolution. The negative team opposes (negates) the resolution.

Occasionally, a resolution will allow the affirmative team to make a choice. For example, “Resolved that [Richard Nixon/Lyndon Johnson] was a better U.S. president.” These “2-choice” resolutions require the affirmative to select one of two options to support. The negative must then support the option the affirmative does not select.

Resolutions are selected to create good debates. They should be fairly balanced between the affirmative and negative (meaning that both sides should be able to make reasonable arguments). Good resolutions focus on topics that are significant and timely. They also allow students to research the topic without too much trouble (topics that are obscure or topics that are too broad may present research difficulties).

The Role of the Judge

Each debate round will have a judge who will decide which team does the better job of debating. The judge is instructed to base his/her decision on the arguments made in the debate round, not on his/her personal beliefs about the issues. Usually, a judge will take notes and do his or her best to follow all of the arguments you make. At the conclusion of the debate, the judge will write a ballot which explains his/her decision. You will get your ballot back at the end of the tournament.

Judges are hired by the schools that attend a debate tournament. They may be teachers, parents, former high school debaters, or other interested adults. Some judges are very experienced, but many are not. Undoubtedly, at some point in your debate career you will be disappointed by a decision that a judge makes. It is best to assume that your judge is doing their best. Remember, debate is subjective and will be seen differently by different people.

CONCLUSION

Debate is an organized clash of ideas. You now know a little more about what it means to be on the debate team. You also know that a competitive round of debate consists of two people on each side of a controversial statement called a resolution. The debate round is observed by a judge who selects a winner based on the arguments made in the debate. Next, Chapter II provides more information on the Classic Debate Format.

CHAPTER II

THE CLASSIC DEBATE FORMAT

All debates have a format which the participants are expected to follow. This format usually prescribes how much time each side gets, what order the speeches will be given in, and what is expected to occur in each speech. This chapter introduces you to the format for Classic Debate.

Please study the chart on the next page. This provides basic information regarding speech times, order, and purpose. This chapter will walk you through the entire debate in more detail. In addition to describing what will occur during the debate, we will also examine what is expected of you before and after the debate occurs. Please notice that there are additional sections at the end of this chapter on writing your constructive speeches, making your summary speeches, and cross-examination.

BEFORE THE DEBATE

At the beginning of the tournament, you will be assigned a team number or code. Write this down and don't lose it. For each debate round, a schedule will be printed which will list the affirmative team, the negative team, the judge, and a room number. Find your team number or code and go to the room assigned. The schedule will also tell you which side you are on (affirmative or negative).

Sample schedule:			
<u>Room</u>	<u>Aff.</u>	<u>Neg.</u>	<u>Judge</u>
A300	5	16	Hering
A301	2	7	Kraft
A302	13	11	Graupner

Once I have found my room, what do I do?

Normally, the two debate teams will set up in the front of the room. The judge will sit in the middle of the room, looking toward the front. You will need a table or desks to take notes and to set your materials on. You should always face the judge during the debate.

THE DEBATE ITSELF

The next question is obvious. What happens during the debate itself? To answer this question, you will find the next page helpful because it outlines the format of the debate. After the format chart, this chapter takes you step by step through the entire debate.

Classic Debate League

Format and Time Limits

Affirmative Constructive	6 Minutes	In this prepared speech, the affirmative presents their arguments in favor of the resolution. The speech should be pre-written.
Cross-Examination	3 Minutes	The 1st Negative Speaker cross-examines the 1st Affirmative Speaker
Negative Constructive	6 Minutes	In this prepared speech, the negative presents their arguments in opposition to the resolution. The speech should be pre-written and is not expected to directly address the arguments made during the affirmative constructive.
Cross-Examination	3 Minutes	The 2nd Affirmative Speaker cross-examines the 1st Negative Speaker
1 st Negative Rebuttal	5 Minutes	The purpose of this speech is for the 2nd Negative Speaker to refute the arguments presented in the affirmative constructive.
Cross-Examination	3 Minutes	The 1st Affirmative Speaker cross-examines the 2nd Negative Speaker
Preparation Time	2 Minutes	
1 st Affirmative Rebuttal	7 Minutes	The 2nd Affirmative Speaker should first refute the arguments presented in the negative constructive. Then, the speaker should answer the attacks made during the 1 st negative rebuttal.
Cross-Examination	3 Minutes	The 2nd Negative Speaker cross-examines the 2nd Affirmative Speaker
Preparation Time	2 Minutes	
2 nd Negative Rebuttal	6 Minutes	The 1st Negative Speaker should divide this speech between the negative and affirmative cases. The debater must both rebuild the negative attacks on the affirmative constructive and then rebuild his or her own case.
Preparation Time	2 Minutes	
2 nd Affirmative Rebuttal	4 Minutes	The 1st Affirmative Speaker should divide this speech between the negative and affirmative cases. The debater must both rebuild the affirmative attacks on the negative constructive and then rebuild his or her own case.
Preparation Time	2 Minutes	
Negative Summary	3 Minutes	The 2nd Negative Speaker presents their closing argument. This speech should summarize the primary reasons for the judge to reject the resolution based on the arguments made and evidence presented throughout the debate.
Preparation Time	2 Minutes	
Affirmative Summary	3 Minutes	The 2nd Affirmative Speaker presents their closing argument. This speech should summarize the primary reasons for the judge to affirm the resolution based on the arguments made and evidence presented throughout the debate.

During the Debate Step by Step

Speech #1: The Affirmative Constructive
Time Limit: 6 Minutes
Purpose: The affirmative team presents their arguments in favor of the resolution.
Speaker: The First Affirmative (1A)

This is a pre-prepared speech which provides the primary affirmative arguments in favor of the resolution. While the affirmative team will be able to answer negative attacks later in the debate, they can't bring up "new" main ideas or arguments in their favor. Therefore, it is very important that the affirmative team carefully plan their constructive speech. The speech should contain the very best arguments in favor of the resolution. These are the arguments the affirmative will defend throughout the debate.

The speech should be written to persuade the judge and/or audience. To be persuasive, the speech should be clearly written, it should be well supported with credible evidence, and it should use persuasive and attention-holding language.

Cross-Examination #1

Time Limit: 3 Minutes
Purpose: Question and answer
Participants: The 1st negative speaker asks questions of the 1st affirmative speaker

Cross-examination is an important part of the debate round. This is the only time that debaters interact directly. There are two main purposes of cross-examination.

Purpose #1 Clarification: First, issues or arguments that are unclear should be clarified. Simple questions like, "can you please explain your argument against our third contention?" can be crucial. It is impossible to debate well when you aren't sure of your opponent's arguments. Cross-examination gives you time to clarify any confusion.

Purpose #2 Exposing Flaws: Second, cross-examination allows you to expose weaknesses in your opponent's arguments or evidence. When executed well, such a cross-examination can be devastating.

Please see the section on cross-examination for more information.

Speech #2: The Negative Constructive
Time Limit: 6 Minutes
Purpose: The negative team presents their arguments in opposition to the resolution.
Speaker: The First Negative (1N)

Just like the affirmative constructive, the negative constructive outlines the main arguments in opposition to the resolution. It is also a pre-prepared speech, meaning it is not expected to directly answer the arguments made in the affirmative constructive. After the two constructive speeches, each team has presented a set of arguments in their favor. The next logical step is for the two teams to begin to directly attack the arguments made by their opponents.

Cross-Examination #2
Time Limit: 3 Minutes
Purpose: Question and answer
Participants: The 2nd affirmative speaker asks questions of the 1st negative speaker

Speech #3: The 1st Negative Rebuttal
Time Limit: 5 Minutes
Purpose: The negative team refutes the affirmative constructive.
Speaker: The Second Negative (2N)

While the 1N delivers the negative constructive, the 2N gets to plan their attack against the affirmative constructive. In this speech, the negative team presents their refutation (answers to) the affirmative constructive. The goal of the negatives is to disprove, or at least minimize, the affirmative arguments.

Cross-Examination #3
Time Limit: 3 Minutes
Purpose: Question and answer
Participants: The 1st affirmative speaker asks questions of the 2nd negative speaker

Preparation Time: 2 Minutes. All debaters are given 2 minutes at this time to prepare for future speeches. This is especially important for the 2nd affirmative speaker who will give the next speech.

Speech #4: The 1st Affirmative Rebuttal
 Time Limit: 7 Minutes
 Purpose: The affirmative team refutes the negative constructive AND rebuilds their case.
 Speaker: The Second Affirmative (2A)

The first affirmative rebuttal is one of the most challenging speeches in the debate because it requires the 2A to do two things. First, he/she must refute the arguments made during the negative constructive (just as the 2N just refuted the arguments made during the affirmative constructive). Next, he/she must rebuild the affirmative case which was just attacked. The first affirmative rebuttal is the longest speech of the debate, but the time must be carefully divided between the two tasks. It is up to the 2A to decide how to divide the time.

Cross-Examination #4
 Time Limit: 3 Minutes
 Purpose: Question and answer
 Participants: The 2nd Negative Speaker cross-examines the 2nd Affirmative Speaker

Preparation Time: 2 Minutes

Speech #5: The 2nd Negative Rebuttal
 Time Limit: 6 Minutes
 Purpose: To rebuild the attacks on the affirmative case and to rebuild the negative case.
 Speaker: The First Negative (1N)

Now it is the negative team's turn to balance time on both cases. This is the negative's last chance before the summary to clarify, defend, and strengthen their argument's. The first negative speaker should defend the negative case and rebuild the negative attack against the affirmative. The negative team should begin to focus on the critical issues of the debate. There is not time to go into great detail over every issue in the debate.

Preparation Time: 2 Minutes

Speech #6: The 2nd Affirmative Rebuttal
 Time Limit: 4 Minutes
 Purpose: To rebuild the attacks on the negative case and to rebuild the affirmative case.
 Speaker: The First Affirmative (1A)

The affirmative now gets their last chance before the summary to clarify, defend, and strengthen their arguments. This rebuttal is 2 minutes shorter than the 2nd negative rebuttal, so the affirmative team must continue the focus on the critical issues of the debate.

Preparation Time: 2 Minutes

Speech #7: The Negative Summary
 Time Limit: 3 Minutes
 Purpose: To summarize the reasons why the negative team has won the debate.
 Speaker: The Second Negative (2N)

The summary is, of course, the final opportunity to persuade the judge to reject the resolution. Rather than going issue by issue through both cases, the summary should crystallize the debate into several main arguments for the judge to consider. These arguments should be the key issues in determining the winner of the debate.

Preparation Time: 2 Minutes

Speech #8: The Affirmative Summary
 Time Limit: 3 Minutes
 Purpose: To summarize the reasons why the negative team has won the debate.
 Speaker: The Second Affirmative (2A)

The affirmative summary is the final opportunity to persuade the judge to support the resolution. Rather than going issue by issue through both cases, the summary should crystallize the debate into several main arguments for the judge to consider. These arguments should be the key issues in determining the winner of the debate.

Summary of Responsibilities

During the debate, each speaker will give 2 speeches. He or she will also participate in 2 cross-examinations, one as the questioner and one as the person who is questioned. Here is a summary of each person's responsibility through the debate.

First Affirmative (1A)

- Affirmative Constructive
- Answer questions of 2N
- Question 2N after 1st Negative Rebuttal
- 2nd Affirmative Rebuttal

Second Affirmative (2A)

- Question 1N after Negative Constructive
- 1st Affirmative Rebuttal
- Answer questions of 1N
- Affirmative Summary

First Negative (1N)

- Negative Constructive
- Answers questions of 2A
- Question 2A after 1st Affirmative Rebuttal
- 2nd Negative Rebuttal

Second Negative (2N)

- Question 1A after Affirmative Constructive
- 1st Negative Rebuttal
- Answer questions of 1A
- Negative Summary

After the Debate

- Immediately after the debate, it is customary for both teams to shake hands.
- Any evidence or materials that may have been borrowed during the debate should be returned.
- Occasionally, the judge will have a few brief comments for the debaters, which of course, should be listened to respectfully.
- Finally, all debaters should clean up their materials and move to their next debate. If you are competing in the last debate of the day, be sure to rearrange desks or tables that have been moved. Please help the tournament host by making sure any trash is disposed of.

WRITING YOUR CONSTRUCTIVE SPEECHES

As you already know, your team will present a six minute constructive speech during each debate. The purpose of the constructive speech is to make and support your main arguments in favor of the resolution when you are affirmative) or against the resolution (when you are negative).

Your constructive speech should always accomplish the following:

- It will present your primary arguments
- It will provide support for those arguments in the form of evidence and reasoning
- It should be persuasively written (should include introduction, transitions, & a conclusion)

Beyond those basic guidelines, you have the freedom to create a case that makes sense to you and that you believe will persuade the judge. Let's take a closer look at some of the basic requirements.

The Introduction

Your case should always begin with an introduction. The introduction needs to accomplish two things.

- 1) State the resolution and your position (in favor of it or opposed to it)
- 2) Provide a persuasive attention-getter to encourage the audience to listen to your speech.

Sample:

“Every year in the United States, our government executes dozens of convicted murderers. Their crimes are so terrible, that our legal system assigns death as the ultimate punishment. What is truly tragic and hypocritical is that every so often our legal system gets the wrong person. Instead of punishing someone for taking an innocent life, it is our government itself that is taking an innocent life. Because my partner and I believe that this should never happen again, we stand Resolved that the death penalty should be abolished in the United States. First, we'll prove that the death penalty results in miscarriages of justice...”

The Contentions

Your main arguments are called contentions. They should be labeled as Contentions and numbered (traditionally Roman Numerals are used because this follows the outline format). Your contentions are statements that must be proven.

Sample:

“Contention I. Innocent People Are Wrongly Executed”

After you have stated your Contention, you must provide reasoning and evidence to support it. The length of the Contention is up to you (you only have 6 minutes, so they will be fairly brief). Also, the number of Contentions that you have is up to you. Usually, a case will have 2 to 4 main contentions.

You may choose to further divide your contentions into sub-points. Sub-points should be labeled with capital letters (following the outline format). Sub-points provide additional organizational structure to help clarify your argument.

Conclusion

After you have made and supported all of your contentions, you should end your case with a brief conclusion. In your conclusion, you should restate your main ideas and end with a persuasive appeal to your audience.

Sample: “In today’s debate, the affirmative team has proven that the death penalty results in two major harms to society. First, innocent people are sometimes wrongly executed. Second, the death penalty is discriminatory because it is used more frequently against minorities. Finally, we have shown that the death penalty has no major benefit because it does not reduce crime rates. In light of this evidence, the right thing to do is to abolish this unfair and ineffective punishment. I am now open for cross-examination.”

SUMMARY SPEECHES

The final speeches of the debate should be used to synthesize various arguments into a few critical points for the judge to consider. One might introduce their summary with a statement like “in light of the arguments made in today’s debate, we have upheld the resolution because...”

This summary statement is difficult for several reasons. First, because of the general nature of the closing argument, the speaker must focus on the “big picture” and less on specific details. Second, the speaker must extend his/her best arguments while answering his/her opponent’s best arguments. This requires a careful balance. Of course, each round of debate will lead to unique summary statements. However, here are some general tips for making successful summary statements.

- 1) Ask yourself, what are our most powerful arguments? After selecting your most powerful arguments you must explain why you have won these arguments and why this means you have won the debate. In other words, explain the *impact* of your best arguments.
- 2) Ask yourself, what are the weaknesses in my opponent's best arguments. Explain these weaknesses to the judge.
- 3) The summary must be an extension of the debate. It should show what your team has accomplished during the debate. It should not be new ideas or perspectives that haven't been brought up.
- 4) The summary should set up a decision-making criteria for the judge. What factors should be given the most weight in making a decision? For example, let's say that the affirmative has proven that adopting the resolution will save a species from extinction. The negative team, on the other hand, is able to prove that adopting the resolution would cost the US \$10Billion. In this debate, the two sides would have to weigh saving a species to spending billions of dollars. It is your job as a debater to provide analysis that helps the judge arrive at his or her decision.

CROSS-EXAMINATION

Cross-examination serves three important purposes in the debate. It gives one side the chance to clarify the arguments and evidence presented by the other. Secondly, it is an opportunity to demonstrate flaws in the opponent's arguments. Thirdly, cross-examination is the time when the audience and judge have a chance to see the debaters interact with each other. In other words, cross-examination is a chance to gain the judge's favor.

In cross-examination, both participants face the judge rather than each other. This is because the questions are intended for the audience. The keys to effective cross-examination are good questions and a professional demeanor. Specifically:

1. Ask specific questions that get to the heart of the issue.
2. Be polite, professional, and respectful during cross-examination.
3. Never personalize cross-examination—the focus should always be on issues.

CONCLUSION

As you discovered, Chapter II is full of information. If you are new to classic Debate, it is quite normal to be confused by the format. Most beginning debaters have trouble remembering what to do in each speech. There is a simple solution: practice! Once you have been through a few debates, the format will be very easy to remember and you can focus on building better arguments, improving your delivery, and gathering evidence.

CHAPTER III

ARGUMENTATION & ORGANIZATION

A debate is a series of arguments. While these arguments differ in function, structure, and importance, the basic format for delivery remains the same. There are many models of argumentation. The most basic model is the Claim-Support format. In addition to the argument itself, debate requires organizational structure to hold the arguments together and to help everyone keep track of the arguments. Therefore, a sound debate argument consists of the following three parts.

1. **Sign-posting:** A signpost is a verbal map that allows the listener to know where to place the argument in the context of the debate. This tells everyone listening which issue the argument pertains to. This is essential for the debate to remain organized. For more information about sign-posting, see the organization section later in this chapter.
2. **Claim:** The statement of the argument. The claim, much like an evidence tag should be brief and powerfully stated. Example: “The Death Penalty Decreases Crime Rates.” This tells the listener what the argument is. A claim by itself, however, is only an assertion. To become an argument, it requires support.
3. **Support.** The two most common forms of support for an argument are reasoning and evidence. For many arguments, logical reasoning is sufficient to win the point. The debater may also refer to previously presented evidence as support. At times, new evidence is required. Please see Chapter V for much more information about the use of evidence in debate.

While sign-posting and stating claims requires practice, supporting claims requires the most preparation and work. The type of support given to an argument will depend on its importance in the debate and the arguments and evidence presented up to that point. Many arguments are made without the presentation of new evidence. Some examples:

- “Global Warming is scientifically doubtful [claim]. The global warming theory is suspect for several reasons. First, despite predictions of scientists, we have seen no significant temperature increases. Second, the computer models used to predict climate change are faulty. And third, a growing number of qualified experts tell us that the theory is untrue.” [support—the debater gives reasons for the listener to support the claim]
- “Global Warming is scientifically doubtful [claim]. The negative team has provided evidence from three leading scientists that casts doubt on the global warming theory. This evidence has not been refuted. Therefore, we should consider the theory doubtful at best.” [support—the debater refers to previous evidence and the lack of refutation to support the claim]
- See Chapter VI. For more information on using evidence to support your arguments.

There are two specific kinds of debate arguments that you will make often: refutation and extension.

REFUTATION

Refutation is the process of disproving an argument. Not all of your opponent's arguments require refutation. There are generally three ways to answer an argument. First, you may simply agree with it. Second, you can partially agree but modify (e.g. "we agree that air pollution causes health problems, however, you overstate the impact"). Thirdly, you can refute the argument (prove it wrong). Let's look at how each method may be used effectively.

Agreement

Why would you want to agree with an argument made by your opponent? There are three main reasons.

1. Occasionally, your opponent may make an argument that actually helps you. In this case, simply explain to the judge why the argument actually supports your position.
2. Your opponent's argument may be irrelevant to the debate. In this case, explain why the argument is irrelevant.
3. Your opponent's argument may be true. If you know that your opponent has made a true argument, it may not be worth your time fighting against it. Instead, you may grant the argument and use your time to explain that while your opponent's individual argument is true, you should still win the debate.

Modification

Often, you will agree with part of your opponent's argument, but will disagree with the amount of weight they try to assign it. This most often happens when you feel that your opponent is exaggerating. Example: "While I agree with my opponent that Bill Clinton deserves *some* credit for the prosperous US economy, the truth is that he only deserves a small share of the credit."

Refutation

There are several good ways to attack or disprove a debate argument. Here are some effective strategies:

- 1) Attack the argument's support: You may explain that the argument lacks adequate support. This may be because of insufficient reasoning, no evidence, poor evidence, or misapplied or mis-tagged evidence.

As you think about how to respond to your opponent, you may ask yourself:

- Is the argument supported at all? (If so, continue down the checklist)
- Does the evidence match the claim/tag?
- Does the evidence have a credible source?
- Does the evidence provide reasoning?

- 2) Present Counter-arguments and evidence. Even well supported arguments often have equally persuasive counter arguments. These counter-arguments can be reasoning, evidence, or (hopefully) both. It then becomes your job to convince the judge that your reasoning and evidence is superior. For example, experts disagree about whether tougher prison sentences reduce crime rates. Your opponent may have very credible evidence that giving dangerous criminals more prison time makes America safer. But, because experts disagree, you may

present evidence from an equally reliable source to indicate that tough sentences don't really reduce crime rates.

EXTENSION

When you "extend" your argument it means that you are restating it in a later speech. To effectively extend an argument, you need to do more than repeat what you said earlier. Often debaters mistake repetition for extension ("if I just say it again, the judge will understand and will vote for me." Effective extension includes the following:

- 1) **Clarification:** You must make sure that the judge understands your argument. Be the one who clarifies the debate.
- 2) **Presenting additional reasoning and evidence:** You simply need to strengthen your position with more (and better) support.
- 3) **Add new (additional) argumentation:** Sometimes it may be advantageous for you to add new ideas in support of a position. For example, your general position may be that coal harms the environment. In the first affirmative constructive, you argue that coal causes air pollution, acid rain, and global warming. In the first affirmative rebuttal, you may further explain the health impacts of these environmental problems.

Often, extension and refutation go hand in hand and must be carefully blended.

ORGANIZATION

During the course of a debate, hundreds of arguments are made. Dozens of facts and experts are cited. The issues are complex and interconnected. Because of this complexity, effective organization is absolutely essential to debate. This chapter deals with two aspects of organization within a debate, note-taking and sign-posting.

Note-taking (Flowing)

In order to keep track of everything, debaters need to keep a flow of the debate. This is a set of notes that track the arguments made throughout the debate. Flowing goes beyond normal note-taking because it charts the progress of arguments. When a specific argument is responded to, the flow chart places the response directly to the right of the original argument. In this way, you can see the entire history of an argument by reading from left to right across the page. Here are some important tips on flowing:

1. You will need (at least) two sheets of paper for your flow chart. Two 8 _ by 14 size legal pads are ideal. Label 1 flow sheet "Affirmative Case" and 1 flow sheet "Negative Case." The affirmative sheet will need to be divided into 7 columns. The negative sheet will only need 6 columns. Each column is for a speech during the debate.

2. Write small and neatly. You need to fit seven columns across the page, so you will need to write small. To increase your space, you may use a 8 1/2 x 14 inch legal pad turned sideways.

This gives you 2 inches for each column. Of course, your flow is only valuable if you can read it--be NEAT!

3. Abbreviate. You need to record all the main arguments in the debate. If you try to write out all of the words, you will fall behind and miss things. Develop your own set of abbreviations. Instead of writing "Russia will decrease organized crime," for example, you could write "R will org. cr." You should immediately come up with set of abbreviations for words you are likely to hear often for your debate topic.

4. Leave yourself space. As you flow the arguments made by the first affirmative, write them down the first column on your chart. However, after each point is made, skip some space, maybe half an inch to an inch, before writing the next argument. This way, when responses are made you'll have plenty of room to write them directly to the right of the original argument. This leads to the next point.

5. Flow responses to the right of the original argument. If the 1NR is responding to the third point made by the affirmative, you want to find the point and write the responses in the INC column to its right. This way, all the arguments pertaining to a certain issue should be grouped together. This allows you to respond directly to your opponents arguments and improves the clash in rebuttals.

6. Don't give up. Flowing takes practice. You will miss points from time to time. Don't stop. Keep listening and write as much as you can. Your partner may be able to help you get missed points *or* you can ask for clarification in cross-examination.

SIGN-POSTING

Sign-posting means telling the judge and your opponents "where you are on the flow." Put another way, it is stating the argument that you are responding to before you respond. You should state which main issue you are on, which specific point you are answering, and what your answer is.

Sample: "Please turn to my opponent's second contention. She states that the death penalty is applied in a discriminatory fashion. I have two responses. First..."

If you forget to sign-post, it will be unclear to the other people in the debate which argument you are responding to. This will create confusion for all when they try to answer you.

CONCLUSION

Once again, the skills of organization and argumentation are improved upon greatly through practice. As a summary, try to always remember the following tips for effective debating:

- 1) An argument consists of a claim and support for that claim
- 2) It is important to keep a flow chart of the arguments made during the debate
- 3) When making any argument, you must sign-post

Now that you are more familiar with the mechanics of debate, let's focus on the art of public speaking.

CHAPTER IV

DELIVERY

There are at least two requirements for successful debating. First, a debater must have quality arguments. And, second, a debater must effectively communicate their arguments to the judge or audience. The focus of this chapter is on effective communication.

Articulation

Let's start with the basics. If the words you say are not understood by the audience, you are not communicating effectively. To articulate well means to speak clearly and to correctly pronounce the words you use.

Articulation Problems to Watch For:

- ✓ Mumbling or slurring (this is usually a result of not pronouncing words carefully).
- ✓ Common mispronunciations (gonna instead of going to, cuz instead of because, etc.)

Volume

Every speaking situation requires the speakers to adjust his or her volume for the circumstances. Of course, a speaker must be loud enough to be clearly heard by the audience. On the other hand, if a speaker is too loud, the audience will become annoyed or uncomfortable. It is a good idea for a speaker to vary his/her volume during the speech to emphasize certain key points. A slight increase or decrease in volume can call attention to an important point the speaker wants to make.

Rate

Like volume, your rate of speech can be too fast or too slow. Very slow speech will bore the audience. On the other hand, delivery that is too rapid will cause the audience to miss important points or maybe even to tune out. Different speaking circumstances call for different rates. For debaters, a good model is the rate of delivery used by television news reporters. Listen to an anchor on CNN for an idea of an appropriate rate of delivery.

Sometimes debaters will speak at fast rate in order to fit more into their speeches. In some debate formats, this has been taken to an extreme. Because the judges are not evaluating speakers on their delivery skills, debaters in these formats have used extremely rapid delivery. In Classic Debate, however, judges are specifically instructed to evaluate student's delivery along with their arguments. In fact, judges are instructed to award a loss to a team which speaks at an unnaturally rapid rate which results in a competitive advantage.

Vocal Variety

When you articulate well with an appropriate rate and volume, you ensure that the audience will hear your words. What else can you do to make them want to listen? One key is vocal variety. A speaker with little variety is often called monotone (or boring!). You can vary your voice by adjusting volume or rate. You can also change your pitch and tone. This is called inflection. Also, using pauses of different lengths can make your speech easier to listen to.

Posture & Gestures

You want your audience to see you as professional, relaxed, and confident. In order to achieve this positive image, you should pay attention to posture and gestures. The number one rule is don't do things that will distract your audience. Proper speaking posture is simply standing up straight with your feet pointed toward your audience. Avoid slouching, leaning against walls or tables, and pointing your feet to one side or another.

Gestures are more difficult to master. First, your gestures may often be impeded by what you have in your hands—evidence or notes. This is understood to be part of debate. When you are able to gesture, some general rules are:

- Always gesture above the waist
- Gesture to add emphasis. Your gestures should be purposeful.
- Vary your gestures. Avoid repetitive gestures.

Eye Contact

When possible, look your audience straight in the eye. Of course, you will need to look down at your notes and evidence. At the same time, do not spend the majority of your speech looking down. Speakers who look their audience in the eye are found to be more persuasive. You may also get important non-verbal feedback from your audience that you may use to make your speech better. Is the audience interested, confused, having trouble hearing you, agreeing with you? You can learn a lot by looking at your audience. When there is more than a single person in the audience, you should spend time looking at each person.

Appearance

Many consider your appearance to be part of your delivery. Different debate competitions have different dress expectations. At times, you will be asked to dress professionally (like you would for a business interview). Other times, you will be expected to be more “dress-casual.” Your coach will have suggestions for how to dress for competition. Just remember, appearance does make an impact on the audience. Your attire sends a message. What message do you want to send?

Suggestions for Improvement

Practice, practice, practice! Delivery can always be improved. There are many ways to practice. You can practice by yourself by giving a particular speech several times, concentrating on improving your delivery. You can practice with teammates by helping evaluate each other. And, of course, you can practice with a coach, teacher, or parent. Simply give your speech and ask for feedback on delivery. Or, ask for help with a particular component of delivery. The more you practice, the better you will be.

CONCLUSION

Polls show that most Americans fear public speaking more than death! Luckily for you, debate will help you overcome that fear. Like all aspects of debate, your delivery will get better with practice. You will also get used to standing in front of an audience and making an argument. These skills are great to have—just ask anyone in the professional world.

You now know how to make and deliver an argument. Let's turn our attention to adding more credibility to your arguments by citing credible evidence.

CHAPTER V

RESEARCH & EVIDENCE

It is essential that debaters provide support for the arguments they make. The quality of the support you provide for your arguments is a key to successful debating. One way to support your arguments is with logical reasoning. In addition to reasoning, you will need to provide evidence to support your claims. The focus of this chapter is how to gather, organize, and use evidence in debate.

Let's begin with the assumption that what we personally know is limited. Very few high school students are experts on the topics they will be debating. Therefore, debaters need to use outside sources of information to increase the credible support for their arguments. Usually, debaters will quote directly from a variety of sources.

In preparation for a debate, you will want to gather evidence (quotes) that you feel will support arguments that you plan to make. Because you will be unable to predict the exact arguments that will be made, it is good to have a variety of evidence quotes to use.

Finding evidence requires effective research. You are probably already an experienced researcher. Even so, you can probably improve your skills by reviewing the following steps in the research process.

RESEARCH PROCESS

Step 1. Formulate research questions. Before you begin any research, you should identify the questions you are trying to answer. It is important to identify research *questions* rather than *topics*. A question gives you a specific goal, whereas a topic is too open-ended. A good question is one that meets the following criteria:

- The wording of the question is clear and specific
- The question can be answered
- The answer to the question is meaningful (i.e. the question leads somewhere important)

If you are new to a topic, adjust your questions accordingly. You should begin by building general topic knowledge before trying to answer specific questions. For example, let's say you are learning about Russia's economy. As you begin your research, you may ask "What is the current status of Russia's economy?" As your topic knowledge grows, your questions should be more in-depth: "What programs does Russia have to encourage foreign investment?"

Step 2. Select a Method. There are a variety of ways to find answers to your questions. Students who try various sources usually find more success and end up with deeper research. Some good methods include:

- Article databases. Your school library probably has several databases which are easily searchable. You may also have access to more powerful databases like Lexis/Nexis.

- Specific Internet Sites. You may know of specific sites on the Internet that have excellent resources on your topic (example: <http://www.mdt.org/>)
- General Internet searches. If you don't know of a specific site that will be helpful, you may try a general Internet Search.
- Printed materials in the library (most periodicals and newspapers can be found on-line. However, you may find some very helpful printed materials that are not accessible on-line.
- Books (advantage: depth; disadvantage: time consuming)
- Personal interviews (including e-mail requests for information)

Step 3. Keep Trying. Most likely, you won't succeed right away. Research takes perseverance. If you are not having any luck answering your questions, try new a different method, different key words, or ask for help. Often, you will need to try several different key words before you get what you want. Write down what you have tried and keep going. If your question is "Who are the main contenders for the 2000 election (US)?" try: presidential elections, 2000 election, candidates for presidency, presidential candidates, presidential hopefuls, etc.

Help falls under two categories: people who know what they are doing and shortcuts that others have created. If you are new to a library, ask the librarian. They will appreciate you having a focused research question. As for shortcuts, check out bibliographies, names mentioned in articles, and references to other publications.

Step 4. Have a system for recording your results. Make sure you have the ability to take something away from your research. Always have a notebook to jot down notes (good web sites, important names, leads for further research etc.). Furthermore, make sure you are getting full source citations. If you are printing or copying articles, it is a good idea to staple them together and write the full source citation on the top right away. This will avoid confusion later.

MAKING EVIDENCE CARDS

Once you have gathered and read the information necessary to answer your questions, it is time to transform your articles into evidence cards—a format that is easily used within a debate. When you present evidence in a debate, you actually present three different pieces of information: a tag, a citation, and the body of the evidence. Each part is very important to effectively using the evidence in the debate.

As you read articles, you should look for passages that may be useful during your debates. When you find such passages, follow this procedure for making evidence "cards." The term card refers to a 4x6 index card. Debaters used to write their evidence quotes down on index cards. Today, some debaters still used index cards, but many also simply print their evidence on 8 _ x 11 pages.

Step 1: Mark Useful Passages

As you read your articles, you should mark passages that you believe will make good evidence quotes. The best way to mark passages is by putting brackets around the sentences that will be cut out and placed on index cards or paper. Highlighting is problematic because it may be difficult to copy. As you bracket the quotes you intend to use, you may also want to make notes in the margin about what the main idea of the quote is. This will make it easier when you go back to cut and paste.

What Makes A Passage Worth Cutting?

Students will immediately struggle with a major question: what should be marked and cut? In other words, what makes a passage or excerpt good evidence. Although it is difficult to say exactly what will be useful in a debate, good evidence fits the following criteria:

1. The excerpt says something that may be useful in a debate. That is, it supports an argument that a debater is likely to make.
2. The excerpt is authoritative. It is from an expert, cites a credible study, or gives strong reasoning to support the argument. It should also be free from excessive bias.
3. The excerpt is concise. Because the evidence is read verbatim during the debate, an ideal passage communicates the idea with a minimum of words.
4. The excerpt is taken in the context of the article. An excerpt should never alter the meaning the author intends. Any qualifiers should be included. Additionally, statements the author goes on to disagree with should not be represented as the author's view.

Step 2: Cut & Paste

At one time, debate evidence was written out by hand or manually typed on cards. Today, students find it most efficient to cut and paste from copies or computer printouts. Some even copy text directly from electronic sources into word processing programs. Regardless of the method, the idea remains the same, to transfer information from an article to a self-contained card or brief that can be filed. In a way, the article is "harvested." The useful parts are identified, picked, and stored. The useless parts are recycled. When students cut and paste, they should be conscious of future copying. The text should be dark enough to copy and the paper should be firmly glued or taped down.

Some guidelines for bracketing:

- Cut in context. Make sure you do not alter the meaning of the article by omitting any important information.
- Always cut full sentences. Even if you do not intend to read it, have full sentences on your final product.
- A good evidence card is usually 3-7 sentences long. Cards that are too short lack credibility and reasoning. Cards that are too long are not useful because they are too time consuming and usually bore the judge to tears.

Step 3: Source Citation & Tag

The excerpt alone is not complete without a source citation and tag. For printed materials a full source citation consists of:

- Author
- Author's Qualifications
- Publication (name of periodical, book, or report)
- Date of Publication
- Page Number(s)

For electronic sources (like Internet sites), the full citation consists of:

- Author
- Author's Qualifications
- Publication
- Date of Publication
- Name of Computer Service or Network (i.e. Nexis, SIRs, or www address)

If any of this information is not available, the student should make a note. For example, NQA is often used to signify No Qualifications Available. If the information is available, the student has an obligation to correctly provide it with each evidence excerpt.

A tag is like a headline for the excerpt. It should summarize the main idea of the passage using powerful language and a minimum of words (ideally five or less). The tag should not exaggerate the quality of the information it represents. The tag serves two main purposes. First, it allows students to know the contents of a particular piece of evidence at a glance. Second, the tag is often written during a debate in a competitor's notes. It represents the content of the evidence and therefore needs to be accurate and concise (so that it can be easily written).

Step 4: Organize Your Evidence

Much of a debate is spontaneous. As one side makes an argument, the other side thinks quickly of responses and counter-arguments. These responses most often require evidence. A debater must quickly find the necessary evidence in his or her files. Typically, evidence is sorted two ways. First, the student decides whether it is affirmative, negative, or both. Of course, some evidence may be useful for both sides depending on the specific argument. If possible, the debater should label the evidence aff. for affirmative and neg. for negative.

Secondly, the evidence is sorted by topic. These files will be alphabetized or otherwise grouped. When a student needs evidence on a topic, he or she will quickly go to the appropriate file and pull out what has been prepared.

The following page is an Evidence Card checklist that you can use to evaluate your work. Does your evidence measure up to the following criteria?

Evidence Cards Checklist

What makes an excerpt a good piece of evidence?

_____ Relevance: The excerpt says something that may be useful in a debate. That is, it supports an argument that a you may make.

_____ Authoritative: It is from an expert, cites a credible study, or gives strong reasoning or data to support the argument. It should also be free from excessive bias.

_____ Presentability: Is the excerpt short enough so that it can be read in a debate? Because the evidence is read verbatim during the debate, an ideal passage communicates the idea with a minimum of words (usually 3 to 7 sentences).

_____ In Context: An excerpt should never alter the meaning the author intends. Any qualifiers should be included. Additionally, statements the author goes on to disagree with should not be represented as the author's view.

What is included in a full source citation?

For Printed Sources, the full citation consists of

- _____ Author
- _____ Author's Qualifications
- _____ Publication (name of periodical, book, or report)
- _____ Date of Publication
- _____ Page Number(s)

For electronic sources (like Internet sites), the full citation consists of:

- _____ Author
- _____ Author's Qualifications
- _____ Publication (name of periodical, book, or report)
- _____ Date of Publication
- _____ Name of Computer Service or Network (e.g. Nexis, SIRs, or www address)

What makes a good tag (headline) for a piece of evidence?

- _____ Summarizes the main idea of the excerpt accurately
- _____ Uses powerful and descriptive language
- _____ Is six words or less

Sample Evidence Card

Bush Plans To Strengthen US Military

Ron Hutcheson & Jodi Enda, Washington Bureau Writers, St. Paul Pioneer Press, August 22, 2000, p.2A (or <http://www.pioneerplanet.com>)

In a stinging critique of the Clinton administration's handling of national defense, George W. Bush said Monday that the next president will inherit a military crippled by low morale, muddled missions and inadequate equipment. The Republican presidential candidate used an appearance at the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention to underscore his belief that defense remains a potent issue even a decade after the Cold War ended. "I don't care what's said in the political campaign, these are signs of a military in decline and we must do something about it," Bush said after citing a litany of problems with equipment and recruitment.

Please Notice:

- The tag summarizes the content of the evidence quote in a minimum number of words
- A complete source citation is given
- The text of the evidence is copied exactly from the original source

CONCLUSION

The process of accumulating evidence might seem complicated, with all the rules about tags and citations and cutting and pasting. Now is a good time to return to basics. Preparing evidence for use in a debate round simply means finding useful quotes, writing down a summary of what the quote says, and writing down where the quote is from. Because beginning debaters often struggle with the details of this process, this chapter goes into detail to help you get it right the first time.

This concludes the final chapter of *Learning Classic Debate*. Hopefully you have found some helpful hints that will make debate a better experience. Your time and effort will be rewarded as you develop a set of highly valuable life-long skills. Good luck and have fun.