

**The University of British Columbia Debating Society,
and the World Universities Debating Championships
2007 Organizing Committee,**



**In collaboration with the National University of
Singapore Debating Team,**

(Your Logo Here)

**Proudly Present the 2006 Singapore Summer Debating
Workshops.**

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Seminar #1 – The Basics of BP Debating

The following is a guide to BP debating written by Alex Deane, World Universities Debating Champion 2004. It was produced for the World Universities Debating Championships 2007 in Vancouver for which Mr. Deane is a Deputy Chief Adjudicator.

The Debating Handbook

by Alexander Deane

*A guide to British Parliamentary Debating and
the World Universities Debating Championships*

Every time you have to speak, you are auditioning for leadership

James Humes

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Introduction

British Parliamentary debating features eight speakers to a debate: there are two teams of two speakers on each side. It is a team sport: debates are won and lost by teams, not by individuals. It is a subtle art. It involves competing with a team on your side, without appearing to disagree with them. Positions are allocated on a random basis: teams do not choose the side of the debate they are on. Often this will lead to speaking in favour of things you don't believe in, and against those that you do.

The World Universities Debating Championships (“WUDC”) is the largest and most prestigious debating competition in the world. It is held in the British Parliamentary format and occurs during the post-Christmas holidays. Over the first three days of debating, nine debates are held, three on each day. All the teams compete in all of these nine debates. At the end of the third day, New Year's Eve, the 32 best performing teams “break” away from the rest. These 32 teams go on to debate against one another in the New Year, in a series of knock-out debates: two teams from each of the eight debates (octo-finals) progress to quarter finals; two teams from each progress to semi-finals, and two teams from each of the semi-finals progress to compete in the Grand Final. The team that wins that debate wins the World Championships.

There is also a separate post-break competition for the 16 best-performing teams that speak English as a Second Language. Teams that break in the main break are not eligible to compete in the ESL break.

Before the debate

The Draw

Whilst the topics for debate for some competitions (or for those for specific debates in competitions) are announced in advance, generally topics are announced 15 minutes prior to the debate itself. This is the case at the World Universities Debating Championships, which is held in the British Parliamentary format.

Competitors gather together for the “draw” before each round, which is shown on a screen or series of screens. The draw says which teams will be in which debates (or “rounds”).¹ This will show:

- The room number for each debate
- The four teams and their positions
- The judges in the rooms

After the draw is shown, the subject of the debate will be announced. This is called the “motion” and is expressed in the format “This House...” followed by a statement of belief or will, which the proposition teams will support and the opposition teams oppose.

Teams should not be judged by adjudicators from their own institutions, or by boyfriends/girlfriends/husbands/wives/relatives. Both judges and competitors will have registered such “conflicts” with tournament organisers before the competition begins, but it is incumbent upon both judges and adjudicators to tell the organisers immediately if

¹ This draw is constructed at random for the first debate, and puts teams with the same number of team points in debates together after that. This is done by reference to team points and without reference to individual speaker points. If there are an insufficient number of teams on a particular number of team points, teams on one point less are “pulled up” until a sufficient number of teams are obtained for a full debate. If there are not enough teams with that number of team points, then the teams on one point less than that will be eligible to be pulled up, and so forth. Teams are pulled up on a random basis, without reference to speaker points.

they are nevertheless allocated to rooms in which such conflicts occur. In some formats of debating, competitors may declare that they do not wish to be judged by a particular adjudicator or adjudicators (this is sometimes called “striking” or “scratching” a judge). However, there is no right to avoid being judged by adjudicators who do not fall into one or more of the “conflicts” outlined above in the British Parliamentary format generally, or at the World University Debating Championships in particular.

After the motion is announced, teams go and prepare for the debate. The team in first proposition is entitled to use the room in which the debate is to be held for their preparation: if you are not in the first proposition team, you should allow that team to take the room even if you get there before them. All teams should go straight to the room. 1st proposition go in. The rest remain nearby.

When a team does not arrive for the debate on time, adjudicators call for a runner from the organising team who will supply a dummy/swing team to fill their place. If the team has not arrived five minutes after the round was due to start, they are replaced and may not enter the round after this time. When this happens, the adjudicator draws a line through the name of the absent team and the individuals within it and replaces their team name with that of the dummy team and their individual names with the names of the individuals on the dummy team. The dummy team can win the debate. The team not there will receive zero team points and zero speaker points for the round. The judges adjudicate the round as they see it without reference to the fact that one of the teams is not a registered competitive team.

Pre-debate preparation

Plan what you’re going to say = what are your arguments?

Attempt to predict what they’re going to say = what’s their rebuttal?

Plan your response to that = what’s your rebuttal to their rebuttal?

Which points for your team will be delivered by you, and which will be delivered by your partner?

How will your speech be structured?

These are questions you should have answers to by the end of your fifteen minutes.

Fifteen minutes is not enough time to prepare speeches of very high quality. Competitive debaters therefore assemble material that might be relevant to future debates. There will always be topics that you hadn't predicted which prompt scrabbling for thoughts right up until you walk into the room. But you should work to make the number of them as low as possible. Your ultimate aim should be to use that preparation time merely to brush up on facts and arguments you've already collated, to structure them and divide them between you and your partner.

Teams on the same side do not prepare with one another. Nor may teams from the same institution "group-prepare" together, or receive assistance from coaches or others. A team prepares by itself – the point of this team competition is that it is the efforts of your team alone that decides your performance, not assistance from anyone else.

Speakers may use whatever printed material they wish to prepare. There is no limit on the amount of notes speakers may use to prepare or take into the debate. Electronic dictionaries are allowed. All other kinds of electronic equipment (e.g. laptops) are not allowed.

In the debate

Order of Speeches

Speakers speak in the following order:

1st Speaker, 1st proposition team (the “Prime Minister”)

1st Speaker, 1st opposition team (the “Leader of the Opposition”)

2nd Speaker, 1st proposition team (the “Deputy Prime Minister”)

2nd Speaker, 1st opposition team (the “Deputy Leader of the Opposition”)

1st Speaker, 2nd proposition team (the “Member of Government”)

1st Speaker, 2nd opposition team (the “Member of the Opposition”)

2nd Speaker, 2nd proposition team (the “Government Whip”)

2nd Speaker, 2nd opposition team (the “Opposition Whip”)

Timing

Speeches are of five or seven minutes in length, depending upon the competition: at WUDC, they are seven minutes. The first and last minute of each speech are ‘protected time.’ The end of the first minute and the beginning of the last minute will be indicated by a single knock on the table or sounding of a bell by one of the adjudicators. The end of the last minute will be indicated by a double knock or bell.

There is a grace period of no more than 30 seconds after this. Even 30 seconds is pushing the boundary of acceptability. This is important to note, particularly for teams from different formats (such as the American Parliamentary Debate Association) where debaters may speak significantly over their allotted time without incurring a penalty. In British Parliamentary debating, speaking over time is a serious breach of the rules and the marks such a speaker is awarded will reflect that breach.

Points of Information

British Parliamentary debating features no audience participation or intervention by judges. However, between the first and last minute of a speech, debaters on the other side may attempt to interject by offering a 'point of information' ("PoI"). The debater giving the speech has total control over their speech: they choose whether or not to accept the point of information and if not accepted the debater offering it should sit down immediately. If accepted by the speaker, the debater offering the point may deliver a brief interjection (never more than 15 seconds). Points of information cannot be offered to your own side.

The first and last minutes of a speech are "protected time:" the speaker is allowed to begin and end his speech without interruption. The end of the first minute and beginning of the last are indicated by a bell or knock and attempting to offer points during that time (making points "out of time") is bad form. Such points will be ruled out of order by the adjudicators.

Points of information are extremely important; along with discussing the matter raised by other speakers, they are the prime method of showing involvement throughout a debate, and are one of the most obvious distinctions between debating and public speaking.

Speakers should always stand up to make PoIs. They should not be offered in any way other than variations on the conventional 'On a point of information' or 'on that point.' To deliver a point such as "on Brazil" – saying the point, so it's delivered even though you're not accepted – is to unfairly inject the thrust of your intervention without the current speaker, who controls the floor, and should have the choice of accepting you or not. It is cheating. Whilst some judges don't take this view, many judges will heavily penalise the practice. You won't know what your judge thinks – so play safe. Don't do it.

PoIs should be offered frequently. But be aware that 'badgering' is to be avoided – this is a sensitive judgement that will become easier with experience (delivering PoIs in the

conventional way also diminishes the possibility of judges viewing you as badgering your opposition).

PoIs should be offered to each member of the opposition team: don't attempt to get your 'quota' in to just one or two of them – this will be apparent to those watching.

They can be positive: Offering a new argument or example for your side

Highlighting an argument already delivered by your side that they have ignored

Or negative:

Displaying inconsistency in an opposition speech or between speeches

Giving a fact or precedent that stands against their argument

Pointing out something they've got wrong

Taking points: whilst the speaker giving the speech has the absolute right to accept or decline points just as he wishes, he should aim to accept two points during a seven minute speech. Not taking any points of information during your speech is a serious fault.

On the other hand, taking three PoIs undermines your time and any more will seriously damage a speech.

It is very obvious if speakers are unwilling to take points of information from stronger teams or speakers and are waiting for points from weaker ones. Don't be afraid to accept POIs from your strongest opponents – when it suits you to. Good points are rewarded – dealing well with them is too.

Speaker roles

Positions in the debate come with different responsibilities. Do your job. Fulfilling your role in the debate is the fundamental yardstick by which you will be judged.

Position-Specific Responsibilities

Defining

The first speakers define for their sides and delivers arguments for their teams. They also point to (“flag”) the points their partner will deliver. The roles of the first speakers differ somewhat so they shall be dealt with in turn.

First Proposition

The first proposition team speaker (the Prime Minister) has a particular job to do: he defines the debate. He sets out what the “line” of the proposition in the debate will be. Whilst in doing so, there is no obligation to propose a policy by which that “line” would be implemented, debates are often poor if you don’t and it is never wrong to deliver one.

Things you shouldn’t do:

Status quo definitions

Normally, the proposition proposes a change and the opposition opposes it – they defend the current situation (the “status quo”). Proposing a status quo policy is not fair on the first opposition team. The 1st prop team has had 15 minutes to prepare their arguments. If you simply defend the status quo, you are asking the opposition to prepare a policy in

the round, during your speech, in perhaps five minutes. Very occasionally, motions will force you into proposing the status quo. This does not happen at WUDC. Whenever you have a choice as the proposition team between a change and the status quo, and opt for the status quo, your marks will suffer.

Truisms

There are three truisms, and all are to be avoided: First, the self-evident: “Wednesday is after Tuesday.” Secondly, the self-proving: e.g. the President should have the power to do x because the power to do x rests with the President. Thirdly, most common in debating, the moral truism, something to which no real opposition exists: “genocide is bad.” Think when you’re defining: what’s the opposition to this? It’s not fair to take *too* much of the moral high ground: you cannot ask the opposition to take a position that is unarguable or absurd.

Squirrels

When a motion has an obvious meaning and you twist the wording of the motion to define onto something else, you are “squirreling.” Some formats have more sympathy for this practice than others. The British Parliamentary format has little sympathy for squirrels, and WUDC has none at all. The “obvious” debate is the one you should have. You can have an innovative policy for it, an approach others won’t have considered, material others don’t know about: that’s great. But defining on something other than the plain meaning of the motion is not right, especially at WUDC where ruining somebody else’s round by offering an off-topic debate can lead to them suffering through no fault of their own, perhaps to the extent of not breaking. It forces the opposition to debate against something they’ve had no time to prepare for, or to challenge the definition which always leads to a horrible debate. It’s not wacky or fun – it’s childish and unfair. Don’t do it.

Time/Place setting

“Time setting” means defining the debate to be held at some point in the past or in the future. It is never acceptable to time set in British Parliamentary debating.

“Place setting” means defining the debate as occurring in a particular geographical location or region. In national or regional competitions, it is acceptable to place-set in the relevant nation/area. At WUDC, it is not: it is a *world* championship and it is not fair to define the debate on a particular geographical area (normally chosen because you know a lot about it). Exceptions may arguably arise where all four of the teams in the round are from a particular place/region but as a matter of good practice it should simply be avoided per se.

Don't “hang your case”

The whole of the philosophy, and the central case offered by your team, must be in the first speaker's speech. If it's not, you've “hung your case” – it's left hanging, incomplete until the second speaker's speech. It's not fair, because a speaker on the other side has had to oppose your team without knowing half of what you stand for.

Beyond these strict rules, there are also two related “inadvisables.” Defining a very narrow change often leads to a minimal-clash debate that runs out of steam – you'll be blamed for it if so. On the other hand, extreme positions that might be of philosophical interest but of no realistic application lead to theoretical debates with no real-world application. Such debates are of very limited worth.

Finally on defining for the proposition, don't over-complicate. Your arguments can be tremendously complex: but the issue being debated should be straightforward.

The point of proposing is to set up a good debate. Put forward a decent proposition and stand by it. Tell us the principle you wish to establish. Tell us the grounds of debate as you see them.

First Opposition

The first opposition speaker sets out the opposition to the proposal. A frequent question is, should I challenge the proposition's definition? (This is allowed, at least in theory). A good rule of thumb is, *don't do it*. If the definition is good, it will count against you that you don't just get on with it. If it's bad, you'll be given credit for ensuring a debate can nevertheless occur. Debates about the definition of the debate are bad and horrible to watch and even the winners get low points. You don't want to be in one. Normally, the definition is bad because the prop team is bad – so just beat them, don't waste time on definitional challenges. Only the first speaker of the first opposition team is allowed to challenge the motion. If they do not, the rest of the opposition bench is bound by that decision.

It is legitimate to define where no definition has been offered. Here, the first opposition speaker takes on the burden of establishing the debate, at short notice. Credit will be given to him for this problem. The opposition remains the opposition, though: the opposition continues to oppose change to the status quo.

It's first opposition's job to set out the opposition's "line." Whilst first proposition should have put forward a case with broad, contestable principles, it's down to first opposition to show what the disagreement is between the two sides: to establish the "clash" in the debate.

One vital part of doing that is ensuring that you oppose the proposition that's given, not merely the one you were expecting. First opposition is the place where people are most obviously caught out, unprepared and unable to be versatile in the face of the unexpected. *Listen* to what first prop says, and tell us why you disagree with it.

You can oppose the *principle* of the proposition, the *policy*, or both. If opposing only the policy the proposition have advanced, you can recommend an alternative policy.

Opposing on very narrow grounds (accepting most of what the proposition says, and only opposing a bit of it) is dangerous. It can lead to a bad debate, about very little, for which you will be blamed. Normally, defending the status quo is the right thing to do in opposition.

The words of caution above about “hanging your case” apply equally to first opposition.

Beyond defining

Having set out the basis of their side’s position first speakers also deliver arguments for their team and flag the points their partners will make. It’s not enough merely to define: indeed, if your definition takes two minutes of your seven minute speech, it’s too long. The first speakers also deliver substantive material for their side.

The first opposition speaker also rebuts the arguments advanced by first proposition.

Seconding

Speakers in the second position on the table will have (should have) been allotted points by the first speaker. These points *must* be delivered: it is a serious teamwork flaw if a point to come is promised by one member of the team and not delivered by the other.

They also rebut the material provided by the speaker(s) on the other side that have spoken before them. A fault common to speeches made in the second positions is giving too much time to rebuttal and not enough to substantive material: though there are no hard and fast rules as to the division of a speech, if more than half a speech is spent rebutting, usually not enough time is left for substantive arguments.

If a definitional challenge has been made by 1st Opp (remembering that they almost always are *not* and should be avoided), the second proposition speaker must set out the proposition’s position on it: defending the original definition, or accepting the new one.

Though the usual approach is to defend the original definition, because obviously damage is done to the standing of a team which advances a definition that gets “left behind” and drops out of the debate, this is a decision that is context-specific. If on hearing 1st Opp you realise that there really is something terribly wrong with your definition, then accepting theirs is the right thing to do. This would salvage something for your team and lead to a better debate, which judges will appreciate.

Extending

Speakers in the third position on the table have an interesting job. In essence, their task is to show what their team has to offer that is new. Importantly, the second half of the table is not a new debate. The nature of the 3rd speaker position reflects the subtlety of the British format: material must be new, but not too new; different, but not too different.

3rd speaker approaches can take two forms:

- New arguments/examples
- New analysis of arguments and examples that have already been delivered

Both are legitimate. For this reason, the term ‘extension’ is in some ways unhelpful, as a successful ‘extension’ can be to do substantively the same thing as the team before you, but do it better. For example, a legitimate new contribution from the second team on the bench can be to rebut well an opposition argument that has previously been rebutted badly.

In framing your own positive material, something that’s been mentioned by the other team on your bench can be enlarged. The fact that they’ve glancingly said it doesn’t mean the point belongs to them. You can make the point your own by expanding it and analysing it more fully.

Third speakers on either side do not have to say the word “extension.”

Third speakers for the opposition have a particular responsibility to deal with the extension given by the third speaker for the proposition. They also contribute their team's positive material in the same way as the third speaker for the proposition.

The second teams in BP debates must not contradict the material set out by the first teams on their sides (neither the principle, nor the policy, nor the examples, nor anything else). If done to a significant extent, it's called "knifing" and will greatly harm your team. It is difficult to beat a team on your side without contradicting them: but that's part of the subtlety of the format. Teams going first will often try to deliver as much material as possible, starving the second teams of new ground: but they don't make that overt. Similarly, teams in the "back half" will advance material that seeks to advance their side's position more effectively than the first team did; it may be chosen or flagged in a way that reveals faults in the first team's material, but those faults aren't to be explicitly pointed out by the team in second. Being on the same side is more than a formality: it has real meaning in the debate and though you're trying to beat the team alongside you, you must do this by being better, not by arguing against them.

Summating

Last speakers give a different kind of speech. Their job is to offer a summation of the debate. Ostensibly, they look back and tell us what happened in the debate. In reality, a useful comparison might be with very biased news coverage. Watching a left wing and right wing network reporting the same event, you might see them reach totally different conclusions, despite the fact that both ostensibly offer a neutral perspective. Alternatively, think of a summary as a biased adjudication, highlighting the strengths of the winners (your side) and the weaknesses of the losers (theirs).

Given this, whilst new examples are always welcome, summary speakers **should not advance new arguments.**

The constitution of the World Universities Debating Championships currently states that the last proposition speaker *may* offer new material. This is contrary to understanding and practice in the UK so need not trouble those debating domestically. Speakers competing at the World Championships should receive clarification of this issue at the full briefing.

Obviously the last opposition speaker shouldn't deliver new material – that would be very unfair, as no-one speaks after him to rebut them.

Summary speeches may be delivered by addressing the debate speaker by speaker, or by themes, or in another way you prefer: it's really a matter of personal choice. Most speakers prefer that a “thematic” summary: going through six substantive speakers (and rebutting the last summary, if you're in opposition) means taking things very quickly in a seven minute speech. But in some debates, you might find that a speaker by speaker approach helps highlight contradictions on the other side. It's up to you.

Roles: A Summary

So going by position, speakers must carry out the following responsibilities:

First Speaker, First Proposition Team (*1st Prop/Prime Minister*)

- Defines the grounds of the debate
- Delivers own substantive material
- Flags the arguments to be delivered by his partner

First Speaker, First Opposition Team (*1st Opp/Leader of the Opposition*)

- Defines the opposition's grounds
- Rebutts 1st Prop
- Delivers own substantive material
- Flags the arguments to be delivered by his partner
- *Doesn't challenge the definition if he's got his head screwed on*

Second Speaker, First Proposition Team (*2nd Prop/Deputy Prime Minister*)

- Rebutts 1st Opp
- Delivers own substantive material, using the labels his partner gave for it, and makes reference back to partner's material

Second Speaker, First Opposition Team (*2nd Opp/Deputy Leader of the Opposition*)

- Rebutts the arguments of the 1st Prop team, with particular responsibility for rebutting 2nd Prop
- Delivers own substantive material, using the labels his partner gave for it, and makes reference back to partner's material

First Speaker, Second Proposition Team (*3rd Prop/Member of Government*)

- Delivers own substantive material
- Does not have to say the word 'extension'
- Rebutts the arguments of the speakers before him, with particular responsibility to rebut 2nd Opp

First Speaker, Second Opposition Team (*3rd Opp/Member of the Opposition*)

- Rebutts the arguments of the speakers before him, with particular responsibility to deal with the extension from 3rd Prop.
- Delivers own substantive material
- May deliver an 'extension'

Second Speaker, Second Proposition Team (*4th Prop/Government Whip*)

- Summates for his side
- Shouldn't offer new material (subject to discussion above)

Second Speaker, Second Opposition Team (*4th Opp/Opposition Whip*)

- Summates for his side.
- Definitely, definitely offers no new material.

Universal Responsibilities

The universal responsibilities are rebuttal, structure, timing, points of information and teamwork.

Rebuttal

All speakers except the first speaker on the proposition have a responsibility to rebut (i.e. attack the arguments of) the speakers before them on the other side. They have a specific responsibility to rebut the speaker who has spoken immediately before them.

Unlike kinds of debating, for instance those favoured in the United States, British Parliamentary debating doesn't (or shouldn't) feature point-by-point judging, where each and every argument – no matter how trivial or stupid – must be rebutted. Instead, you should look to hit the other side's good points, not just their weak ones: your biggest responsibility is to knock down their important arguments. Whilst points are naturally to be had in knocking down obviously poor arguments, such reward is limited: strong arguments must be attacked, their best points combated. Reasons for this stress are twofold: firstly, without such an approach, rebuttal will be lacking; secondly, and more importantly, it leads to better debates, where the significant ideas have a greater chance of being developed and grappled with as more time is devoted to them. **Look for the hard argument and hit it.** There is less credit to be had for attacking the weak ones – because they're weak, so it's easier.

Structure

Having a clear idea of what you're going to say helps the audience, and helps you. A lack of structure is probably the thing that damages speeches more than any other – basic

errors in this area often lose debates for speakers and teams simply because there isn't enough clarity in their delivery.

Structure is much easier to get right than one would think. **Say what you're going to say, say it in the order you've said you'll say it, and then say what you've said:**

My three points today are x
 y
 z.

Beginning a speech with a quick introduction and then giving an outline of the speech's structure (and sticking with it) develops an involvement on the part of listeners, an understanding of where the speaker is heading and what they are trying to achieve. The delineation of one idea or theme from another is helpful in both understanding and following a speaker and engaging with their argument.

- Audiences feel most comfortable when they can easily follow a speaker
- Complex ideas are most easily presented in a transparent framework, unclouded by clumsy or unsignposted packaging.
- You will find giving a speech easier when you have a clear idea of what you're going to say next – it will inform the point you developing before it, and diminish the possibility of confusion
- Both audiences and judges will accept swifter transition from one point to another (which might otherwise seem 'clunky' or clumsy movement) if they know the next point is coming.
- Speakers will find that moving from one point to another is easier if those points are pre-arranged, preferably in an order that is based on a logical development.

The selection of those three points, and more precisely the labels you give them, is more important than it might appear. Even when the substance of a speech is extremely good, the first three things most judges will have written down will be the three points you've promised:

- The arguments you deliver should fit happily into those titles, and satisfy the promise made by the point's title to attempt to convince the audience on the ground it states.

- If you promise a point, you must give it. Flagging a point and not delivering it is a major error.
- Whilst absolute parity of time allocation is obviously not necessary, each point must be developed fully in its own right: dwelling on one point for four minutes and delivering two in 30 seconds would imply bad time management, or that you've chosen the wrong points to stress. If one point encapsulates pretty much your whole case, and the others are makeweight, you're mispackaging: break the big one down, and include the others within the new labels.

Timing

People often find that they are 'finished' with time left on the clock. If you don't use your full time, it sends the message that you don't have much to say in this debate. You really must try to get to the end of the allocated time period.

Almost invariably, people end their speeches early because they haven't gone into their points in sufficient depth.

As noted above, timing is affected by the need to deliver a properly structured speech.

Teamwork

Debating is a team sport. Plenty of individuals speak very well and still lose. It may happen to you. There's no point blaming your partner: you lost as a team.

You should tell your partner what you're going to say in a debate. You should know what they're going to say. If you're speaking second, your plan for your speech should be shaped in the knowledge of what your partner is going to say, and then in the debate it should be reshaped in light of what he actually said. If you're speaking first, your speech and your mindset to the debate should be shaped by the knowledge of what your partner

is going to say. Never, ever walk into a debate with a partner who says ‘just back me up.’ You both have a responsibility to ensure that each understands the points the other will give. You should talk a lot to your partner before the debate, and write notes to one another during the debate as things change, noting new lines of argument and agreeing responses.

If you have a good point, you shouldn’t think ‘this is my point, I’m making it.’ You should tell your partner about it. Very often, speakers deliver good arguments well but are marked down – because the argument is in the wrong place. Big, principled arguments belong in the first speech – this is logical for teams in the first half of the debate, since the first speaker is setting out the grounds for the side, and a rule in the back half since the second speaker shouldn’t have new material. If you’re speaking second and you think of such an argument, don’t keep it to yourself. Not only is it bad teamwork, it won’t do you any good: your team will get vastly more credit if the argument is delivered in the right place, i.e. in your partner’s speech. Your point or not, that’s where it belongs – it’s a team sport. If you’re the person that should be delivering this point, you should *still* tell your partner about it – so they can plan and structure their speech. This is one of the interesting things about debating – the interaction not only across the table, but also along it, between team members.

Points of Information should be shared between speakers, too. It may be that your partner will be taken, rather than you. It may be that they will deliver a point that isn’t as good as yours unless you tell them what yours is; or yours may not be as good as theirs. You should write the point down and refine it together until its delivery is just so. you only need to get (and if the speaker is any good, won’t be allowed to get) more than two points in during the speech, and the other team on your bench will be trying too – so make sure that your point is good when you get to deliver it.

Flagging points: The teamwork element of debating is also represented in a formal, structural sense: in the top half of the table, the first speaker should refer (or ‘flag’) in his speech to points the second will deliver. The second speaker should refer to points his

partners has made – particularly if a suggestion can be made that they have not been dealt with adequately by the opposition.

If you're speaking second in your team and your first speaker has said that you will make certain points, they must be given. **If material if promised, it should always be delivered.** If as the debate has developed during the opposition speech between the first and second speakers, the new, more appropriate material should be shaped to fit the labels that have been promised, and the labels distorted so as to appear that the points are being given just as promised. Otherwise, it's not just bad strategy and bad structure (in that speeches have been structured on the basis that points have been promised, but then they've not been given) – it's also bad teamwork: your teammate has promised you'll do something and you haven't done it.

The points or 'labels' used by the 2 speakers should not be the same, or be too similar.

Buzz terms: Team mates should use the same kind of language, the same terminology – the aim is to develop in listeners a feeling that a continuity of thinking exists within the team.

Style/Manner

Debating is a persuasive art. Worlds is not an essay-reading competition. Your manner is important.

Delivery: speed is a great problem at WUDC every year. One naturally speaks more quickly when one's nervous. Take this into account. People often tend to drop the volume, as if they don't want to be noticed. Presumably, you're at a debating tournament because you want to be heard! Avoid overcompensating though – especially in small rooms. Some take comfort in their notes – beware. Reading is very irritating for the listener. Eye contact is important. Avoid ums and ers as much as you can; you'll find that slowing down a bit helps with that as you'll start to be less worried about filling

every second of empty air with noise! Pauses can be very effective – don't be afraid to use them. Don't monotone; vary the pitch of your voice as well as the speed.

Modes of address: the chairman may be called Mr Speaker, Mr Chairman, Mr Chair – it really doesn't matter. Other speakers may be referred to by their position (e.g. 3rd Opp), their role (e.g. Deputy Prime Minister), by their first name, by their last name – it really doesn't matter. Don't call people “the honourable.” They're not.

Profanity: it's a Parliamentary competition. That may mean different things in different countries. But you are not going to help your cause with profanity. On the other hand, you could greatly damage it. You don't know how judge will react. It's therefore poor strategy. Err on side of caution.

Finally, the vast majority of debates at WUDC are conducted in a perfectly decorous manner. However, every year there are one or two instances of someone going beyond the bounds of what is decent behaviour. Debaters have a right to compete without being abused. This is the sole area in which adjudicators will intervene in the debates: they may simply end the speaker's speech. Adjudicators have the power to award punitively low (on no) marks to speakers behaving in this way, and in extreme cases teams may be removed from the competition. Please bear this in mind.

Miscellaneous

Speakers may not use props of any kind.

After the debate

After a British Parliamentary debate, the judge/s deliberate, and a discussion occurs between the panel of judges if there is more than one judge (note that this is different from other formats, where the judges may vote on a result without conferring). At Worlds, there are always two and normally at least three judges to a room, so there will always be a discussion. The chairman controls and directs the discussion. This discussion always aims for unanimity. If unanimity is impossible, then a majority is sought. If a majority cannot be reached, then the chairman of the panel decides. All judges have an equal vote.

In the discussion, adjudicators rank the teams and then allocate speaker points. They may not award “low point wins,” meaning that the two speakers on the team that wins must have more combined speaker points than the combined speaker points of the team that came second, which must have more than the team that came third, which must have more than the team that came last. Where team A beats team B, an individual on team B may have higher speaker points than one or both of the speakers on team A, but the combined points of team A must be greater than those of the combined points of team B. A handout explaining the allocation of speaker points will be circulated to all judges before the commencement of the competition.

Teams may receive zero team points if adjudicators unanimously agree that a team member has harassed another debater on the basis of religion, sex, race, colour, nationality, sexual preference, disability, or simply been gratuitously and excessively

unpleasant. Teams may also receive zero points if they arrive at the debate more than five minutes late.

Some debates have “oral adjudications” after the judges have reached their decision. At Worlds, there are always oral adjudications for the six debates held on the first two days, and none for the three debates held on the last day.

In these oral adjudications, one of the judges will tell teams the positions they have been given but not the points allocated to individual speakers. He will also give a brief rationale for the result, which should not be interrupted. He may give constructive criticism if he wishes. This adjudication is given by the chairman of the panel unless he is dissenting, in which case the adjudication is given by a member of the panel nominated by him. Speakers are welcome to seek individual or team feedback in private from one or all of the adjudication panel after the debate. In obtaining that feedback competitors must be polite and non-confrontational.

Participants may feel that the feedback they have received is extremely good. Exceptionally, participants may feel that the result they have received is wrong. They should consider the experience held by judges and the objectivity they possess before acting on that feeling. In either case, competitors are welcome to fill in feedback forms, which are considered by the organisers. There is little point in filling in such forms unless one’s attitude about the round conforms to either of these extremes.

Something you don't want to hear

Debating is hard work. In the laudable enthusiasm that motivates those that encourage others to take it up, this is often overlooked or underplayed. But it's best to be open about it: if you want to be a serious, successful competitive debater, you're going to have to hit the books. You will have to work at researching information and facts on current affairs, moral principles, basic legal rules, and so on.

This is because the reality of competitive debating is very different to the theory suggested by a 15 minute preparation time. In order to be prepared to a maximum possible level, teams [should] compile files of material on debates that might conceivably be had. Ideally, the 15 minute prep time should be used by team mates to discuss the issues that arise out of the debate's specific motion, to allocate points between the speakers, and to decide the structure of one's speech – not frantically trying to think of the basic principles and facts.

On the other hand, plenty of knowledgeable people lose debates every week of the debating year to people entirely ignorant about the issue in question. This is because the latter understand an important fact: that debating is a game, and like any other game it has rules (obviously, the ideal is to understand the rules, *and* know the material). Beyond the stated, formal requirements – length of speech, scores for manner and matter – there are also formulas that must be followed to deliver high-scoring speeches. As Elle Wood might say, the rules of debating are simple and finite. These rules are rigid – debating is like any other game in this; the fact that it's played by speaking doesn't mean that the rules are any more relaxed.

For some reason, most debaters aren't taught these rules. Many of those that are don't heed them, and get the same feedback from judges week after week. You should avoid this. The rules are here. Learn them if you want to win.

Much of the material above is unglamorous. But there are some things in rounds that simply *must* be done. A surprisingly high number of debaters lose rounds because they don't do them. Debates *ought* to be won or lost based on argument and persuasiveness, which are more interesting and are normally the reasons we start debating. But this text is meant to help people over the hurdles that must be crossed even before people start considering those things.

The most useful thing you can do to get better at debating is to debate more. Experience of the way a debate works, an instinct for what to say and when, the confidence to advance a point under attack: these things come with time spent "on your feet." Your notes from debates can be invaluable; you'll often have the same debate again: they should be included in the file referred to above.

One of the reasons that experience is so valuable is that every so often, there will be times when any number of the "rules" set out should be put to one side. A disastrous debate may need you to redefine, though you never should. Or you might need to devote six minutes to one point. Or you might have to depart quite considerably from the line taken by your side, even though normally this will greatly harm your performance. This is because a great deal in debating is context-specific. Furthermore, what lines to take, the decisions about your approach: these are *judgment calls*, not rules. In both of these areas, you can't really be taught what to do.

Seeking further information?

The author of this document is willing to provide further information via email:

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It should be understood that neither this document, nor anything discussed via email by him by email, or by other members of the University of British Columbia Organising Committee, shall bind the Committee at the XXVII round of the Championships. Whilst this document sets out general principles that shall certainly carry force at the XXVII round, it should be understood that the definitive position on rules and requirements of that tournament shall be set out at the full briefing before the competition begins.

Seminar #2 – Adjudication

Adjudication is probably the most controversial aspect of debating. Undoubtedly each losing debater feels that the panel has made some sort of egregious error, and that they should have judged the round properly. This frequent criticism is where we shall start this seminar. Is it possible to adjudicate a round properly?

The simplest answer to this question is that it is impossible to judge a round “properly” but it is certainly possible to judge a round “improperly”. What I mean by this is that there are a number of things that you must make sure do not factor into your adjudication, and I will take them one by one below.

- 1- Do not go into the round with a preconceived notion of which side of the debate has the easier or more winnable side. As an adjudicator you must be somewhat neutral on this issue and assume that the adjudication team has done a good job of picking balanced and fair issues for the debaters to discuss. This is a difficult task for adjudication teams, and they do not always strike a perfect balance, but that does not give each judge an individual license to reward or penalize a team for having either an easier or more difficult task in front of them.
- 2- Do not judge the round based on who convinced you. This one sounds counter-intuitive as debating is inherently the art of persuasion. All I mean by this is that you have to recognize that convincing you as a judge isn't the ultimate goal of the debaters. The debaters are attempting to offer the best argumentation in the round, and if they do so, they should likely win. Imagine that both sides of the debate are pushing a ball against each other. The winner of the debate should be the team that moves the ball the furthest, even though the ball may still be on the opposite side of centre. If you are in a round about abortion, you may be staunchly pro-life, but that does not mean that a team arguing pro-choice may not win. At the end of the round, you may still be pro-life, but if the pro-choice team offered better arguments than the pro-life team, they should win, regardless of your personal politics.
- 3- Do not judge by checklist. Some judges hear a case, or a motion, and immediately come up with all the arguments that they think should be used. They then judge the debate based on how close the teams came to offering the argumentation that they thought should be used. Keep an open mind. Some arguments you weren't expecting may end up being brilliant. Some arguments you could easily refute will end up standing in the round un-rebutted.
- 4- Don't insert arguments into the debate. You can only judge the debate based on what was said, not what you think should have been said. There are some exceptions to this. If a debater says something that is

- factually wrong, it's okay as a judge to not give them much credit for a fact that simply isn't true. Don't penalize them if no one in the round called them on it, but you just don't have to reward them for it either. If a debater makes a stupid argument (we've all made them) and no one refutes it, you don't have to give them much credit for it. The argument still stands in the round as an argument, you simply just don't find it very persuasive.
- 5- Don't give automatic lasts. Some judges think that things like knifing, shafting, squirreling etc are grounds for an automatic last... they aren't. Like any other rule violation or tactical error, they are a problem for the team that committed them, but they aren't independently decisive. View everything in context of what it did to the round as a whole and never base a decision on a single issue.
 - 6- Don't make an argument more than it actually is. The most common mistake, even among senior adjudicators is to hear a debater mention a brilliant point, in the last 30 seconds of their speech, or even in the grace period. The speaker simply stated the point, didn't develop it, or provide any back up, and it certainly wasn't the focus of their teams argumentation. It's still a good point, and they should be rewarded for it, but don't award the win, solely on the basis of a 10 second point that even the speaker who gave the point didn't think much of. You should be looking for major areas of clash, and the themes of the round, and who gave the best argumentation on those important issues.

Now that we know how not to judge, how should you go about discussing a round with your panel, assuming you are the chair? There is no one set way to do this, so I will simply tell you how I do it. As long as you cover the same areas of chat, you'll get the job done.

Generally when I am getting input from the panel, I'm looking to come to some sort of consensus of how the round played out. What were the major themes, where were the principle areas of clash? Did anyone have particularly brilliant analysis or style? Was any team clearly first or clearly last? To get these areas clear, I follow a fairly simple formula.

- 1 – I ask the panel for preliminary rankings without any reasons, I ask them to call the round from first to last, and if they are unable to do so, I ask them to give me whatever rankings they have. If you have a panelist who has NO rankings, they may be intimidated by you as the chair, they may really be inexperienced and confused, they may not have paid attention to the round. If they are intimidated, assure them that you are not there to judge each other and that their opinion is as valid as theirs as chairs. To those who are not chairing rounds, it's important to know that

I have promoted judges far more often when they have politely disagreed with me, than when they simply parroted my rankings back to me. If they are confused, give them another minute with their notes, or ask them why they are confused... some of the things confusing them, may well shed light on some important points of the debate. If they did not pay attention to the round, I suggest you not really involve that panelist in the discussion too much, and report the situation to the Chief Adjudicator as soon as possible. Always pay close attention to everything that is said in a debate, it is your only job as an adjudicator.

2- Once I have preliminary rankings, I see if there is any commonality in the panel. Is one team last in everyone's rankings? Is one team first in one team's rankings? Is it a bench win, a top or bottom half etc? This is not where you finish, but merely where you start the discussion. If there is a commonality in the rankings, I start going around the room and asking each adjudicator to tell me why that team placed where they did. From this discussion, themes of the debate and major issues and areas of clash start emerging.

3- The discussion in section 2 carries on for quite some time and still there is no consensus. Don't be afraid of this happening, but be careful... the longer the discussion goes, the greater the risk that you start inventing arguments and reading into the debate things that didn't happen. It is also where you start to see minor arguments as bigger than they were. Don't be afraid to go back to your notes, you made them for a reason. If I find my panel is deadlocked, it can be for one of two reasons. If the 1st person thinks 1st opp won, and 2 think that 1st prop won, you ask simply if anyone feels that they would change their mind with further discussion. If they say no, then you simply take a vote and that's that. A split panel is nothing to be worried about, intelligent people can disagree on things and that's fine. If the problem is that you have a lot of confusion and no one is really sure where to put the teams, I like to use Ian Lising's "filter" approach. The filter approach is basically a way of using different perspectives to clarify issues. The filter of engagement says "who was engaging who in the round, and what impact did that have?" My favourite filter is "how can I justify myself to the teams?" Ultimately you will have to explain to the teams why they won or lost. Ask yourself how you would explain any possible decision to the teams and see how you feel about it. If one of the explanations feels better than the other, that's probably telling you something about how you see the round.

4- At this point you have either agreed or voted on ranks, and are ready to do speaker points. Firstly set a floor and a ceiling. By this I mean that the panel agrees that this debate was "excellent", "average", "poor" etc.

You can even use letter grades A, B, C, D, if you want. Once you all agree on the range, I find it best to ask who was the best speaker in the round (it won't necessarily be from the winning team) and who was the worst speaker in the round (it won't necessarily be from the losing team). Once you have the high and low marks given, the rest of the numbers sort themselves out fairly easily. Remember that Worlds uses a wide range, and has 9 rounds, so don't haggle unnecessarily over a matter of a single point. As always, try to be reasonable and flexible in your thinking, this is after all, a collaborative effort.

Seminar 2 Continued – How to prep for a tournament and how to construct a matter file.

Again we find ourselves in a position of not having an easy answer or a set of instructions that must be followed, but rather a set of guidelines that you can follow and modify to suit your own purposes.

The Matter File

Matter Files, or “World’s Binders” as some call them, are an important and valuable tool if used correctly. If used incorrectly they can be a weight that you have to carry around for 9 days and that you get nothing of real value out of. Many people think that the matter file is designed to predict motions that the adjudication team may set, and will have a number of pre-set cases in case that issue comes up. I think this is a terrible use of a matter file. You should definitely brainstorm a few of the big issues in the world in the lead up to the tournament, and should have some important points jotted down about them, but don’t write out a whole case, and certainly don’t try to exhaustively predict the topics, you’ll never get them all.

The matter file should basically serve the function of a modified almanac. You want to have speedy access to a set of valuable information about the world. I like to divide the binder by region. I will have a section for each continent, and a 1 page brief on each of the major countries, and the major conflicts and developments in the last decade or so. I generally pay closer attention to the area where most of the teams will be coming from. The value of this is that it solidifies your ability to use examples from different regions of the world. Maybe a debate will come up about the Tamil Tigers, maybe it won’t... but I guarantee that the Tamil Tigers will be a valuable example in a number of rounds at worlds every year. However you want to organize the binder is up to you, but don’t let it get too big. You only have a short amount of time to use it, so if you spend all your prep time looking for the page, the matter file is a hindrance not a help.

Where to get the matter for your matter file

This is the biggest challenge in debating. There is simply too much to read and not enough time to read it in. I suggest the following sources as a general guide to the world:

- The Economist, particularly the “World In 200x” edition that comes out pre-worlds
- The CIA factbook, good general information source
- The BBC
- CNN

- The New York Times or the Wall Street Journal
- 1 Major Newspaper from wherever it is you will be debating
- Adbusters – for the radical leftist perspective
- Debatabase – This website will give you hundreds of previous motions and the breakdown of arguments. Be warned, Debatabase only gives very general argumentation, it is only a starting point.

Seminar 3 - How to win from Opening Benches and, POI's.

How to Win on 1st Government Benches

A practical guide to constructing cases and controlling the direction of your debate round

Case Construction as a "Skill"

- Gov and Opp are like Reading and Writing
- Reading takes practice, you have to learn to write
- There are a number of ways to lose a case on Gov, and only 1 way to win
- It is ALWAYS easier for an opp team to win by arguing the set-up of your case than it is for them to argue its merits.

How to Construct A Proper Case

- Play to your strengths
- Focus the issue and make sure that there is only a single onus, or if there is a double onus, make sure you can address both in sufficient detail
- Make a Case Statement... then wait a while... come back to it, and make sure it isn't stupid.
- A confusing debate is ALWAYS the governments fault!

Example

- Subject: Criminal Law
- Sub-topic: Treatment of mentally handicapped persons
- Motion: THBT the mentally handicapped should be punished the same as regular people in the criminal law.
- After time to reflect... this is a confusing debate, too hard to win, unfocussed and stupid.
- After Rethinking: "This house would execute mentally handicapped people who are found guilty of capital offenses"... MUCH better

Questions you must answer

- What is the Problem?
- What is the Proposed Solution?
- What are the benefits of your plan?
- What are the costs of your plan?
- Is the juice worth the squeeze?

Picking Your Battles

- Every case that is debatable has a number of battles in it.
- Bad teams try to cover all of them.

- Focus on the strong points, downplay the weakpoints.
- Put the Opp to a strategic choice... argue on your turf, or try to move the case... either way, you're in good shape.

Controlling the Round

- The Single BIGGEST advantage to being on government is that you control the direction of the round
- Don't give up that advantage by constructing a case with no direction.
- Write the Whip Speech before the round begins.

The PM

- Should be by far the best speech in the round
- Should be passionate, with great analysis and excellent examples.
- Set traps for the Opp
- Get them to accept false premises
- Make them argue on Gov strong ground
- Set up Opp arguments that the DPM has good answers for
- The LO has only 7 minutes to prepare... they don't have time to be creative
- Use the PM to set up the Whip

The DPM

- The DPM is a much more critical member to the team than people think
- The DPM should have a really large and important contribution to the round, without shifting the case
- The DPM should serve 2 functions
- Take the LO completely out of the round.
- Set up the DLO, and put them to a strategic decision.

Case Study: "The Polar Bear Case"

- This is a fun case that was run in the final round of the Canadian national championships.
- It is not a case that is designed to win, because the subject matter is silly and counter intuitive... but the construct of the case is flawless.
- More than anything else, it forces the Opp to accept false premises and fall into traps that if they were smart, they would avoid.
- It also has the essential components of every case, a defined focus, a single onus, properly constructed arguments, and a clear direction.

Case Setup – Minute 1

- A few years back a 3 year old was left UNATTENDED by his parents in a zoo
- The 3 year old crossed through a barrier, climbed a fence and entered a polar bear enclosure

- The polar bear mauled and killed the child
- The parents are suing the zoo for wrongful death, but have agreed to drop the suit if the zoo agrees to euthanize the bear.
- Case statement: We Say... Don't Euthanize the Bear (4 word case statement)

Argument #1 – There was nothing wrong with the fence (minute 2)

- State premise – there is nothing wrong with the fence
- Explain: the law dictates a requirement for negligence and reasonable care.
- Analysis – this fence was adequate, what was it's purpose, did it do it's job
- Evidence – Kept bear in, proof... bear was there.
- Evidence – no one had climbed in since
- Evidence – there was a sign that said "don't climb fence"
- Conclude – evidence shows that the fence was not faulty
- **Link to case statement – Since the zoo was not negligent, they ought not settle the lawsuit since they were clearly complying with their legal duties**

Argument #2 – There is nothing wrong with the bear! (Minute 3-4)

- State Premise – There is nothing wrong with the bear
- Explain – Euthanizing the bear assumes that whatever happened was the bears fault... this is not true
- Evidence – the parents aren't suing the bear, they're suing the zoo... clearly even they don't blame the bear
- Evidence - If you got another bear and put a three year old in front of it, it too would eat the child... polar bears eat things... its what they do... it's why they are behind fences in zoos unlike say... bunnies
- Summary – the bear was not culpable before the incident, and the incident has not materially changed the bear, so there is no reason to harm the bear simply for "being bear-like".
- Conclusion – The bear has done nothing out of the ordinary, or at least not for a polar bear.
- Link to case – Court proceedings are about assigning blame and apportioning responsibility. We can all seemingly agree that the bear was not morally culpable for his actions, and didn't even act any differently from what we all would expect... so it cannot serve justice to euthanize the bears, even if to do so satisfies the sick blood lust of the little child's parents.

Argument #3 – There IS something wrong with the child’s parents! (Minute 5-6)

- State Premise – The parents have some if not total responsibility to control the actions of their child
- Evidence – We hold parents legally accountable for the actions of their children
- Evidence – We put up signs that say “don’t leave your children unattended, there are dangerous animals around.”
- Evidence – Zoo’s won’t admit children who are unaccompanied by parents or adult guardians
- Evidence – The law recognizes abdication of parental responsibility as grounds for a finding of contributory negligence
- Evidence – Think of how long you would have to leave your child unattended for in order for that child, aged 3, to climb a fence that adequately contained a 2 ton Polar Bear

Argument #3 Continued

- Conclusion – the Parents need to acknowledge their responsibility for this tragedy
- Link to Case – Allowing this settlement acknowledges fault, while allowing the parents to get away. This sets a dangerous precedent and says that the Zoo is responsible for looking after children on it’s premises, even when the child’s parents are present.

DPM Argument – The Role of a Zoo as Protector of Animal Rights

- State Premise – the zoo has a moral, and functional obligation to defend the bear, not to euthanize it
- Evidence – Zoos aren’t profitable, they aren’t good business ventures, people invest in them to protect animals.
- Evidence – Zoos are funded largely by animal protection groups, who will shy away from you if you kill a bear simply to avoid a lawsuit
- Evidence – The purpose of animal rights activism is that animals need defending because they cannot protect themselves against the modern human way of life. Can you think of a more direct example than a bear in a lawsuit fighting for it’s life?
- Evidence – Killing the bear commodifies the animal. The problem with this is that once you commodify one animal, they all become commodified. You CANNOT agree to euthanizing the bear without sacrificing your entire mission and purpose for existence. There IS NO COMPROMISE

DPM Argument Continued

- Conclusion – Euthanizing the bear is inconsistent with and detrimental to your role as a zoo.

- Link to Case – When deciding on settling a lawsuit, you have to think long term. Beyond next week, this settlement will have ramifications next month, next year and so on.

Anticipated Opp Arguments

- 1 – people will stop coming to the zoo for fear of safety
- Answer – we never said we wouldn't build a higher fence, we're just saying that the fence as it stands is fine by a legal standard.
- - We also think that killing the bear won't solve this problem when people will be equally afraid of the elephants and lions in the next cage over.

More Anticipated Opp

- The PR and Media Campaigns will kill you
- Answer – The parents will soon realize that the media does not take kindly to negligent parents either.
- - The animal rights groups will rally around you, which is helpful in a liberal dominated media
- - the PR and Media campaigns will be even worse if you kill the bear... it's not like it brings the kid back

More Anticipated Opp

- Losing the Lawsuit will put you out of business
- Answer – since there is no fault on the fence, that's unlikely
- - there is also likely sizable insurance policies for things like this
- - there is also the issue of contributory negligence on the parents which will greatly cut down the award
- - finally, killing the bear destroys your whole reason for existence, so there isn't much point not fighting, since even if you settle, you lose the zoo... at least in our proposal you have a chance

The Whip Speech

- Issue 1 – What is the likely outcome of the court case? What can you win, what do you stand to lose?
- Issue 2 – What best fulfills your role as a Zoo-owner/manager? To whom do you have responsibilities and how do you best discharge those duties?
- Issue 3 – How will the Media respond, and how do you best keep your zoon afloat?

How to win from First Opposition Benches

- This topic focuses on:
 - Types of government cases and how to deconstruct them
 - Constructing a coherent Opposition line
 - Creating deeper, more sophisticated constructive matter
 - Summarizing, and overall strategies for winning rounds clearly

What is the role of the OPP?

- Defeat the government's case
- Introduce coherent case and good substantive matter of your own.
- What is your goal?
- Overall, to define the round in your own terms, but you should frame this goal for yourself within the context of each round.
- Here's how . . .
- Take very careful note of the government's case statement.
- From the case statement, boil them down to the "ten word answer."
What principle are they resting their case on?
- Then, ask yourself very carefully where you fit in.

Consider . . .

- If the case is a false dichotomy.
- If it is tautological or lends itself to becoming so.
- If it's just silly.
- *Then:*
- What is the key issue?
- Who are the key actors?

The LO Speech

- *Introduction*
- Think of the introduction to an MO speech like that of the PM constructive
- Try to say something witty or interesting about the round
- Move quickly into a brief comment about what you think has happened
- Get your OPP line out, clearly and early

The Constructive Point

- Name your point
- argument
- evidence (e.g. analogous situation)
- example (e.g. time where it has worked)
- analysis (link evidence and example to argument)

- Remember . . .
- Link your point back to the original case statement. Show why it matters.

Refutation

- Refuting does NOT mean proving that all of the points are wrong.
- Instead, consider if it is . . .
 - Inconsistent with other points
 - Not provable
 - not exclusive to the GOV's proposal

- Or, as always, not relevant to the key issue of the debate.
- Summarize
- Yeah guys, even LO's have to summarize too.
- Don't just repeat the points that you have said. Re-iterate key things and frame the debate in the OPP context
- Challenge the MC to debate on your terms

The DLO Speech

- Your goal in a DLO is to be so clear and decisive, that when you sit down no one wants to bother with the second half of the round
- However . . . you should not try to single-handedly win a round in the DLO. You should be providing shape and context to the debate, which includes incorporating the philosophy introduced by the LO

How to sound smart when you've got nothing to say

- At this point in the round, you have strongly identified the key principles, institutions, actors, etc. that are at play. Ask yourself what they are, what they do, why they do it, and why they are significant
- Analogies and examples become especially important. Yeah, just know stuff.
- Try to come up with points that are counterintuitive, unusual, or even paradoxical.

Refutation

- Use this sparingly. Make sure you address the DPM's point, because it is new. Before you stand up, circle any other GOV points that you feel should be directly refuted, but ultimately, your partner should have done most of the direct refutation, and should spend the bulk of the rest of your speech in . . .
- Rebuttal and Summary
- Quite simply DO IT.
- However works for you, just make sure it gets done and make sure you give it a minute at least.
- Try to aim to ultimately be able to pick out a couple of main themes and show where GOV stood on them, where you stood, and why, on balance, you are right
- Finally, remember . . .
- No one cares what you think. They care what you can prove.
- Be memorable in some way. OPP'ing is fun because you don't have as high a constructive burden, so you can be funny, deep, and slightly adventurous.
- Be confident.

- And, always, do whatever you can to maintain control of the round.

Points of Information – The Edge of a Sword

- 15 Seconds is too long, wayyyyyy too long.
- People ask and answer POI's without a great deal of thought about them.
- Used properly they can single handedly take a team out of a round.
- It would be good to start thinking about the purpose of your POI's rather than focusing on just getting one into the round before the protected time starts

Effect

- One benefit of POI's is that they can break a speakers train of thought. Time spent stumbling is time that the speaker isn't making a good argument
- If you find a certain speaker always says "no thank you" or "not at this time"... then be sure to stand on a POI mid sentence during a crucial argument. Stand politely and stand silently... the response of "no thank you" is enough to break the train of thought, and you won't be blamed for it

Effect Reversed

- When speaking, don't respond to POI's verbally. Simply wave the speaker down with your hand. If they don't respond to that... let them stand.
- Strategically, if you are ready to take a point after your current thought, see if the person who is set to speak next is standing. If you are the PM and the LO is on their feet... say "stay standing, I'll take you in a minute"... then stall a good 30 seconds before taking their point. This is time that they aren't spending writing down responses to your speech. (like all things, overuse of this is rather obvious and frowned upon)

Motive

- Always be aware of why you are asking something, or conversely why it is that you are being asked this question.
- You can either be obvious – and insert information that casts doubt on a current argument on the table.
- Or you can be dubious and ask a question that either highlights an argument that you will use later, or sets up a response that you can use to trap the team into a position that is unable to respond to an argument that you will use later.

Strategic Offering

- In BP, strategy counts more since you want to get POI's in and make sure that the other team gets shut out. To do this, make a shadow plan where one person always stands up when their counterpart stands
- Sometimes you won't have anything to say... when this happens, arrange a signal to your partner so that your partner can jump up with you, and you can apologetically sit down as though it were a miscue... you still get noticed for trying to offer a POI and you look active even when you weren't.

Strategy Continued

- Often a team will have a debater who is known for damaging POI's. That debater will never get taken when their partner is standing. As a result, make sure the weaker partner stands at times when POI's are unlikely to be accepted and the stronger partner stands when the speaker on the floor really needs to take a POI.
- Also share communication through a sheet of paper in the middle of the desk so that both partner's can offer the same POI if needed... especially if it's a really good one.

Content Issues

- POI's are obvious most of the times in terms of where they are coming from.
- Truly brilliant debaters will conceal the motive of their POI so as to give no indication of the appropriate response, or even worse, will actually phrase that POI in such a way that a "good" response will actually trap the team more.

Examples

- In a case about not requiring prisoners to admit guilt in order to be eligible for parole, the question is asked: "Is admission of guilt really necessary in order to make a finding that a prisoner has been rehabilitated"
- Answer – "yes, and if you can't find rehabilitation... you can't find a reason to parole the inmate"

Example Continued

- This seems like an easy question and a straightforward answer. In this particular case it was a weak question and a good answer, because the debater didn't realize the brilliance of their own POI (see comments on knowing your motives)
- In reality, this pinned the opp team to a caseline where they now had to prove that rehabilitation was a criteria of the parole process AND that rehabilitation was impossible without an admission of guilt. The opp team

on that one POI could have gone from having NO burden of proof to having TWO of them.

- Had the speaker seen the motive behind that POI, they would have dismissed the question as irrelevant, claiming that the importance of admissions came from the inability of a parole board to try the case again, so at parole, guilt is assumed, and issues of responsibility and remorse are all that count

Another Example

- In a round about electing judges the question was asked: "How often will you re-elect your judges?"
- Answer – "I don't know why you're nitpicking, but let's just say every 6 years or so"
- **Example Continued**
- As a result of this POI, the first prop team lost the World's Grand Final in the first unprotected minute of the PM's speech.
- the speaker thought it was a simple POI about term length, but in reality it forced the concession that judges could run for re-election. All of Opp's ensuing arguments focused on how judicial decisions would be tainted by re-election campaigns. The first prop team couldn't recover from it and the second prop team couldn't fix it.

Seminar #4 – Closing House Strategies

Since this is the sort of seminar that is best handled in a discussion format, please refer to the materials in Seminar 1, and we'll try to do the best we can with answering your questions. Ultimately, the back half of the table is fun because there are no rules... but the following 3 MUST be followed to have any success.

- 1 ENGAGE WITH THE SPEAKER THAT CAME BEFORE YOU
- 2 EXTEND IN THE FIRST SPEECH
- 3 THE WHIP MUST SUMMARIZE

What is an extension?

An extension is anything new to the debate. It's as simple as that. Most of the judges that say "you didn't have an extension" mean "your extension sucked".

How do I summarize?

Thematically. Cover 3 points, or 3 questions. Make them broad questions that can fit the whole debate into them. Write notes in the standard format on 1 sheet of paper. Using 3 different colours of high-lighters, colour code your notes to the corresponding question... this will ensure you fit the whole debate in. If an important point is missing a colour... you have the wrong questions.