

Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate

Reason, argumentation, and strategy for winning value debate

by
Travis Herche

For my wife, Christina.



2 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate

Reason, argumentation and strategy for winning value debate

Published by

Monument Publishing

P.O. Box 3527

Monument, CO 80132

Copyright © 2012 by Travis Herche

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be either addressed through mail at the address above, or through e-mail at info@monumentpublishing.com.

Library of Congress Control Number:

ISBN: 978-1-936147-53-3

Manufactured in the United States of America

First Edition, June 2013

Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate

Table of Contents

FOREWORD: TRAINING FOR ACTION	9
KEY 1: START.....	11
WHAT IS DEBATE?	11
HOW DO I GET INTO DEBATE?	12
WHAT IS A TOURNAMENT LIKE?	13
RULES	15
THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS FORMAT	16
START	16
KEY 2: LAY THE GROUNDWORK.....	17
WHAT IS DEBATE THEORY?	17
A BRIEF HISTORY OF LD VALUE DEBATE.....	17
VALUE RESOLUTIONS	18
<i>Comparative vs Brightline</i>	18
<i>Moral Charges</i>	18
<i>Burden Scope</i>	19
<i>Challenging Burden Scope</i>	20
<i>The Logic of Value Debate</i>	20
THE TOULMIN MODEL LITE.....	22
THERE IS NO PERFECT THEORY	23
KEY 3: RUN GREAT VALUES.....	25
3 STANDARDS FOR A GOOD VALUE	26
<i>External</i>	26
<i>Measurable</i>	26
<i>Specific</i>	26
WHAT DO WE MEASURE?	27
SPECIAL VALUE TYPES	31
<i>Counter-value</i>	32
<i>Anti-value</i>	32
<i>Super-value</i>	32
<i>Dual-values</i>	32
VALUE LINKS	33
<i>Intrinsic Good</i>	33
<i>Extrinsic Good</i>	34
<i>Topic Context</i>	34

4 Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate

<i>Usefulness</i>	35
<i>Reasons to Prefer</i>	36
KEY 4: CONNECT YOUR CRITERIA	37
ECONOMY OF COMPLEXITY	37
WHAT MAKES A GREAT CRITERION	38
<i>External</i>	38
<i>More Practical</i>	38
SPECIAL CRITERIA TYPES	38
<i>Anti-Criterion</i>	38
<i>Sub-Criterion</i>	39
CRITERION LINKS	39
KEY 5: PROVE YOUR CONTENTIONS	41
HOW TO WRITE A CONTENTION	41
HOW MANY CONTENTIONS DO I NEED?	43
ORDERING CONTENTIONS	44
<i>Chronological</i>	44
<i>Storytelling</i>	44
DRAW YOUR CASES	45
KEY 6: PROVE YOUR CASE	51
LOGOS	51
EPISTEMOLOGY & FACTS	52
<i>Objective</i>	52
<i>Descriptive Normative & Subjective Normative</i>	53
<i>Opinions</i>	54
THE IVORY TOWER	55
TYPES OF EVIDENCE	55
APPLICATIONS	59
<i>Fulcrums</i>	59
<i>Proving General Scope</i>	60
REFUTING APPLICATIONS	61
<i>No Link or Non-unique</i>	61
<i>No Impact</i>	61
<i>Counter-warrant</i>	62
<i>Pure Turn</i>	62
<i>Wash Turn</i>	63
<i>Alternate Causality</i>	66
<i>Fact Correction</i>	66
KEY 7: MASTER TRICKY THEORY	67
OBSERVATIONS	67

THESIS STATEMENT	67
RESOLUTIONAL ANALYSIS	68
DEFINITIONS	68
<i>Reasons to Prefer</i>	69
BACKGROUND	71
META-FRAMEWORK	71
OBJECTION	72
KRITIK	74
<i>Reactional Kritiks</i>	74
<i>Resolutional Kritiks</i>	76
<i>Link-Implication-Alternative Format</i>	77
<i>Standard-Violation-Impact</i>	78
<i>The Hidden Kritik</i>	78
BURDEN	79
CASE ORDER	80
VOTING ISSUE	80
<i>Voter as Summary</i>	81
<i>Voter as Point of Contention</i>	81
<i>Voter as Flow Alternative</i>	82
KEY 8: FLOW EVERYTHING.....	83
FLOWING BY SPEECH	83
FLOWING BY ARGUMENT	85
FIVE BENEFITS OF TAGS	85
MASTERING YOUR FLOW	86
ABBREVIATIONS	87
NEW AND DROPPED ARGUMENTS	88
<i>Impacting New and Dropped Arguments</i>	88
KEY 9: ASK INSIGHTFUL QUESTIONS	91
HUNTING THE MAMMOTH	91
<i>Three-Dimensional Cross-Ex</i>	92
<i>Admission</i>	92
<i>Absurd Position</i>	95
<i>Absurd Non-Position</i>	95
THE TECHNIQUE	95
1. <i>Neutral Start</i>	95
2. <i>Safe Lead</i>	96
3. <i>Happy Confirm</i>	97
4. <i>Push</i>	98
5. <i>Fake Restart</i>	99
6. <i>Silly Confirm</i>	100
7. <i>Scary Assumption</i>	101

6 Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate

8. Repeated Confession.....	104
9. One-off.....	105
10. Familiarity check.....	106
ASKING QUESTIONS.....	106
<i>Get the Most from Practice</i>	107
<i>Avoid Pleasantries</i>	107
<i>Avoid Transitions</i>	107
<i>The Confirm</i>	109
<i>Dealing with Unruly Witnesses</i>	110
<i>Pre-flow</i>	112
ANSWERING QUESTIONS.....	114
<i>Answer Any Question</i>	114
<i>There are No Good Questions</i>	115
<i>Don't Squirm or Speed</i>	115
<i>Admit that You Don't Know</i>	115
<i>Lampshade Silly Confirms</i>	116
Ask for Time.....	117

KEY 10: SPEAK STRATEGICALLY119

DECISIONS ARE EMOTIONAL.....	119
BIAS IS UBIQUITOUS.....	120
THE JUDGE IS ALWAYS RIGHT.....	121
EMOTION AND LOGIC ARE COMPLEMENTARY.....	124
<i>Weak: Pure Logic</i>	125
<i>Passable: Pure Persuasion</i>	125
<i>Strong: Logic and Persuasion</i>	125
THEMATIC CORE.....	125
<i>Tangible</i>	126
<i>Simple</i>	126
<i>Irrefutable</i>	127
<i>Finding a Thematic Core</i>	127
TIME = IMPORTANCE.....	128
AC.....	129
NC.....	129
1AR.....	130
NR.....	130
2AR.....	131
Analogies.....	131
<i>Analogies are not Arguments</i>	131
<i>Find the Relationship</i>	132
<i>Keep it visual</i>	132
<i>Don't debate analogies</i>	133
RESPONSE RATE CALCULATOR.....	133

KEY 11: BUILD STRONG CHARACTER.....	137
ACCEPT DEFEAT	137
BE ETHICAL	138
BE GRACIOUS	139
BE HUMBLE	139
BE STRONG.....	139
<i>Use the Learning Opportunity</i>	<i>140</i>
<i>Love your Enemy.....</i>	<i>140</i>
<i>Build a Museum</i>	<i>140</i>
<i>It's not Personal.....</i>	<i>141</i>
<i>Check Yourself.....</i>	<i>141</i>
BE COMPETITIVE	141
BE PROFESSIONAL	142
BE VISIONARY	143
BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF	144
CONCLUSION	146
APPENDIX A: SAMPLE CASES.....	147
AFFIRMATIVE: FREEDOM TO STARVE	147
AFFIRMATIVE: HOW MANY FINGERS, WINSTON?	149
<i>Contention 1: Due Process protects Privacy.....</i>	<i>150</i>
<i>Contention 2: Discovery of Fact opposes Privacy</i>	<i>150</i>
AFFIRMATIVE: TAMING THE GOVERNMENT	151
<i>Contention 1: Popular Sovereignty creates Chartered Government.....</i>	<i>152</i>
<i>Contention 2: Popular Sovereignty enforces Chartered Government.....</i>	<i>153</i>
<i>Contention 3. Individual Rights provide no limit.....</i>	<i>153</i>
NEGATIVE: SAVE AMI	154
<i>Resolutional Analysis: Personal freedom is not coercion.....</i>	<i>154</i>
<i>Contention 1: Personal freedom allows for injustice.....</i>	<i>155</i>
<i>Contention 2: Economic security is just.....</i>	<i>155</i>
NEGATIVE: MY HAMMER OBJECTS	155
<i>Definition: Moral Obligation.....</i>	<i>156</i>
<i>Reasons to Prefer: Qualified Source.....</i>	<i>156</i>
<i>Reason to Prefer: Standard.....</i>	<i>156</i>
<i>Thesis: Governments can't have Moral Obligations.....</i>	<i>156</i>
<i>Alternative: People have Obligations.....</i>	<i>157</i>
NEGATIVE: FOOD FOR THOUGHT	158
<i>Contention 1: Privacy Endangers Safety.....</i>	<i>159</i>
APPENDIX B: PRACTICE RESOLUTIONS.....	161
APPENDIX C: DRILLS.....	165
ALTERNATE DEBATE FORMATS.....	165

8 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

<i>Standard LD (45 min)</i>	165
<i>Shortened LD (30 min)</i>	165
<i>Constructive LD (20 min)</i>	166
<i>Mini LD (18 min)</i>	166
<i>Baby LD (10 min)</i>	166
<i>Speed LD (5 min)</i>	166
CROSS-EXAMINATION DRILLS	167
<i>Piranha Pack (15-30 min)</i>	167
<i>Piranha LD (30 min)</i>	167
<i>Chain LD (20 min)</i>	167
PREP TIME DRILLS	168
<i>Guided Prep (1 hour)</i>	168
<i>Bonus Prep (1 hour)</i>	168
<i>Prep of Persia (1 hour)</i>	168
<i>Road Paint (3 min)</i>	168
<i>Scale-Prep Impromptu (10 min)</i>	168
DELIVERY DRILLS	169
<i>Lion Face/Lemon Face (1 minute)</i>	169
<i>120-Word Debate (5 min)</i>	169
<i>Shout at the Sea (3 min)</i>	169
<i>Metronome (8 min)</i>	170
<i>Um Wars</i>	170
<i>Dynamic Snake (3 min)</i>	170
ORGANIZATION/REFUTATION DRILLS	171
<i>Flow Check (10 min)</i>	171
<i>Letter Debates (15 min)</i>	171
<i>Echo Tags (45 min)</i>	172
<i>Journey LD (32 min)</i>	173
STRATEGIC DRILLS	173
<i>Application-Only Debate (15 min)</i>	173
<i>Advanced Letter Debates (15 min)</i>	173
AFTERWORD: FINAL CONSIDERATIONS	175
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	181

Foreword

Training for Action

I've been serving the debate community since 1995, and very few coaches rise to the quality, enthusiasm and success of Travis Herche.

He left his own competitive stint in 2006 after he took top awards in speech and debate. He didn't just dabble in forensics. He was all over it. He participated in countless speech events, but made sure he mastered both formats of debate, Team-Policy and Lincoln-Douglas. Back in the day, Travis was *something else*.

Most students of Travis' caliber take on life and do great things. Colleges are certainly eager to bring on champion debaters, and the workforce is too. Debaters are the sharpest kids on the planet, in my opinion, and a *champion* debater stands a head above the best. Travis had nothing but opportunity ahead of him after high school.

Like many students, Travis returned to the speech and debate community to coach. I'm in the business of harnessing young talent. Travis has contributed to the yearly Lincoln-Douglas sourcebook I publish. He has come on board as one of the Training Minds coaches. I have a lot of former champions to join the team and help the older coaches with the greater program.

But I have to single out Travis as extraordinary in two respects. First, he truly *loves* to coach. He can't get enough of it. I may have built a coaching organization, but I can't say I *love* coaching like Travis loves it. I have traveled the country with him for tournaments and camps, and he is consistently staying up late with students, practicing for 12-14 hours in a day, and seldom growing weary of it. For a guy like me—president of a speech and debate coaching organization, one that prides itself with a long history of champions—Travis has been an awesome addition.

The second distinction is this: he has actually molded the industry of coaching. Seriously, Travis has created a new kind of freelancer: *professional debate coach*. Sure, there are coaches who are hired by school districts and perhaps get paid by a local club. But Travis has gathered together basic Internet technologies like Skype and blogging software and has made a living coaching students all over the country.

In this regard, Travis is a genius! He met a demand for coaching with business prowess and ingenuity. He's now free as a bird, doing what he loves, and making a decent living off it. Do you have any idea how few people can claim this in their lives? And at such a young age?

You'll soon discover in this book that Travis has a solid understanding of the specific format of Lincoln-Douglas debate. But I think you'll also come to realize that Travis has a solid understanding

10 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

of life. I suppose this shouldn't be too surprising. Debate is a life skill — one of the best, in my opinion, that should be taught much more broadly than it is — that teaches kids to think, speak and engage the world. Travis isn't only preaching it. He's living it. I can't wait for you to get to know him as you read these pages.

I believe Travis is still *something else*, and you are one of the many privileged enough to glean from his years of competition and coaching.

Chris Jeub
President, Training Minds

Key 1

Start

What is Debate?

Debate is a competition of ideas.

When you argue with a friend over which of two movies to watch, you're debating. You're probably not debating well, but you're doing it all the same. There are at least two ideas (the movies to watch), and you'll keep debating until the two of you agree on one.

Sometimes debates get personal and mean. They hurt feelings and entrench ignorance. Fortunately, competitive debate, often called "forensics," is different.

Forensics is the formal study and competition of public speaking. There are many kinds of forensic events including debate, literary interpretation, platform and impromptu speaking. Thousands of high school students engage in forensics every year at tournaments all over the world. The skills learned stay with the competitors throughout their lives and are directly attributed to their success. Many successful businessmen, politicians, lawyers, and others were once forensic competitors.

Forensics is a big deal. It has leagues and clubs and professional coaches. It is just as competitive as baseball or karate. Their uniforms are professional suits and the tools of their game are evidence boxes. Just like the best sports players, debaters travel the country, stack up trophies, and earn college scholarships.

Forensic debate is a structure for the academic exchange of ideas. The debaters aren't out to convince one another like the friends deciding a movie to watch, nor are they out to hurt one another's feelings. They are participating in discourse supported by their logical arguments and the evidence to support them. After a good debate, opponents are often closer friends than when they started.

Debate isn't just an extracurricular activity that puts trophies in your parents' attic or gets you a scholarship. Debate will change your life. If I had to choose between it and everything else I did in high school (science, math, etc.), I'd choose debate without hesitation. Debaters accumulate a host of valuable skills, some of which include:

- Public Speaking
- Critical Thinking
- Refutation
- Persuasion

12 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

- Strategy
- Time Management
- Creative Writing
- Self-discipline
- Understanding Current Events
- Working under Pressure
- Philosophy
- Teamwork
- Dealing with Disappointment
- Positive Thinking
- Goal setting

Academically, nothing will give you more for your time and investment than debate. While general education may teach you facts, debate will teach you how to find, understand, analyze, present, and refute ideas. It is the best thing you can do as a student to become an excellent person.

Debate is also really fun. I'd argue it is way more fun than anything general education has to offer. Within one or two tournaments, you're likely to catch what's known as the "debate bug," an enthusiasm that will grow as you get better. It is not uncommon for debaters to discipline themselves to stop debate preparations to attend to other subjects.

How do I get into debate?

Debates happen at **tournaments**. Participants are matched against each other in a series of rounds. A small tournament may have twenty competitors; a large one could have hundreds.

Coaches, clubs, volunteer parents, or schoolteachers run tournaments. They typically follow rules and guidelines that keep things orderly. Students assemble for as little as a one-day scrimmage or for several days of elimination rounds mixing debate with other forensics activities.

Rules and guidelines are created by **leagues**. They require membership for participation, and membership means meeting some basic requirements and paying a fee. There are probably many leagues available to you in your area. I have experience in the three largest leagues in America, and I reference them throughout *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*:

- National Forensics League (NFL)
- Stoa USA
- National Christian Forensics and Communications Association (NCFCA)

To prepare for tournaments, organizations offer camps and businesses produce curriculum to help teach debate. They supplement the learning for students to best prepare for tournaments.

Competitors gather together independently or within schools to form **debate clubs**. Club members work together and help each other in various ways. They are led by coaches who administrate the club and offer guidance. Clubs typically meet weekly to practice or work through curriculum.

To get started in debate, you should find a local club and speak to the coach. Ask to sit in one of the club sessions. If you like what you see and they like you, then get started. You might contact one of the leagues to find a club in your area. You may find that your own school already has a debate club, making it easy to sign up.

What is a tournament like?

A tournament is exciting and boring, crowded and lonely, dignified and crazy, the best and worst time of your life. There's nothing like a forensic tournament. You can expect hundreds of students just like you wearing suits and carrying briefcases and binders. You'll be on a campus from early in the morning until late at night. Your closest friends will be with you whenever they're not away speaking. Your adrenaline will be pumping non-stop, making it hard to eat or sleep or stand still. By the end, your tongue and feet will hurt and you'll want nothing more than twenty solid hours of sleep. But when you wake up, you'll want to do it all over again.

Your first few tournaments can be overwhelming, but remember: no one ever sees the whole tournament. There's just too much going on. To be successful, just know where you need to be at all times. Let the rest go on like a formal circus around you.

For each room a facility has available, two teams are allowed to compete. This is why most tournaments are held at schools, college campuses, and churches. Buildings with classrooms are the best kinds of rooms for tournaments. It is not uncommon to have tournaments on weekends or while a school's students are on break.

When you arrive at the tournament, you'll want to find a **registration table**, where you sign in and receive materials like a name tag and tournament schedule.

Somewhere near the middle of the action is a **student lounge**. This is usually just a big indoor area (like a cafeteria) for students to hang out and relax when they're not speaking. When in doubt, that's not a bad place for you to be. It's easy to find—just follow the crowd.

Fifteen minutes before a round is supposed to start, pieces of paper will be taped onto walls in prominent places on campus. They're called **postings**, and they hold information on who should be where for the next round. The moment postings go up (you'll know by the crowd around the walls), look up your name and go to your assigned room.

The room will hold four people: the affirmative and negative speakers, the **judge**, and perhaps a **timekeeper**. The judge will sit in the middle of the room facing the podium (which is usually a music stand). He watches the round, takes notes, and makes a decision about whose position was most compelling. The debaters will sit at tables on either side of the podium facing the judge, with

14 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

affirmative to the judge's left. Other audience members may also be present, but you can expect a pretty quiet room for the first half of the tournament.

At the end of your debate round, it is customary to shake the hands of the judge and timer and thank them for their participation. The judge then goes back to a **judge's lounge** to fill out his or her **ballot**. Along with any comments about the round, the judge must provide a decision (affirmative or negative).

The judge then grades each speaker with a score of up to 30 **speaker points**. Some leagues give judges freedom to assign these points however they like; others ask that the debaters be given scores of 1-5 on six criteria like organization and refutation. The total of these scores will be a number between 5 and 30. The average score in high school debate is 22, with 30 being exceptional and anything less than 16 being poor. Of course, individual judges may give out more or less points than the average. The person with the highest speaker points (or the best debater in the case of a tie) is given a **speaker rank** of 1, while the other is given a rank of 2.

Leagues rules sometimes allow the best-ranked speaker to lose the round. If the lower-ranked debater wins, the debate is known as a **low-point win**.

As ballots are completed, they are taken to a mysterious place called the **tabulation room**. A team of people will enter the ballots into special software designed specifically for forensic tournaments. Tabulation (or "tab") staff go to great lengths to prevent mistakes. They have people double-checking entries and often have backup systems in case the primary computer should fail.

Most tournaments have six to eight **preliminary rounds**. Every debater in the tournament competes in these rounds. If there are an odd number of debaters, one will be assigned with a "bye," which means they get a free win and can relax until the next round. Your job is to read the postings as the preliminary rounds are posted, get to your room, and debate in front of the judge. Then you return to the student lounge and wait for the next posting until all the preliminary rounds are finished.

Your success in preliminary rounds is measured by your win-loss record. Ties are broken by your speaker points (usually after removing the best and worst scores, or **hi-lo**), then your speaker ranks. Some tournaments calculate differently, but win-loss record is always the primary way to evaluate performance.

Between your rounds, the tournament may host other forensic events. If the scheduling doesn't conflict with your participation in LD, you're free to watch those events. In fact, I encourage you to prepare to compete in them. I wrote another textbook, *Keys to Interp*, which goes into how to give interpretative speeches. Buy that text and get involved in speech, too.

After the preliminary rounds comes the **breaks announcement**. This is usually held in the student lounge and features a tournament official reading the names of people who won most of their preliminary rounds. These people advance to **outrounds**, which eliminate the loser and match the winners together until just one is left standing.

If you don't break to outounds — or you do and are eliminated before the final round — your tournament is over. But don't leave yet! Stay in your suit and watch the remaining outounds. Do this for two reasons: first, you can learn from them. Studying great debaters is a key ingredient to improvement. Second, it's good sportsmanship. Just because you didn't go as far as you'd hoped does not mean you should change into jeans and pout in the corner. Be a bigger person and stay involved in the tournament. If you go to outounds, you can expect growing crowds of spectators and a panel of three or more judges.

After the final round comes an **awards ceremony**. Everyone who broke or did well is recognized with a medal or trophy. Because so many names are read at both breaks announcements and awards ceremonies, providing applause for every person can be exhausting. A **forensics clap** is often employed—a single clap a second after a name is read. Announcements will fall into a rhythm you can bob your head to: *name, clap, name, clap, name, clap*, and so on.

After awards, you will receive a manila envelope with copies of ballots from each of your rounds. You may also receive an **accumulation report** (or “cums”), which shows a breakdown of the performance of every participant at the tournament.

Rules

The rules for Lincoln-Douglas debate are slightly different in each league, but they closely follow the pattern in this book.

Debate *rules* exist to answer the questions: “How shall we debate, and what shall we debate about?” They provide speech times, a resolution, and little else. Most debate rules are about two pages long at most. Debate *theory* answers the questions: “What shall we say, and how should the judge vote?” Theory is infinitely complex, nuanced, and subjective. Rules are simple, straightforward, and objective. I'll talk about theory in the next chapter.

You should carefully read and understand the rules of your league. You're allowed to experiment with theory, but a violation of the rules can have consequences.

Debaters are given a **resolution**. This is a single sentence that can be demonstrated true or false. It is usually preceded by the word “resolved,” which just indicates that the following sentence is a resolution. The debate is supposed to revolve around the resolution with one side supporting it (affirming the resolutions) and the other opposing (negating the resolution).

The Lincoln-Douglas format was constructed around value resolutions. There are other kinds of resolutions (policy and fact), but LD really can't handle them well; it's not a great fit. *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate* approaches value theory exclusively. Some smaller leagues incorporate policy in a Lincoln-Douglas format (called **LD Policy**).

I'll explain what a value resolution is in the next chapter, but first let me say a bit about the format of LD debate.

16 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

The Lincoln-Douglas Format

LD debate contains five speeches. The first two speeches are known as **constructives** because they are opportunities for each side to “construct” their opposing positions on the resolution. Constructives are followed by cross-examinations, timed periods during which the opposing speaker will ask questions. The round is concluded by two **rebuttals** each. These speeches are not followed by cross-examination and presenting new arguments in these speeches is frowned on (because the other side won’t have time to respond).

Here are the most common speech times for Lincoln-Douglas debate, shown in minutes:

Affirmative Constructive: 6
Cross-Examination: 3
Negative Constructive: 7
Cross- Examination: 3
First Affirmative Rebuttal: 4
Negative Rebuttal: 6
Second Affirmative Rebuttal: 3

This format gives both sides equal speech time: 13 minutes each plus 3 minutes for cross-examination. Though the affirmative has the persuasive advantage of speaking both first and last, while the negative can use its two longer speeches to gain a strategic advantage.

Start

So there you have it. You now know what is expected of you in your league, your club, and the tournaments in which you will compete in the coming school year. You’re off to a good start. Now for the rest of the keys to success – keys that will help make you a champion debater.

Key 2

Lay the Groundwork

What is Debate Theory?

Rules give us the form, but theory gives us the substance. This chapter will begin to answer your questions about what to say in a round.

The two sides of the debate—the affirmative and negative—have conflicting **burdens**. The side that upholds its burden is the winner. The burden of the affirmative is to support the resolution; the burden of the negative is to disprove it.

Every argument the debater presents should pertain to the resolution. If you are affirmative and you prove that the resolution is true, you should win the round. If you make accurate points that have nothing to do with the resolution, or your arguments about the resolution are refuted, you should lose.

Lincoln-Douglas is just a format. It specifies the length of each speech, and little else. You could use the format to debate anything. The type of resolutions used is what makes it value debate.

A Brief History of LD Value Debate

Lincoln-Douglas (LD) is a debate format named after the famous senate campaign debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas. They toured seven of the nine Illinois districts in 1860, debating for two hours each time. Though Douglas ended up being re-elected as senator, heavy media coverage made Lincoln famous enough to run for and win a presidential election.

Modern LD debate uses a shorter, more dynamic format. The original debates centered on the morals and philosophy of slavery; in the same way, LD tends to discuss values and ideas.

LD is the only well-established debate format to feature just one person. Other formats have two-person teams. British parliamentary debate has four people per side, for a total of eight!

LD was first introduced by the National Forensics League in 1980 as an alternative to the popular team-policy format, which had devolved into progressive, confusing debate tactics and hyper-fast speaking styles. It was intended to emphasize conversational debate and persuasion. Team Policy isn't as bad as it used to be, but LD is still the format that sounds most like two people talking about philosophy in their living room.

Value Resolutions

A **value resolution** assigns arbitrary worth to one or more entities. The key word in that definition is *arbitrary*: there's no clear right or wrong answer to a value resolution, which means it's up to the debaters to persuade the judge that their position is the most coherent and appealing. In a nutshell, a value resolution says, "such-and-such has this much worth."

Comparative vs Brightline

There are two basic kinds of value resolutions. The first is a **comparative resolution**, which says: "A is greater than B." Comparative resolutions have two entities that need to be evaluated. In some way, one is better than the other.

Resolved: Freedom is more important than safety.

Resolved: The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.

Resolved: In wartime, national security ought to be valued over free speech.

On the other hand, a resolution could be a **brightline resolution**, which says: "A meets or exceeds a standard." It has only one entity that needs to be measured. Rather than describing a relationship with B, a brightline resolution says: "A can be described in this way."

Resolved: Charity is a moral obligation.

Resolved: The most important quality in a person is honesty.

Resolved: Violent revolution can be morally valid.

Moral Charges

Resolutions also have three basic moral charges, or levels of morality.

Moral means it discusses goodness, or one thing being *better* than the other. "Cooperation is better than competition." Phrases like "ought to," "better than," or "valued above" all suggest a moral resolution. This is by far the most common kind of resolution, one that debaters should learn inside and out.

Amoral means that the resolution discusses ideas that are neither good nor bad. It still assigns worth, but in some morally neutral way. "Electric screwdrivers are more efficient than manual screwdrivers." We're discussing efficiency, which could be great if we're building an orphanage or a birdhouse, but evil if we're building a torture chamber. The final product doesn't matter — the resolution only cares about efficiency.

Immoral means that the resolution discusses bad things, or asserts that something is bad. "Religious intolerance is worse than racism." Immoral resolutions are tricky because they force one to argue, "Vote for my terrible thing. My thing is more terrible than my opponent's." While immoral

resolutions are rare, they are worth practicing as they will enhance one's general understanding of value debate.

Burden Scope

Burden Scope describes the amount of the resolution that must be true to warrant an affirmative ballot. It can be interpreted at three different levels:

Absolute means that the affirmative must prove that the resolution is *true in all cases*. That means the negative can disprove the resolution with a single exception.

“Napoleon Bonaparte was the ultimate general.” Napoleon had to embody the qualities that make for an ultimate general, whatever those may be. Ruthlessness, the ability to inspire ... he had to have all of them. If he didn't, he wasn't the ultimate general — perhaps just a good one.

“Nothing is more important than justice.” The affirmative needs to prove that justice is the most important entity. The negative could build a generic case asserting that other values — like peace, order, or creativity — are more important. If the negative proves that any one value is more important than justice, the affirmative collapses.

Think of absolute resolutions like a game of golf. The golf ball is either in the hole or it isn't. It doesn't matter if it's 200 yards or half an inch away. If it's not in the hole, you have to take another shot. For that reason, absolute resolutions are particularly difficult for the affirmative. They have one tiny little hole, while the negative has the entire golf course.

General means that the affirmative must prove that the resolution is *true in 51 percent or more cases*. The negative can disprove it by showing that there are exceptions at least half the time. This is the most common interpretation of value resolutions.

“You should save your money.” The negative might contend that you shouldn't save your money if you have earned barely enough to give your little sister life-saving medical treatment. But that's an extreme example. In general—in at least 51 percent of cases—saving your money is a good idea.

“Killing humans is morally wrong.” Some would agree with this resolution absolutely. But many would say there are exceptions, like assassinating a genocidal warlord, shooting someone before he shoots your family, or executing a terrorist. These may be exceptions, but they are extreme cases. It is unlikely that such instances are so common that they represent half of the scope of the resolution. So we can still say that killing humans is wrong — it is true even with exceptions.

Specific means that the affirmative must prove that the resolution is *true in at least one instance*. The negative can disprove it by showing that there are no good instances or by refuting all proposed instances. This is the common interpretation of policy resolutions.

20 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

“The use of weapons of mass destruction can be morally valid.” The affirmative doesn’t need to prove that weapons of mass destruction should be used in any conflict, or even in most conflicts. The burden simply requires that WMDs be acceptable in one scenario — perhaps even a hypothetical one.

“You should buy a new shirt.” Suppose you take me with you to a clothing store to get a shirt. We walk in and I look around in dismay. “There’s so many shirts,” I cry. “You can’t possibly afford them all!”

“That’s fine,” you reply. “I’m not going to buy all of them.”

I grab an oversized gator-skin T-shirt off a hanger. “This is hideous,” I say. “Buying this shirt would be a terrible idea.”

“That’s fine,” you say patiently. “I won’t buy that one.” If you walk out of that store with one shirt you like — even if you hated all of the other shirts for sale — the plan was a good one.

As you can imagine, affirmatives love specific resolutions. They are very rare in value debate.

Challenging Burden Scope

While burden scopes tend to be widely accepted, you are free to challenge your opponent’s interpretation and offer your own burden scope. The best way to justify your position is to compare the affirmative and negative burdens:

- Absolute / Specific
- General / General
- Specific / Absolute

If the resolution is worded in a way that seems to give both debaters the same amount of burden scope, the resolution has to be general (because that is the only scope where the burdens match for both sides). If the burdens don’t match, the resolution must be either absolute or specific. Don’t quibble over unimportant details, but do know that this is a valid field of debate.

The Logic of Value Debate

The resolution is proven or disproven through the use of a **case**: a string of arguments that create a logical conclusion about the resolution. At its core, a resolution works just like a basic **logical syllogism**, or mathematical equation for assertions.

The most basic syllogism can be written like this:

A = B
B = C
Therefore, A = C

Logic is not a decision maker. It is not opinionated or judgmental, but is merely a machine that processes assertions. It's like the conveyor toaster in a sandwich shop: bread, meat, and veggies are placed on one end, and toasted lunch comes out the other. The toaster won't make the sandwich for you or give you sauce suggestions. It won't produce anything you didn't already give it. It's just a simple machine: in one end, out the other. Put assertions in one end of the logic machine and it will deliver conclusions out the other end.

All cows eat grass.
Betsy is a cow.
Therefore, Betsy eats grass.

Stealing is a sin.
I stole a car.
Therefore, I sinned.

At their core, value cases function the same way. They build arguments in such a way that the conclusion — the “therefore” part of the syllogism — is the resolution.

There are many ways to do this. Case construction is both an art and a science — there is no perfect, bulletproof case. That's what makes debate so exciting and dynamic.

Private property is a moral right.
Taxes violate private property.
Resolved: Taxes are immoral.

Geopolitical stability is a worthwhile cause.
Assassinations can lead to geopolitical stability in some cases.
Resolved: Assassinations can be worthwhile.

Those are both brightline cases, which are the easiest to write. Comparative cases use a slightly more complex syllogism:

Z is a measure
A upholds Z
B does not uphold Z
Therefore, $A > B$

The most important job is the one most critical to civilization.
Civilization cannot exist without farming.
Civilization can exist without any other job.
Resolved: Farming is the most important job.

22 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

In wartime, human life is our highest priority.
National security preserves human life.
Free speech does not preserve human life.
Resolved: In wartime, national security ought to be valued over free speech.

The best lifestyle is peaceful.
Country life is peaceful.
City life is not peaceful.
Resolved: Country life trumps city life.

Every affirmative case follows this basic pattern: it establishes a measure, relates something to that measure, and concludes that the resolution is true.

Of course, value debaters could just present a list of arguments as above. But over the years, a rich ecosystem of **argument classes** has evolved. A class is a group of arguments that can be identified by its impact — its effectiveness in persuading the judge. They help keep the issues and the debate from turning into a jumbled mess.

Argument classes are part of debate theory, meaning that none of them are mandatory. Debaters can just run a list of arguments or come up with their own classes. But you should master these ideas, because your opponents will use them. More importantly, they represent the best-known way to advocate for a resolution. Over the next few Keys, we'll learn about the most important argument classes, how to run them, and how to refute them.

The Toulmin Model Lite

Stephen Toulmin was a brilliant philosopher who developed a model for arguing moral ideas. Unlike the abstract syllogisms we just went through, Toulmin focused on how a specific argument can be proven or refuted. Here's a modified version that can be used every round:

Claim is the argument you're trying to make. If the judge accepts your claim, that should help you. If it doesn't help, the argument doesn't belong in the round. Example: "Country life is peaceful."

Ground (or "analysis") is the logical foundation for the claim. It provides the reasoning for your argument. Why is the claim valid? Because the logic behind it makes sense. "Country is peaceful *because you have fewer things clamoring for attention.*"

Warrant provides evidence for your argument. It could prove the ground true, or connect the ground and claim together. "The population density in a rural area is a fraction of that of an urban area," or, "on average, people in the country live longer and suffer from fewer stress-related illnesses."

While you won't be using these terms constantly, every argument you run in value debate should follow this basic format. If your opponent runs an argument that is missing an element — for example, if he presents an empty claim with no supporting logic or evidence — you can jump on it

with a response like “No Warrant.” Just make sure that you explain what that means, because your judge may not be familiar with the Toulmin Model.

There Is No Perfect Theory

This book offers well-accepted and logically coherent debate theory. While those that take this book’s advice and apply it in cases and argumentation will win rounds, no one has the corner on an absolute, unbeatable theory. Debate is a learning process, and every round is different. As long as the theory you use is logically coherent and understandable, it is acceptable.

When you’re exposed to new and different theory, don’t panic. Be skeptical, but give it a shot. Some new theories are worthless, but others can be usable. Either way, you’re always learning.

Key 3

Run Great Values

The most important argument class in the round is the **value**. A value is an external measure for the resolution. It provides a weighing mechanism for deciding whether or not the resolution is true.

Imagine a debate without a clear value:

Affirmative: “Freedom is great! Safety isn’t as great!”

Negative: “No, safety is the greatest! Freedom is secondary!”

At the end of the round, the judge might as well flip a coin. That’s where the value comes in. For this resolution, consider a value of Life. It says: “Which entity best protects the objective standard of Life — freedom or safety? If freedom saves the most lives, vote for freedom. If safety saves the most, vote for safety.”

The debate is no longer arbitrary and allows us to build a syllogism:

The principles in question should be measured according to Life.

Freedom does not uphold Life.

Safety upholds Life.

Resolved: Safety is more important than Freedom.

Picture a sign next to a roller coaster. “You must be this tall to ride the roller coaster.” One kid tells another that he’s too short to ride.

“Nuh-uh!”

“Yuh-huh!”

“Nuh-uh!”

This is debate without a value. But then the accused child says, “I know how to settle this. I’ll stand next to the sign.” Now it’s a simple matter of comparing his current height to the mark on the sign.

Different values yield different results. If we use Individual Rights as the value, we create an objective yardstick. Then we compare freedom and security to Individual Rights. Freedom *is* an individual right, so it gets a 10 out of 10. Security can help preserve rights, but it may also threaten them if taken too far. Security gets a 3. Now we have a logical, external reason to say that freedom is more important than safety.

3 Standards for a Good Value

A good value needs to meet these standards:

External

The value is supposed to measure the resolution. You can't define "sheep" with the word "sheep" or describe the length of a truck as "one truck long." A resolution cannot be measured against itself. The value could be related, but it can't be part of the resolution. For the value to work, it has to be something against which the resolution can be compared.

Measurable

A value must not be so abstract, inane, or universal that it cannot be used as a philosophical measuring stick. Values like Truth or Destiny are unsuitable for most debates as they are too abstract or broad to be useful for the judge. Values like National Security or Human Rights are more practical as they provide a clear standard by which to measure the resolution.

Specific

Every resolution is different. Why should they be measured the same way? Perhaps the most widespread misconception about values is that they must be the highest concepts imaginable. Take, for example, Economic Prosperity. To claim that Economic Prosperity isn't a good value because it isn't as noble as Human Life doesn't necessarily fly. There are good reasons to value Economic Prosperity — when the economic is doing well, businesses thrive, people are employed, and personal freedom is enjoyed.

You wouldn't use Will of God to choose a breakfast cereal, or Utilitarianism to pick a birthday card. Economic Prosperity might be a better way to measure the resolution simple because it is specific.

Values should mirror the moral charges of the resolution. With an immoral resolution like "Being blind is worse than being crippled," you need a value to measure the effects of disability, such as Missed Experiences. That's not a very high value, but it is external, measurable, and specific.

While values do not have to be the highest concepts in the round, it can be appropriate for a debater to defend his value on the grounds that it is higher, more important, or more foundational to society as long as the resolution is moral and the value is sufficiently specific.

Values should be carefully defined as soon as they are presented, even if the meaning seems obvious. Debaters have a way of getting into the tiny little details of their opponent's value, sometimes turning it against itself. Be prepared and offer clear, reasonable definitions.

Debaters tend to use familiar ideas for their values — Justice, Peace, Freedom, etc. This allows the audience to immediately relate to the values. However, you are not limited to well-accepted ideas.

Any value can succeed as long as you can prove that it is a good external measure for the resolution. In the past, debaters have argued unique or original concepts like Tyranny of the Individual, The Pitcher Principle, or Reciprocity. As long as you clearly explain the concept, you can value anything.

Similarly, be wary of arguing against an opponent's value based on a generally accepted definition. There are many definitions of Justice, so listen carefully to see which one your opponent is using. The value belongs to the person who presented it. Arguing against a different definition is like pretending your opponent presented a different argument and refuting that instead. This is known as a **straw man fallacy**.

Also, avoid arguing that your opponent's value could be misinterpreted. Everything is misinterpreted — even popular, long-lasting ideas like Peace, or important works like the Bible. Your opponent is not responsible for how his value has been misinterpreted in the past, but what it actually means today. Don't redefine your opponent's value or say it's confusing — refute it directly and show that it shouldn't be valued.

What Do We Measure?

So a value measures the resolution. What does that mean exactly?

You don't have to measure the whole thing to get an idea on the focus. Grammarians know that every sentence has a subject, and everything else pertains to it. In the sentence "I went to Italy," I am the subject. The sentence is about me.

A comparative resolution has two or more subjects and a relationship is explained between or among them. Technically, only one is the proper grammatical subject, but both or all are of equal importance. For example, consider the underlined subjects and italicized relationships in the following resolutions:

Cooperation is *better than* competition.

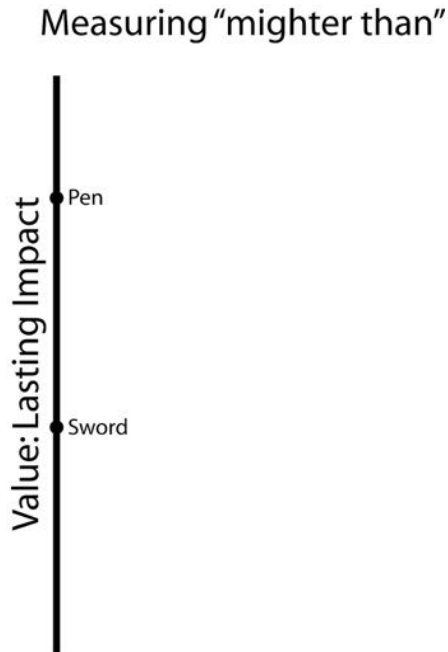
Economic strength ought to be *valued over* individual rights.

The pen is *mightier than* the sword.

Better a lifetime of hatred than a moment of violence.

The relationship in each is being measured by the value. Values answer questions such as: "What is better? What should be valued highest? How do we ascertain which is mightiest? What does it mean to be justified?" Once we know those answers, we can compare the subjects to the measure.

Consider the resolution "The pen is mightier than the sword" with the value of Lasting Impact. The value framework can be diagrammed with a simple vertical line. Here, the top of the line represents full achievement of the value, and the bottom represents complete violation.

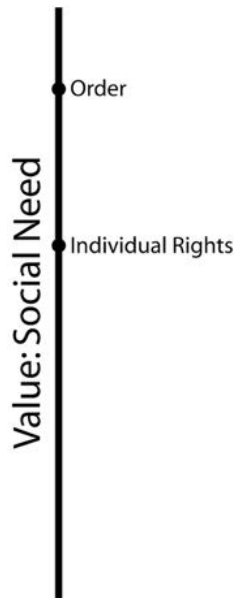


This diagram suggests that we use the value of Lasting Impact to measure might. All that we need to argue to prove the resolution true is that the pen has high Lasting Impact, while the sword has low Lasting Impact.

The negative speaker could counter this two different ways: prove that the sword is actually long-lasting (moving it above pen), or prove that the pen is short-lived (moving it below sword). Most negative strategies involve a combination of the two. Alternatively, the negative could try to replace Lasting Impact with a more favorable value, like Challenging Authority.

Consider the resolution “Order outweighs individual rights” with a value of Social Need:

Measuring "outweighs"



Order outweighs individual rights.

Value: Social Need. The needs of society *outweigh* other needs. Thus, choose the subject that best upholds Social Need.

Society needs order. It needs laws, police, etc.

Society does not need individual rights. They make society nicer, but society can live without them.

Therefore, order is the most important, and the resolution is true.

Brightline resolutions are even easier because they only have one subject. Instead of a relationship, they describe the brightline. In the examples below, the resolution subjects are underlined and the brightline is italicized.

The use of Native Americans as athletic mascots is *immoral*.

Developed nations have a *moral responsibility* to fight world hunger.

The use of a military draft for non-defensive wars is *justified*.

Citizens have a *duty* to serve in a military or civil function.

Again, the brightline needs to be measured with a value before the subjects can be applied to it. You can diagram this by drawing the same vertical line and marking the brightline, represented by the dashes.

30 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

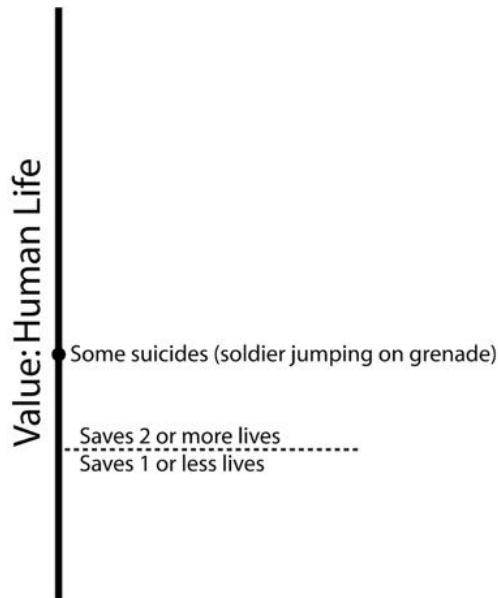
Measuring "moral responsibility"



By the logic of this diagram, anything that alleviates suffering is a moral responsibility. That's the brightline. Now all we have to do is prove that fighting world hunger alleviates suffering and the resolution has been affirmed.

Let's try one that is a bit more challenging morally: "If suicide can save three or more lives, it is justified."

Measuring “justified”



Suicide can be *justified*.

Value: Human Life. Life is precious and sacred, so measures that save lives are *justified*.

Some suicides cause a net preservation of human life. For example, a soldier jumping on a grenade to save his friends should be regarded as a hero.

Therefore, such a suicide would be justified, and the resolution is true.

Context is everything — if it isn’t a subject, relationship, or brightline, it is context. It narrows or clarifies the resolution with phrases like “when in conflict” or “during wartime.” The resolutions above had some contextual phrases: one limited moral responsibility to developed nations, while another limited duty to citizens. Meanwhile, the suicide resolution doesn’t just say, “Suicide is justified” — that would be horrifying. Instead, it uses specific burden scope (“can be” rather than “is”) to give the affirmative room to play.

Special Value Types

Some cases call for variations on the classic value statement. Let’s look at four specific types:

32 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Counter-value

A **counter-value** is a value presented to replace another value. Counter-values, usually referred to simply as values, are extremely common — most negative cases include them. When a counter-value is presented, the original value has to be refuted. More on this in a few pages.

Anti-value

An **anti-value** is the perfect inverse of a value. Rather than something we're trying to achieve, the anti-value is something we're trying to avoid. For instance, "Privacy is more important than Peace" could be affirmed with an anti-value of Tyranny. The logic: whatever entity in the resolution best prevents Tyranny should be valued highest. Privacy does this by insulating citizens from their government. Peace does not.

Anti-values are perfectly coherent, but they can be confusing. Don't use one unless you can't think of a positive way to express your side of the resolution. If you're considering an anti-value of Death, try the value of Life. Instead of the anti-value of Poverty, try the value of Prosperity. Judges like voting for specific values, not against them; offer them a path to a better world. Only anti-values with no direct inverse are justifiable: Tyranny, Genocide, Apocalypse.

Super-value

A **super-value** is a standard to which values must conform. Think of the super-value as a way to measure values. For example, Consequentialism — the idea that actions are right or wrong based on their outcomes — is usually a super-value because it helps us weigh more common values.

You might run a super-value of Function, saying that any value needs to actually work in the real world. It can't just be an abstract, unattainable idea. You might then reject your opponent's value of Utopia and instead present Capitalism.

Super-values are mostly implied rather than explicitly stated. You could label the three standards of a value—external, measurable, and specific—as super-values. Any additional standards need to be carefully explained and justified. Many of the arguments surrounding values — such as links, objections, or reasons to prefer — more clearly address issues that would otherwise be covered by a super-value. In most cases, you're better off just skipping the super-value entirely.

Dual-values

Dual values are a pair of values used to create a complete value framework. For example, you might measure the success of a nation with the dual values of Peace and Prosperity.

The trick to dual values is to explain the precise relationship between them. Some questions you need to be able to answer:

Is one value more important than the other?

If so, which one?

Do they ever conflict?

If so, which one do we uphold first?

What is the relationship between each of your values and your opponent's?

Dual values allow debaters to approach their side of their resolution from a more comprehensive perspective. It is best to choose values that are both comparable (of equal value) and complementary (they don't conflict).

Value Links

Debaters must defend their values. It's not enough to say *what* you think; you have to explain *why* you think that. To show the judge why your value is useful for the round, you should run at least one **value link**. This is a subpoint for the value that explains why the judge should prefer it. A value link explains the connection between the value and resolution. Equally important, when your opponent brings up a counter-value, value links help distinguish why your position is preferable.

There are four basic types of value links:

Intrinsic Good

Intrinsic good is an inherent type of worth — it can't be taken away or altered or turned bad. An appropriate test of intrinsic worth is to ask, "If we were to make this thing as evil as possible, would it still have value?"

Capitalism is a market system that is widely credited as being the most effective at building wealth. While it doesn't build wealth for everyone equally, it has historically been a tool that pulled even the lowest classes up from the muck. But what if we made Capitalism as evil as possible? What if we said that it only made one person rich, and he used his wealth to oppress everyone into pseudo-slavery? Capitalism would be evil and we'd dispose of it without hesitation. Therefore, Capitalism has no intrinsic worth.

On the other hand, Life is special. While lives are often remembered by what they were used to accomplish (e.g., Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone, Neil Armstrong walked on the moon), every life holds some kernel of precious intrinsic worth that cannot be taken away. Take the life of Osama bin Laden. He was a truly evil man bent on destroying an entire civilization through mass-murder. Upon his death—10 years after he presided over the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon—the people of the free world rejoiced, but with restraint. Even though he was evil and killed many people, bin Laden still had worth. He had a soul, making his death tragic. And if the loss of someone like him can be tragic, Life must have intrinsic worth.

34 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

When discussing a moral resolution, an intrinsically good value can be appropriate. The logic: we're trying to decide what is good, so we should use this broad measure of goodness to figure it out. Popular values with intrinsic worth include Justice, Human Rights, and Freedom, to name a few.

You could just call your value link Intrinsic Good, but this type of value link can take many forms and expressions. Think of this as a pattern used to defend a value, even if the exact argument is something like Moral Imperative or Worth Dying For. This defense of a value is very common, especially when used against the second kind of value link:

Extrinsic Good

Extrinsic Good is when something *leads to* good things. If something is good, but it fails the intrinsic worth test, it is an extrinsic good.

Democracy is a form of government that makes a government accountable and transparent to its people. It is associated with better laws and respect for freedom. One could say that democracy leads to intrinsic good. But if people vote for bad politicians and bad laws, the system would collapse. Thus, democracy can be called an extrinsic good.

"Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried." - Winston Churchill

Comparatively, consider an axe. It can be used to cut something, break down a door, split firewood, clear a path, or kill someone. When used positively, an axe is a good thing. When used destructively, it is bad. This means it does not have intrinsic value, and its extrinsic value is also questionable. Axes serve a purpose, but it's impossible to predict what that will be. Whereas democracy is generally good, axes are just neutral and thus probably can't be called an extrinsic good.

Extrinsic values essentially argue: "Since we're trying to decide what is good, let's measure the resolution with this standard that ensures goodness."

Common arguments that follow an extrinsic good might include "Foundation of Society" or "Protects Life." Listen carefully to the argument to see if the value is good on its own, or good because it leads to something else.

A value can be both intrinsic and extrinsic. For example, the life of George Washington Carver was inherently good but also led to the invention of peanut butter. That's something for which I'm very grateful.

Topic Context

Intrinsic and extrinsic goods make excellent values for moral resolutions, but what about the other kinds of moral charges? That's where topic context comes in. **Topic context** argues that a value is suitable because it relates directly to the resolution. It is closely tied to the idea that values must be specific to what they are measuring. Let's look at a few examples:

Resolved: Government Legitimacy is determined more by its respect for popular sovereignty than individual rights.

The definition of legitimacy is important here, but this could easily be interpreted as an amoral resolution: a government could be legitimate and evil. Thus, a value like Power might be appropriate, justified by the value link Establishes Governments, which follows the topic context pattern. “We’re talking about government legitimacy, so use this value that establishes governments.”

Resolved: Power tools are more efficient than hand tools.

We’re measuring efficiency, so a value like Time to Complete Task might be good. Note again that this is an amoral value — efficiency could help us build a dollhouse or a torture chamber; the resolution doesn’t care, it just wants us to discuss efficiency. We want the judge to use our value of Time to Complete Task because it is the most precise way to measure efficiency. So we use the value link of Precise Measure, which is a topic context link.

Topic context links are used to tie the value to the context of the resolution. They can be used for resolutions with any moral charge.

Resolved: Justice entitles everyone to a sincere defense by a legal professional.

Here we’re measuring sincerity of defense based on the amount of justice, which is generally understood to be a good thing. Perhaps we use the value of Presumed Innocence — the idea that a person is innocent until proven guilty. If we used the value link Cornerstone of Justice, we’re arguing that Presumed Innocence is a key part of our understanding of justice. That’s topic context, and it’s also extrinsic good because it helps uphold justice.

Usefulness

Value links can also help a judge make a decision at the end of the round. **Usefulness** allows a debater to speak directly to the judge, asking him to use the value that will make his life easier.

While other values might be functional, debaters might argue that a certain value *provides clarity* — it is easy to understand and offers a clear decision process.

Debaters can also argue that this value *provides meaning*. Other values are such confusing, imbalanced measures that they skew the entire resolution to the point that it doesn’t mean anything. This value not only measures the resolution, it helps establish it.

The first three value links are common, logical, and diverse. The fourth is less popular, qualifying as an argument called a kritik (Key 7). The usefulness value link is hard to run correctly. If you do run it, consider mixing it in with other, more standard arguments.

Debaters should be prepared to spend time on their values as they define, explain, and defend them. Values shouldn’t be an afterthought — they are the main event.

36 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Make certain that your value is clearly tied to the resolution and that the judge understands that it is a good way to measure the round.

Reasons to Prefer

Reasons to Prefer (or RTPs) work just like value links, but with one key difference: they contrast your value with your opponent's. This makes them preferable for counter-values. They are also appropriate in the 1st Affirmative Rebuttal, as this is the first chance that the affirmative gets to run them. While a value link says "Use this value," an RTP says "Use this value, not that value." Besides that, run them the same way – as subpoints to the value, following the four value link patterns above.

Key 4

Connect Your Criteria

Your value premise is part of a broader component of your case known as the **framework**: the constructs that measure and establish your advocacy on the resolution.

If your premise is fairly concrete, you can conclude your framework after presenting the value. But often, the value is just too broad and abstract to be useful on its own. That's where your criterion comes in. A **criterion**, singular of criteria, is a means and a measure for a value. It helps the judge use your value in a practical way. It's like attaching a handle to your value so it can be lifted.

If your value is Justice, you can't just go out into the street and measure your value without a tool. You can't lick your finger, hold it up to the wind, and say, "Justice is being 80 percent upheld today!" Instead, you look at some pragmatic thing that upholds justice, such as Due Process. If Due Process allows for Justice, then you can measure how just a society is based on how well it upholds Due Process. It acts as a means to achieve Justice, therefore it is a measure for it.

A criterion is completely optional, but it can be a powerful tool because it empowers debaters to run almost any kind of value without fear that it will be too difficult for the judge to apply. Here is a principle that can help you decide whether a criterion is necessary.

Economy of Complexity

Debaters have volumes of history and current events to present to the judge. To interpret that information, they must present a library of philosophical discourse, going back to root worldview ideas like the source of right and wrong. Yet the first speech in Lincoln-Douglas is just 6 minutes long, forcing debaters to merely scratch the surface.

Fortunately, most of your case will incorporate ideas that are familiar to your judge. If not, they're ideas that can be implied or explained in a sentence or two.

Your judge can't guess what your arguments are — you have to tell him. Every time you present a new argument, the complexity of your case increases. With it comes the risk that your judge will be confused, or that the logic of your case will become too convoluted. Choose your arguments carefully. Say only what you have to, cutting everything else.

Imagine a line of electric nodes, spaced a foot apart. They're so far apart that electricity can't jump between them. But if we move them closer—maybe an inch apart—the electricity begins to flow. We get a solid line of arcing energy. Same with writing a case. You must choose arguments that are close

38 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

enough that no one can tell there is any space between them. The arguments should flow logically from one to the next.

Sometimes, a criterion is necessary to help the logic jump from your value to the rest of your case. If not, cut the criterion and move on.

What Makes a Great Criterion

A criterion should have two basic qualities:

External

The criterion is part of the framework. For the same reason that the value must be external to the resolution so it can measure it, the criterion must be external. Just as the value needs to be something to which you can apply the resolution, so must the criterion be applicable. If you want to say “this thing in the resolution is a means and measure for the value,” you need to run a contention, not a criterion – more on that in the next chapter.

More Practical

If your value is Human Rights, your criterion should not be General Welfare. The whole purpose of a criterion is to make the value more accessible. If your criterion is as abstract as your value, it serves no purpose. (You might as well just run the criterion as your value!)

While it is a weak strategy to argue that people can misinterpret a value (your opponent is arguing that the correctly-interpreted value is a good measure), arguing that a criterion is unworkable can be merited. For example, Perfect Society might work as a value as most will contend that it’s noble to strive toward perfection. But as a criterion, it’s dangerous. It has historically led to purges, or genocides, of “imperfect” people. Thus, while it might be a good abstract goal, it’s a bad practical means.

Special Criteria Types

As with values, there are a few different types of criteria:

Anti-Criterion

Instead of a means and measure on the value, the anti-criterion works to prevent a stumbling block to upholding the value. I like to write, but I can sometimes be distracted by video games. I have to discipline myself to game in moderation. If my value is Productivity, my anti-criterion is Gaming: the more I game, the less productive I am. In order to uphold my value, I need to game less. Similarly, Just Laws might call for an anti-criterion of Corruption, or Capitalism might need an anti-criterion of

Pure Democracy. Here we need less Corruption in order to have Just Laws, or less Pure Democracy in order to have Capitalism.

Anti-criteria are confusing. As with anti-values, you should use them only if you can't find positive ways to communicate your ideas.

Sub-Criterion

A sub-criterion is a means and a measure for your criterion.

Your criterion is supposed to make your value more understandable and accessible. If it needs its own criterion, something is wrong. Ask yourself if you really need all three levels in your framework. For example, consider this framework:

Value: Quality of Life
Criterion: Health
Sub-Criterion: Quality Medical Care

The criterion can be implied, and you can bump up the sub-criterion to replace it. Remember the economy of complexity. If you can make the electricity jump without a criterion, do it. Sub-criteria are only appropriate with very complex frameworks—even then, you should consider them a red flag that your case is too complicated in general. Here's an example of a three-tiered framework that might be justifiable:

Value: Justice
Criterion: Due Process
Sub-Criterion: Legal Academia

This framework would be sufficiently complex for the value. Any more additions and it becomes entirely too technical for the time restraints in Lincoln-Douglas.

Criterion Links

As with a value, your criterion can come with a link that explains the relationship between the criterion and the value. The criterion of due process might have a link Ensures Fairness.

Unlike value links, criterion links just explain why the criterion is a means to the value. Here are some examples:

Value: Quality of Life
Criterion: Health
Criterion Link: Active Lifestyle

40 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Value: Human Rights

Criterion: Government Accountability

Criterion Link: Citizen's Interests Upheld

Value: Capitalism

Anti-Criterion: Centralized Planning

Anti-Criterion Link: No Consumer Choice

Applications can be appropriate for tricky criterion links. Statistics on exercise and quality of life, examples of totalitarian military states committing genocide, or accounts of communist countries choking out free-market prosperity can help make the connection for the judge and send the point home.

Value links are important and should be run in almost every case. Criterion links are more obvious and are rarely contested. Unless the relationship is difficult to understand, you can usually skip the criterion link and work directly with a value and criterion.

If you do run a criterion, make sure that it is specific to the logic of the connection. It shouldn't just say "Criterion upholds value." That's implied when you run the criterion; the link should explain *why*. For example, instead of "Unaccountable Governments Abuse Human Rights" – which we obviously believe because we ran that criterion – we explain *why* Government Accountability leads to Human Rights: "Citizen's Interests Upheld."

Key 5

Prove Your Contentions

Value cases are proven through **contentions**, or main arguments which establish your position on the resolution as it pertains to your framework. These are the key points you want to make in order to persuade the judge that your side of the resolution is more justified.

A contention applies the resolution to the *bottom* of your framework. If your framework is comprised solely of a value, your contentions should apply to that. If you have a value, a criterion, and a sub-criterion, your contentions should connect to the sub-criterion.

How to Write a Contention

Contentions complete the logical syllogism of your value case that began in your framework. Here's an example. The subject has been underlined and the standard has been italicized:

Resolved: A nation is *best protected* by a volunteer army.

Value: Morale (will to fight). Training and equipment being equal, the victor on the battlefield will be one with the most committed, enthusiastic soldiers. Thus, a nation is best protected by an army with high morale.

Contention: Volunteers have the Best Morale. Because they chose to be there, volunteers are more cooperative and less likely to run away in the face of danger.

The contentions and framework form the assertions in the logical syllogism. Together, they amount to the logical conclusion on the resolution:

A = B

B = C

Therefore, A = C

Volunteer armies have the best morale (Contention).

Nations are best protected by soldiers with high morale (Value).

Therefore, a nation is best protected by a volunteer army (Resolution).

That's the flow of a debate case. Put two connected observations in one end, and a single result comes out. Contentions + Framework = Resolution.

42 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Contentions are the easiest part of your case to write. In fact, they write themselves! They follow this formula:

Subject in the Resolution > Connecting Verb/Phrase > Bottom of Framework

In the above example, the contention worked like this:

Subject: Volunteer armies
Connection: Have the Best
Framework: Morale

With practice, you should be able to quickly write contentions. The only variable is the connecting phrase, which will indicate either a positive or a negative relationship with the framework.

Resolved: Ninjas are better than pirates.

Value: Style. This is defined as “a distinctive manner of action beyond the practical.” Acting in a stylish manner is worthy of “style points.”

Value Link: Gives Meaning. Ninjas and pirates are incomparable in any scope other than style. They are so radically different that this is the only way the resolution can make sense.

Contention 1: Ninjas are Stylish. They have cool outfits, throwing stars, and smoke bombs. Everything they do is cool. Ninjas don’t have to be so stylish, but they choose to be. They create a culture of stylish excellence.

Contention 2: Pirates are not Stylish. Pirates are ruthlessly efficient. They use improvised weapons, wear whatever they can find, and eat garbage. Their needs and tactics are simple. They’re nothing better than muggers with a boat.

See? Contentions write themselves!

Subject: Ninjas/Pirates
Connection: Are/Are Not
Framework: Stylish

Here’s another example:

Resolved: Country life trumps city life.

Value: Emotional Health. This is defined as “a sense of peace and joy; stability; maturity.”

Value Link 1: Broad Choice. The resolution makes a broad claim about one lifestyle versus another. We need a broad value that can capture this dichotomy, and Emotional Health does that.

Value Link 2: Ensures Great Life. Whatever life throws your way, you can handle it if you're emotionally healthy.

Contention 1: Country Life Promotes Emotional Health. Being outdoors gives you perspective. Being alone gives you room to think. A slower pace of life gives you a chance to process life events.

Contention 2: City Life Destroys Emotional Health. The fast, crowded, dirty world of the city dehumanizes you and sucks the life out of you. It takes from you and offers you no chance to recover.

Again, the contentions are very easy to write once the value is in place:

Subject: Country Life/City Life
Connection: Promotes/Destroys
Framework: Emotional Health

How Many Contentions do I Need?

Many cases only need one contention. That's great! It means you have more time to flesh out your case, perhaps adding subpoints and evidence at your leisure.

The number of contentions depends on two factors. To get your number, multiply *the number of subjects* in the resolution by the *number of arguments* at the bottom of your framework. Look at the following examples:

Resolved: When in conflict, security ought to be *valued over* freedom.

- Value: Justice.
- Two subjects in the resolution and one framework point.
- $2 \times 1 = 2$ contentions. One contention will apply security to Justice, the other will apply freedom to justice.

Resolved: *Justice* requires peacekeeping military operations.

- Value: Human Life.
- One subject in the resolution and one framework point.
- $1 \times 1 = 1$ contention. "Peacekeeping saves Lives."

44 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Resolved: Guns before butter.

- Value: Human Life.
- Criterion: Self Defense.
- Two issues in the framework (Human Life and Self Defense), but the contentions only need to connect to the bottom level of that framework. There are two subjects in the resolution, so we have $2 \times 1 = 2$ contentions.
- They might say, “Guns allow Self Defense” and “Butter is Useless.”

Things get tricky when you expand your framework horizontally. For example, if you have dual-criteria, you double the number of connections you need to make in your case.

Resolved: Fame is *more desirable* than fortune.

- Value: Legacy.
- Criterion 1: Positive Outlook.
- Criterion 2: Size of Impact.
- Two subjects in the resolution have to be connected to Positive Outlook, but they also need to be connected to Size of Impact. $2 \times 2 = 4$ contentions.

You can’t control how many subjects are in the resolution, but you can control the complexity of your value framework. For this reason, aim to construct a simple framework. Make your job easy by running multiple values or criteria only when your case wouldn’t make sense otherwise.

Ordering Contentions

There are two persuasive approaches to deciding the order of contentions:

Chronological

Start with the first resolution subject and the first framework point, and then work forward. This system has the advantage of being easy to predict, meaning the judge will find it easier to follow. However, you forfeit the chance to tell a story with your contention order. This is a good basic system, and it is the one you should use if you’re in doubt. (The Pirates/Ninjas and Country Life/City Life cases are good examples of this approach.)

Chronological order is great if the subject you support in the resolution comes last — something common for negative teams.

Storytelling

At its core, most story structure is about showing a problem and solving it. Building your case this way helps it resonate with your judge emotionally. You do this by starting with the saddest contention and ending with the happiest. Pirates are the problem, ninjas are the answer. City life is bad, country life is good. This method is also useful for subpoints as well.

Draw your Cases

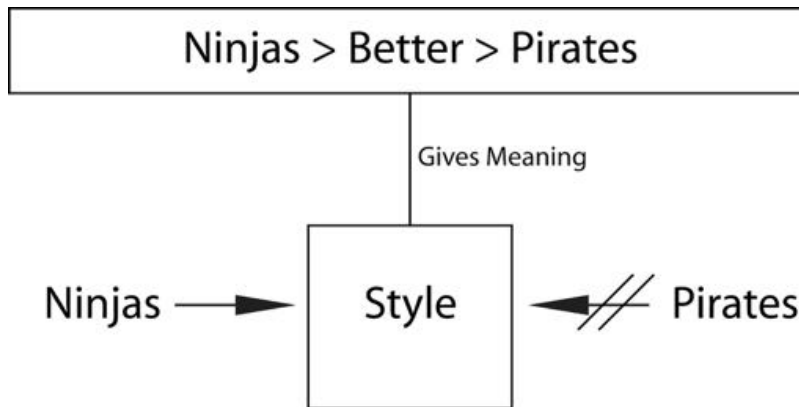
Diagramming a case makes everything easier, whether you're writing, analyzing, or refuting. It helps you pick apart the impact stream and make sure every point is doing its job.

To diagram, begin by writing out the resolution at the top. Write comparative cases as subject > relationship > subject. Write brightline cases as subject > standard. This will help demystify a potentially confusing resolution.

Below whatever you're measuring (the relationship or standard), draw a line straight down. Then draw a box and fill it in with your value. Label the line between the resolution and the value as your value link.

Repeat this process with a criterion, if appropriate.

On either side of the bottom point on your framework (usually just your value), write a subject with an arrow pointing to the value. If the relationship is positive, make it a normal arrow. If the relationship isn't positive, cross the arrow out.

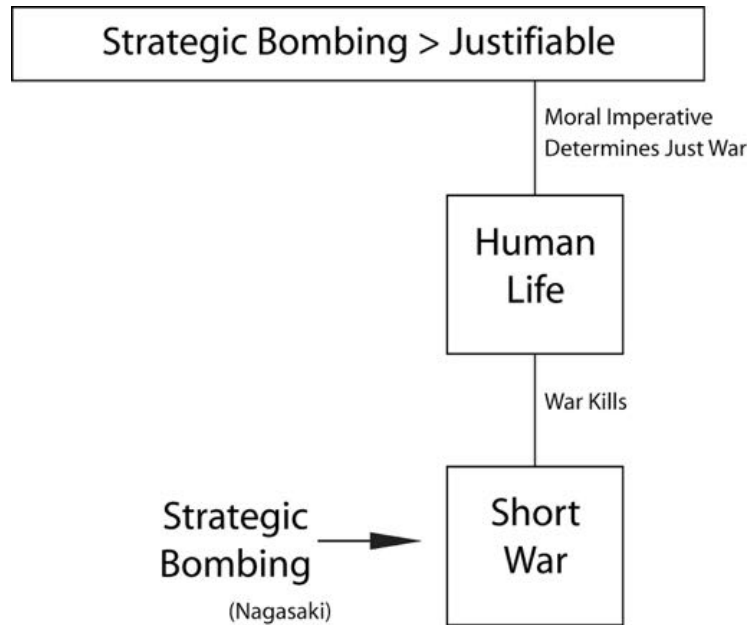


You can follow the impact stream of this case by starting with a contention and going up. Ninjas are stylish, pirates are not stylish, stylish things are better, so ninjas are better than pirates. Let's try it with another:

Resolved: Strategic bombing is a justifiable tactic in a total war scenario.

Strategic bombing means targeting an enemy's economy or civilian population, as opposed to targeting military forces, in order to destroy the country's ability or will to wage war. This is a brightline resolution, so we'll draw the line descending from the standard. This case will use a criterion, indicated as a box descending down from the value.

46 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*



This case could be flowed as follows:

Value: Human Life. The judge should consider strategic bombing justifiable if it is proven that it saves lives.

Value Link 1: Moral Imperative. Nothing is more important than human life.

Value Link 2: Determines Just War. War is appropriate if it is fought to save life. A war for any other purpose is immoral. Thus, human life is the appropriate measure for what is justifiable in a total war scenario.

Criterion: Short War. Measure how many lives are saved based on the length of the war.

Criterion Link: War Kills. Long wars kill many people. Short wars kill fewer people. The shorter the better!

Contention: Strategic Bombing Shortens War. Though still unpleasant, strategic bombing can take years off a war and save lives in the long run.

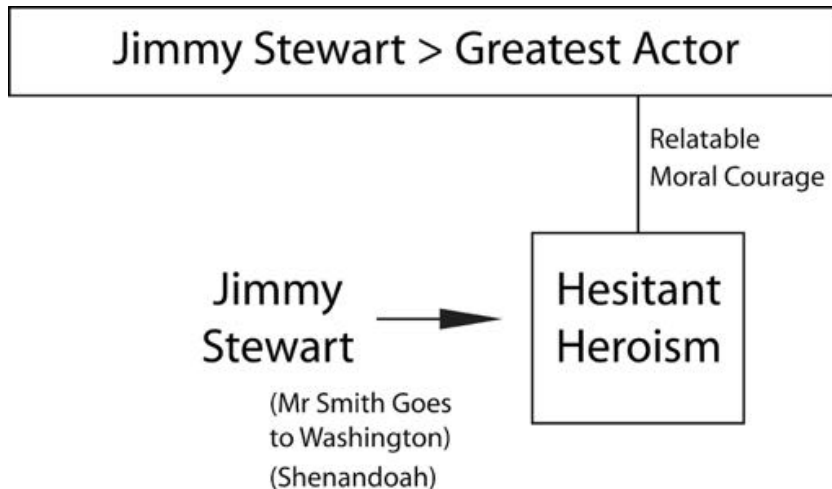
Application: Nagasaki. A conventional invasion of Japan would have taken years and caused millions of deaths—most of them civilian. America averted

that with a show of overwhelming force. While nuking a city was highly regrettable, it saved life in the end by ending the war before an invasion occurred.

Diagramming your case will help you avoid two of the most common mistakes in value debate: irrelevant values and overly ambitious contentions. An example of an overambitious contention: “Strategic Bombing saves Lives.” This skips the criterion, cutting it out of the impact stream and rendering it pointless. Another example: “Saving Lives with Bombing is Justifiable” — essentially a summary of the entire case. Don’t reiterate the resolution — offer proven, logical support for it.

Let’s try it again:

Resolved: Jimmy Stewart was the greatest film actor of all time.



Here’s the flow version:

Value: Hesitant Heroism. Operationally defined as “a humble willingness to be decent and courageous.” The greatest film actor of all time is the one who best represented this trait on screen.

Value Link 1: Relatable. Audiences can connect better to a hesitant hero than a fame-hungry demigod.

Value Link 2: Moral Courage. Hesitant heroes are human. They’re vulnerable and fallible, and that means acts of greatness require great courage. This leads to more powerful stories and a positive impact on the audience.

48 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

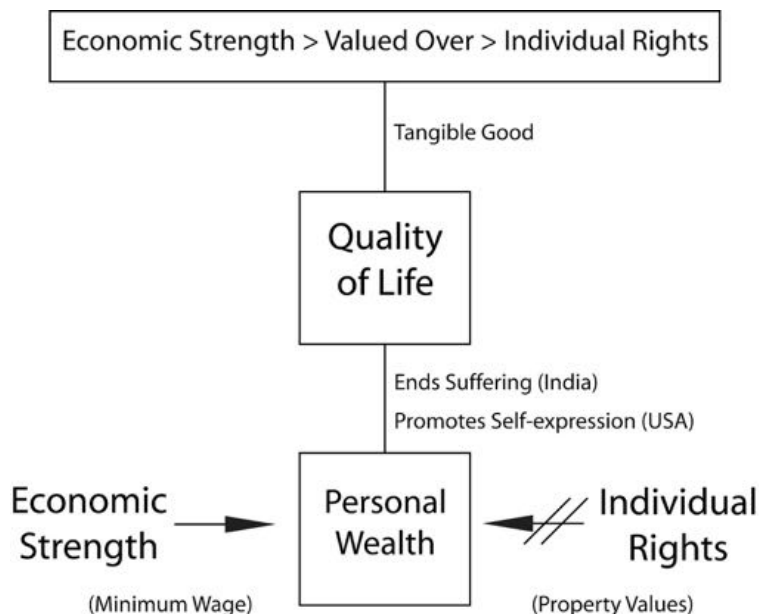
Contention: Stewart was Ultimate Hesitant Hero. Jimmy Stewart was a slow-talking everyman. He wasn't afraid to look silly or cry. He also didn't feel the need to look macho. He portrayed masculine kindness, sincerity, and humility, while being unafraid to take bad guys to the mat when necessary.

Application: Mr. Smith Goes to Washington. Jefferson Smith is handpicked for being naïve, trusting, and easily manipulated. But when he realizes that he's just a pawn for corrupt politics, his starry dreams of democracy are nearly shattered. Jefferson takes a stand that pushes him to the limit and eventually brings the scumbags to their knees.

Application: Shenandoah. Charlie Anderson doesn't want any part in the Civil War. He just wants to live in peace and take care of his family. Eventually, the war threatens to tear his family apart. Charlie picks up his gun and pulls his family back together in an unrivalled show of restraint and leadership.

One last example:

Resolved: Economic strength ought to be valued over individual rights.



The flow version:

Value: Quality of Life. The choice between economic strength and individual rights boils down to this: what makes people's lives better?

Value Link: Tangible Good. A philosophical question like this could turn into an endless circle of moral quandaries. This is a real-world, measurable value that is uniquely suited to measure the resolution.

Criterion: Personal Wealth. Wealth increases quality of life, as indicated in the following criterion links:

Criterion Link 1: Ends Suffering. Human suffering is primarily caused by poverty.

Application: India has suffered through dozens of famines, the most recent in the 1940s. Increased personal wealth is slowly but surely building the hope that famine will never strike again.

Criterion Link 2: Promotes Self-expression. Wealth allows people to chase their dreams, build their hobbies, and enjoy leisure.

Application: USA. From an historical standpoint, America has an incredibly high quality of life. This is primarily because each American can pursue his or her unique dreams.

Contention 1: Economic Strength Builds Personal Wealth. To succeed financially, people need a system that allows for success. Personal wealth is built by working hard and increasing the happiness of others.

Application: Minimum Wage protects workers by ending wage competition before it drops down to pennies per hour. This prevents abuse from employers and ensures that everyone is paid for an honest day's work. Of course, this protection would not be possible if we couldn't assume a basic level of prosperity from employers. Because of economic strength, we can make that assumption.

Contention 2: Individual Rights Endanger Personal Wealth. Building wealth regularly conflicts with a person's right to do what they please.

Application: Property Values. For many people, the single largest investment of personal wealth is in buying a home. Because property values are so dependent on location, many neighborhoods regulate what residents can do with their property. Building a 100-foot-tall tower of steaming garbage in your backyard is illegal because it directly impoverishes everyone else through lost land values — even though you technically have a right to do it.

Key 6

Prove Your Case

Theoretically, you can prove your advocacy using a value and one contention per subject. While that's enough to establish the philosophy of your case, it poses a big question: does your philosophy actually work? Does it ever happen in the real world, or is it just some hare-brained idea you thought up long after you should have been in bed?

Logos

Logos (pronounced low-ghos) is the idea that facts have causes. It is one of the most fundamental concepts about the universe. For example, you are currently reading this book. This fact can be explained by a related fact: Travis wrote the book. That was made possible by dozens of manufacturers who made my keyboard, monitor, and computer parts. The parts were brought to my house by carrier services. People worked for the carrier services because they needed money to pay rent. They needed money because housing is not free. We could keep going down this line for a long time, but eventually we would run out of things to say “because” about. There has to be an end, or we just travel in a massive infinite circle—which means there is ultimately *no* cause. We must find the beginning to reach some core understanding about Logos.

This understanding is related to our beliefs about **cosmology**—the study of the origin and fate of the universe. For example, the Shinto religion puts forth a belief in Kami, an innate supernatural force predating all else. The Kami run through people, gods, spirits, and places. They have no cause; they just *are*. If we keep asking a Shintoist why something is the way it is, he'll eventually respond with “*because Kami*.” To a Shintoist, Kami are the source of Logos.

Meanwhile, Christians believe that the universe was created by a single, omnipotent God named Jehovah. For example, this book was printed on paper. The paper was made from shredded tree fiber. The trees grew because they were planted. The seeds came from older trees. The oldest of trees were created by Jehovah. Jehovah did that because it pleased him. Why did it please him? Where did he come from? Jehovah said: “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (Rev. 22:13, CEV). Why? *Because Jehovah*. He is the source of Logos.

Most evolutionary atheists believe that the universe began in a dense, hot state before rapidly expanding after a singularity known as the Big Bang. Why did the Big Bang happen? There was an explosion of various basic gases. Where did the gases come from? Such a question cannot be answered. It is the final *Because* of evolutionary atheism—the source of Logos. *Because gases and random chance*.

52 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Some people don't believe in a source of Logos. Perhaps they believe that everything is random, or that life is a dream within a dream (which doesn't really answer the question: Why is there a dream?). Without a source, Logos can't exist—and without that, logic cannot exist. Debate is impossible in such a world because any assertion is just as likely to be true as untrue—and no amount of logic or evidence changes that. Without Logos, everything is meaningless.

If you don't believe in Logos, so be it. But understand that you'll have to adjust your worldview while in the debate. You have to believe in some ultimate cosmological answer to the universe. Maybe you don't know what it is, but you just have to believe that it is (or was) there.

Epistemology & Facts

Epistemology is the study of the nature of truth and knowledge. It asks questions like, "Is it possible to know something for certain?" or "What are the limitations of science?" Epistemology recognizes two broad kinds of assertions, each with its own various sub-types.

A **fact** is something that falls within the scope of testable reality. The key aspect of most facts is that you can be wrong about them. "The sky is blue" counts as a fact — if you said "The sky is red," you'd be wrong.

There are three kinds of facts:

Objective

Objective facts are independent of personal beliefs. The planet Earth is round. Even if every single person believed that the planet was flat, it would still be round. We would all be wrong. No matter how hard we believe or how badly we want a different truth, objective facts remain independent of our personal beliefs. Scholars may refuse to fly in an airplane or look at pictures taken from outer space in order to preserve a flattened concept of Earth. Novelists might write about magical, physically impossible worlds. But those concepts do not reflect reality. We can wish for another version of reality, but the objective fact remains: the earth is a globe.

Consider other examples of objective facts:

- *Humans need water to live.* Desert survival requires finding a source of drinking water. If you forget this, or choose to go without water, you'll suffer.
- *It is impossible to walk in a straight line from Brazil to Morocco.* Believe with all your might, and you'll still find yourself covered in water long before you catch sight of the African shore.
- *Smoking is worse for your health than not smoking.* Not too long ago, cigarettes were sold alongside aspirin. You took one for pain and another for stress. No one knew cigarettes were dangerous until they started dying.

Descriptive Normative & Subjective Normative

While objective facts are independent of personal beliefs, **normative facts** are decided by beliefs. You might still be wrong about a normative fact, but you could fix that by changing hearts and minds. This is important because it changes whether or not the fact can be proven, and if so, with what kinds of evidence. There are two types of normative facts: descriptive and subjective.

Descriptive facts are decided by general belief or usage. You are correct if you are in the majority. Language is the best example of this. When you say, “blue,” you’re talking about the color of the sky on a normal day. If I tell you that the sky is red, I am wrong. But suppose I say: “Just for fun, let’s call the color of the sky red, and we’ll call the color of blood blue.” We’re changing the meanings of the words. If you agree, now you’re wrong too!

But maybe everyone else thinks this is a great idea. The meaning switch catches on. A year later, everyone on Earth has interchanged the meanings of the words blue and red. Meanwhile, I’ve given up on the switch. I say: “The sky is blue.” I would have been right a year ago, but now I’m wrong! The sky is red, because everyone agreed that “red” is the same color as the sky.

Language evolves gradually as meanings change or new words appear. For example, the word *idiot* once meant someone who was not interested in participating in democracy or public life. Now, it means someone who is contemptibly stupid. *Cool* refers to a temperature range, but lately it has taken on additional meanings to describe keeping your composure or being desirable or positive.

Other examples of descriptive normative facts:

- *Those curved yellow fruits are bananas.* If we call them bagutus, they are now bagutus.
- *We are all going out to dinner tonight.* If we decide not to go, this fact changes.
- *Travis is a debate coach.* If no one wants to be my student, I don’t get to be a debate coach anymore.
- *Socks and sandals should not be worn together.* Everything changes if the fashion designers in Paris suddenly decide that this look is “in.”

Subjective facts are decided by individuals. Intent, taste, and preference all fall within the realm of subjectivity. For example, my favorite food is cheesy pasta. Whether it’s mac and cheese, fettuccine Alfredo, or my own blend of cheddar, garlic, and lemon pepper, something about cheesy pasta makes me happy. You might think my favorite food is peanut butter & chocolate ice cream. Good guess, but it’s wrong. If you convince every other person on the planet that peanut butter & chocolate ice cream is my favorite dish, everyone is wrong—except me. Only I can decide what my favorite food is. My word is law — I like cheesy pasta.

Similarly, you might think that your coworker Rhonda is out to get you. Rhonda could lie and say that she’s not, but you know better. It’s possible for people to lie about subjective facts. If she changes her

54 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

mind and decides not to go after you, the subjective facts of the matter change—regardless of what you or anyone else believe. Only Rhonda can decide the level of her own animosity.

Other examples of subjective facts (from my viewpoint):

- *My name is Travis Herche.* If I change my name to Roger Bearpuncher, that's my new name. You could keep calling me Travis, but you'd be wrong. You could tell me that I'm too sissy to punch a bear, and you'd be right. But my name is now Roger Bearpuncher, whether you like it or not.
- *I love my wife.* I could stop loving my wife (which would be a terrible mistake). My wife would be surprised. Maybe she'd refuse to believe it. But the choice is not hers to make.
- *I am checking my email.* I will continue to check it until I decide to stop. If you think I'm at the movies, you're wrong—I'm checking my email.

Opinions

Anything that is not an assertion of fact is an **opinion**. Opinions cannot be scientifically tested. They can conflict, but resolving a difference of opinion is much more complex. Some people choose to “agree to disagree,” meaning they respect each other's opinions and make no effort to reconcile them.

Distinguishing normative facts and opinions can be tricky. In most cases, you can follow this rule of thumb: Normativity is the fact that people have an idea; opinion is the idea itself.

Opinion: X

Normative fact: Travis thinks X.

Opinion: The New York Yankees are the best baseball team because of their striped uniforms.

Normative fact: Travis' favorite team is the New York Yankees because of their striped uniforms.

Value opinions are the bread and butter of debate. They assign arbitrary worth to one or more entities. Every deliberate action you take is based on a value opinion. You might be reading this book because of a combination of them, like:

- Being a better debater is worth time and effort.
- This book will make you a better debater.
- This book is entertaining enough to read.

We've already explored value resolutions in extreme depth in Key 2, so I won't belabor them here. Just remember that value opinions cannot be conclusively proven or disproven. If they are logically coherent, they are respectable.

Endorsement opinions support an idea by claiming that an expert likes it. This is invoked extensively in specialized fields like medicine. When your pharmacist gives you a tube of pills to take twice a day, you probably have no idea what it does or how it works. But you put the strange chemical in your body because you trust medical professionals to know how to heal you. In debate, you can read quotations from expert sources to bolster your position.

The Ivory Tower

Here's a great story that helps us understand a dangerous mindset in value debate.

There was once a king who lived in a gleaming ivory tower. This tower was so tall that the king could stand on the highest balcony and reach up into the clouds. Far below, his people toiled away in the hot sun. Raiders would come from the north every week, stealing food and enslaving children. Every evening, the people would gather at the base of the tower and beg the king for help. "Please!" they cried. "Raise an army to defend us!"

The king looked down on his subjects far below. "They're so tiny," he thought. "They must be ants! I wonder what they want." He saw that they gathered every evening, but he could not hear their cries. "Perhaps they're hungry," he said to himself. So he tore up a loaf of bread and dropped it over the edge. Surely a loaf of bread would be enough to feed one little ant colony.

The people thought that the king was mocking them. Eventually they grew desperate and fled to the mountains, leaving the king alone in his ivory tower.

Ivory tower is a pejorative term used to describe thinkers who are disconnected from the real world. This could range from a professor who never leaves campus to a researcher who conducts pointless and inane studies. As a debater, you must be careful to avoid ivory tower thinking. Every brilliant new case needs a reality check — and, preferably, a real-world example.

Types of Evidence

The most direct way to prove your case is to read a quotation from another source. This can be a great way to strengthen your case, but remember: In value debate, even the most important ideas can be contested.

The ideas of Socrates have lasted for thousands of years and still shape western thought. He was a smart guy and is worth studying. But at the end of the day, all he had was a lump of gray matter between his ears coursing with enough electrical current to power a light bulb. That was the only tool he had to devise his philosophical notions. You have the same tool, meaning you are just as *well-equipped* as Socrates — meaning you are just as *qualified* as Socrates. Everyone is a philosopher. Everyone makes value judgments. Socrates had special ideas, but there's no rule that prohibits you from coming up with concepts just as merited.

56 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Evidence cannot be used to prove a value statement. However, it can be used to enhance your eloquence. After all, if Benjamin Franklin supports your ideas on liberty, they can't be *that* crazy.

Evidence is also powerful for proving other kinds of assertions. This chart provides a handy rule of thumb.

	Objective Fact	Subjective Fact	Descriptive Fact	Endorsement Value	Eloquence	Special
Expert						
News						
Philosopher						
Common Knowledge						
Self						
Reference						
Pop Figure						
Source Document						
Opponent Admission						

An **expert** is someone who is knowledgeable in a particular field. A constitutional lawyer can explain how the 4th Amendment has been applied through jurisprudence. A fish and game warden can comment on what animal population is overrunning an area. A linguist can explain the origin of a word. Thus, objective and descriptive facts are the domains of experts. If you quote an expert, be sure to have his credentials on hand so you can brag about him. Just remember that experts are usually field-specific. I'm a debate expert, but I don't know anything about quilting or oil drilling or fly-fishing.

A **news** source is unlikely to bring the same level of expertise, but it compensates by having a wider pool of information to draw from. Quoting the New York Times or the Guardian is a great way to prove objective or descriptive facts, like a bill that just passed or the latest situation in the Middle East.

A **philosopher** is anyone who studies fundamental life questions like, “What is truth?” or “What separates good from evil?” Everyone is a philosopher, but some are better known and respected than others. A respected thinker like Locke, Plato, or Descartes will make your position more acceptable to the judge. The philosopher can endorse your position and communicate it eloquently. You can explicitly copy a philosopher’s ideas and present them in your case. For example, you might run the value of Utilitarianism as taught by John Stuart Mill. A philosopher never eliminates room for debate, but you should still cite them periodically to gain an advantage.

Common knowledge is the body of knowledge that belongs to almost everyone. “Air is necessary for human life” is a good example of common knowledge. Common knowledge is used implicitly to prove most assertions in a debate. Consider the rhetoric in this application:

Korea was divided into two countries following World War II. North Korea controlled its people, depriving the economy of the freedom it needed to grow. Consumers were not in a position to influence the market with their choices because the government was making all the choices for them. Small businesses vanished under central planning, and economic stagnation set in. To date, millions of North Koreans have starved to death because they don’t have the freedom to get food. Grass and tree bark are staples of the North Korean diet.

Meanwhile, South Korea has opted for a very different approach. It has given its citizens free reign to develop and grow the economy. Free enterprise caused the South Korean economy to flourish into the 15th largest in the world, with booming markets in almost every industry. South Korea’s only major economic liability is its proximity to the repressed and belligerent North Korea.

The Korean peninsula makes it clear that Economic Security requires Personal Freedom. South Korea’s economy is fifty times larger than North Korea’s because its people are free.

Common knowledge affirms the fact that North Korea is poor and oppressed, while South Korea is free and flourishing. The only surprises would be that South Korea’s economy is the 15th largest in the world and that it is fifty times larger than North Korea’s. Those are precise facts that the average person might not know. An opponent might well argue: “South Korea is doing well, but not *that* well.” He could also say: “South Korea is free, but that’s not the reason it’s doing well.” Those arguments would be within the realm of common knowledge. Settling the debate beyond that would call for more specific evidence. On the other hand, arguing that North Korea is prosperous would be silly.

58 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

In any area where you and your opponent disagree, avoid invoking common knowledge to support your position. Think of a specific reason the judge should prefer your position.

Self means you are your own source. You endorse your own arguments, but your position was assigned by tournament matchups. You're terminally biased. That's one of the initial reasons we need evidence. That said, you can use yourself as a source for certain kinds of assertions. You are the final authority on subjective facts. If you say your favorite kind of dessert is lemon meringue, we have to believe you.

Personal experience can also lend credence to being your own source. Maybe your unique life experience makes you more qualified than you first appear. In a discussion on the economic situation in Malawi, you reveal that you lived in Malawi for two years. That means the judge should give your arguments more weight. My brother once ran a case urging the legalization of a pesticide called Methyl Bromide. When a negative team made wildly incorrect assertions about how Methyl Bromide is applied, he reached into his wallet and pulled out his California Certified Pesticide Applicator card. That card meant that he knew what he was talking about. He was the expert. Situations like this are very rare, but a lot of fun.

You can also potentially cite yourself as a source for a self-fulfilling argument. You could support an assertion by saying that it is true because you will make it true. Long ago, I watched a policy round in which a debater argued against a water conservation plan. He said: "If you vote against me, I will go the men's restroom down the hall and flush the toilet until more water has been wasted than this plan could ever save." While I do *not* endorse this strategy, the academic implications are interesting. You belong to the world you're arguing about and can help change the future.

A **reference** is an authority to which people turn for basic knowledge. Dictionaries, encyclopedias, and manuals all count as references. References are great for proving most facts or even endorsing your position. However, they may struggle in a clash against more qualified experts. For example, a Supreme Court justice would be a better source for the definition of a legal term than Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.

A **pop figure** is a person or group that has a significant cultural impact. This could range from Black Eyed Peas to Shakespeare. Pop figures are technically philosophers, but we rarely turn to them for deep judgments. They are best used to provide information about themselves or for the sake of eloquence. For example, you might conclude your speech with a verse from Walt Whitman or a line from the Wizard of Oz. This scarcely counts as evidence, but it does count.

A **source document** is an important original written work. Examples include the Magna Carta, the Declaration of Independence, Dante's *Inferno*, and the Gospel of Luke — though each is important for a different reason. Source documents are best used as proof of themselves; for example, you could prove that your position is constitutional by reading the relevant section. Well-written ones can also be used for eloquence. The Declaration of Independence is a popular source of support for ideas on human rights and the purpose of government.

Remember, there's a difference between how things *are* and how they *should be*. Most value debates focus on the latter. The constitution is very important from a legal standpoint, but it can be taken too far if it is used to paint a picture of the ideal government. The original document explicitly accommodated slavery and has been amended 27 times.

The most powerful kind of evidence is an **opponent admission** — meaning you use your opponent's words against him. For more on how to obtain and use admissions, check out Key 10.

Applications

An **application** is a real-world example of an idea. It is used to prove that an idea works practically, and is the best defense against being perceived as an ivory tower thinker. Applications can and should be used throughout the case. While they are most popular in the contentions, they can be used just about anywhere: resolitional analyses, even value links. They are customarily run as subpoints. They say: "Here's proof that this particular point is true." If an application is not a subpoint, you can choose to call it a **case study**, meaning it is proof of your entire position on the resolution. A case study should be the last argument in your case.

Fulcrums

Every application has a **fulcrum** — the person or group that made a choice, causing something to happen. For example, the Korea application had two fulcrums: the North and South Korean governments. They faced a choice of whether to oppress their people, came to different conclusions, and reaped starkly different rewards. Let's examine a few other applications from some of my online students, like this one from Christian:

The importance of popular sovereignty is historically illustrated in the application of *Massachusetts*. The people established a chartered government through a state constitution that organized the government. The first draft of the constitution was rejected by the people because it lacked their involvement. Recognizing the mistake, state leaders used popular sovereignty as a key ingredient in the government they were building. The result was a harmony between the people and the government.

In this application, the Massachusetts government is the fulcrum. The citizens are part of the application, but they aren't making the choices; the government is.

Here's another from a case by Hannah:

In the case *Ashcraft vs. Tennessee*, the defendant, Ashcraft, was accused of conspiring to murder his wife. Ashcraft was interrogated by the police for over 36 hours, with only one five-minute break. At the end of this interrogation, he confessed and was found guilty and sentenced to 99 years in prison. When *Ashcraft vs. Tennessee* took place, due process was undermined. However, Ashcraft appealed and the Supreme Court declared him not guilty.

60 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

This application is a bit tricky. Ashcraft, the police, and the Supreme Court are all actors. The purpose of this application is to show what can happen when due process is ignored. The people who made that choice were the police. They are the fulcrums.

Olivia has this application arguing that due process can be overvalued:

It was a beautiful summer evening on June, 2007. 18-year-old *Kelsey Smith* went to a Target store in Overland Park to purchase a gift. When she returned to the parking lot, a stranger attacked her and forced her into her car. Three hours after Kelsey was abducted in broad daylight, her car was found abandoned across the street, and her family, friends and the police began to search for her. Target gladly gave their surveillance videos to the police, who were able to get a photo of the abductor. Then, they picked up a signal from Kelsey's cell phone. The police asked Verizon for the "ping" records that would pinpoint Kelsey's location. However, the company resisted for 3 days. When they finally allowed the police to see the records, it took them only 45 minutes to locate Kelsey's dead body.

The actors here: Kelsey, the murderer, family and friends, the police, Target, and Verizon. While they all had to make choices, only one made a choice that relates to due process being too strong. Verizon is the fulcrum.

An application is defined by its fulcrum. A different application can be created in the same topic area by finding a different fulcrum. For example, in the *Ashcraft v. Tennessee* application, one could argue that the Supreme Court overvalued due process and let a murderer go. This moves the fulcrum from the police to the court. Understanding the fulcrum is critical to running and refuting applications correctly.

Proving General Scope

Think back to the electric nodes from Key 4. This word picture has another use here. Think of the resolution as a long line of nodes. Each is a possible instance in which the resolution could be true or false. Depending on the resolution, the number of instances could range from one to several quintillion. For example, consider the following resolution: "The use of preemptive military force is justified." There are many opportunities to use preemptive military force arises — dealing with a rogue state, assassinating a terrorist, etc. Each of them could be considered an instance, or an area of the resolution.

To prove a general resolution, you want the judge to believe that in at least half of those instances, preemptive military force could be justified. But you don't have time to go through every single example. For most resolutions, that would take weeks, even years! Instead, you create that perception by discussing diverse applications from all over the resolution. For instance, you might use applications from three different continents or from different time periods. Alternatively, run just one or two applications that are very broad and significant.

The effect should be like touching electricity to nodes all over the place. They jump across the resolution, creating the perception of a general advocacy. You technically only discussed less than 1 percent of the resolution, but the judge sees the entire thing lit up.

The more significant and impactful your applications the better. Run them persuasively and you will give the judge the impression that you covered the entire topic.

Refuting Applications

As with any part of value debate, your options for bringing down an application are many. Here are five of the best. When you're writing applications for your case, check to make sure none of these arguments can be run well against you.

No Link or Non-unique

If an application is unrelated to the topic area or doesn't prove the contention advocacy, it has **no link**. If the application proves (or disproves) both sides of the debate equally, it is **non-unique**. These are different flavors of the same argument. Both work to neutralize the application.

Contention: Democracy Promotes Life

Application: U.S. Police

Response: No Link. The United States is a constitutional republic with appointed judges and bureaucrats. It is not a democracy, where the people vote on every issue. Anything good about U.S. police does not reflect on democracy.

Response: Non-unique. American police do work for a democratic government, but despotic governments also have police that save lives. Anything good about U.S. police does not reflect on democracy any more than some other form of government.

No Impact

Moral and immoral resolutions call for applications that matter. The judge should be able to look at an application and immediately understand its moral charge. Curing cancer: good. Blowing up a commuter train: bad. This moral charge goes beyond your abstract value. It should be *obvious*. Genocide violates your value of justice, but even if it didn't it would still be clearly wrong. That's the mark of a strong application. Without this charge, an application can be refuted with a "No Impact" response. This essentially asks: who cares?

Contention: U.S. Government Undervalues Privacy.

Application: TSA Airport Security.

Response: No Impact. The TSA isn't hurting anyone by checking everything thoroughly. Sure, your privacy is infringed, but all that does is take a few minutes out of your day.

62 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Counter-warrant

A warrant is proof that something is true (more on this in Key 9). An application is the most common kind of warrant in value debate. A **counter-warrant** argues that evidence is outweighed by contrary evidence. It is a special form of objection (Key 7) because it says that the argument cannot be true even though you have not directly refuted its support.

Contention: Jacob is an Alien.

Application: He acts strangely sometimes.

Response: Counter-warrant. In my case, I presented DNA testing that proved that Jacob is a human. This outweighs the fact that he sometimes acts strangely.

Contention: Distance Prevents War.

Application: Canada and India. They have never been at war because they are so far apart.

Response: Counter-warrant. In my case, I discussed three major wars whose main belligerents were oceans away from each other. Two of them were World Wars. In the face of that evidence, the fact that my opponent can find two countries that haven't gone to war proves nothing.

Counter-warrants are strategically powerful because they focus the debate back on your case. However, if your opponent can make his application sound impressive, your counter-warrant will fail. That makes it a risky strategy. Run counter-warrants only if your applications are obviously superior in scope or impact.

Pure Turn

A turn contends that a certain argument from your opponent helps your position and hurts his. There are two kinds of turns. In a round, you should simply call both turns. In practice, you should know the difference. In technical terms, a turn either accepts the link but reverses the impact, or accepts the impact and reverses the link. It does not dispute major facts of an application, but tweaks, adds to, and reinterprets them. A **pure turn** adjusts a single application fulcrum in a way that supports your advocacy.

Contention: Government Charity Saves Lives.

Application: Red Cross in Haiti.

Response: Turn. The Red Cross is a private organization, so this application is actually proves my point that private charity works better at saving lives than government charity.

Contention: The U.S. Government Undervalues Privacy.

Application: TSA Airport Security.

Response: (Pure) Turn. Violation of privacy helps the TSA confiscate an average of four weapons a day, which helps prove my point that the government correctly values privacy to a low degree.

Sometimes, you can build a pure turn out of a “No Link” response:

Contention: Discovery of Fact Harms Freedom

Application: Ashcraft vs. Tennessee. The defendant, Ashcraft, was accused of conspiring to murder his wife. Ashcraft was interrogated by the police for over 36 hours, with only one five-minute break. At the end of this interrogation, he confessed and was found guilty and sentenced to 99 years in prison. When Ashcraft vs. Tennessee took place, due process was undermined. However, Ashcraft appealed and the Supreme Court declared him not guilty.

Response: No Link. The police clearly didn’t care about the facts; they just wanted a conviction.

Response: (Pure) Turn. The police clearly didn’t care about the facts; they just wanted a conviction. They knew that if they could get Ashcraft to cooperate, they could exploit the due process system – which places a high value on admissions of guilt - to lock him away. The police actually overvalued due process here!

Pure turns are rare in value debate because they can only be run against badly flawed applications, or with a big dose of creativity. Most of the time, when a debater says that he’s running a turn, he’s running a wash turn.

Wash Turn

One of the followers of Socrates once ran to him bursting with excitement. “I have wonderful news, master!” he said. “The Oracle of Delphi has declared you to be the wisest man alive!” The follower thought that this news would please Socrates, but he was mistaken.

“There has been a mistake,” said Socrates. “I am not wise; I am a fool. The only thing I know is that I do not know anything. Go back and tell the Oracle of this error.”

So the follower went back to Delphi and told the Oracle what Socrates had said. But to his surprise, the Oracle replied: “Only a fool thinks himself wise. It is by believing yourself a fool that you can begin to gain wisdom. This is why Socrates is the wisest man in the world; for others believe themselves wise, but fool only themselves.”

A few years ago, some of my students debated a resolution contrasting popular sovereignty and individual rights. The most popular application for much of the year was the U.S. War of Independence. The funny thing was that both sides ran this application.

64 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Argument: The War of Independence was all about popular sovereignty. No taxation without representation!

Response: I'd like to turn this argument. It was all about individual rights. Just read the Declaration of Independence!

At the end of such a round, the judge was baffled. He couldn't choose a winner in that debate because both sides were correct. As a result, he would usually **wash** the argument, meaning he would not rule on it and would find other arguments to sway his decision.

How is it possible that both debaters could be correct? *Because they were using different fulcrums with the same name.* The initial cause of rebellion was that the colonials didn't like how they were being treated and had no way to get their grievances heard. Popular sovereignty is supported by a more specific application. We could call it Motivation for War, with a fulcrum of angry colonials like the Sons of Liberty. Meanwhile, individual rights were a priority of certain Founding Fathers like Patrick Henry. We could call that application Foundations of Government, with a fulcrum of the Founding Fathers.

In a **wash turn**, you present a new application with the same tag as the old one. This is problematic because you're not refuting the application directly; you're just adding more detail to that topic area. However, it could be considered a form of counter-warrant. "If you look at the big picture of early America, popular sovereignty doesn't stand out more than individual rights." Most debaters don't even realize that they're running a wash turn, and they should never label their argument as such.

Contention: Consumerism Destroys the Environment.

Application: Elephant Poaching. The consumerist desire for ivory leads to the wholesale slaughter of the elephant population. They are now endangered because of consumerists.
Fulcrum: Poachers.

Response: (Pure) Turn. Obtaining ivory does not require killing an elephant. In countries where elephant ranching is allowed, the population is thriving. In countries where ivory harvesting is illegal, poachers have to shoot the elephants and cut off the tusks before the police arrive. In other words, fostering consumerism saves elephants, and fighting it indirectly kills them. Fulcrum: Poachers/would-be ranchers.

Response: (Wash) Turn. The problem is not poachers, it's that a good synthetic substitute for ivory has not been developed. Plastic just isn't the same. If the market were more consumerist, we'd have an ivory substitute and we wouldn't need poaching laws.
Fulcrum: Plastic materials researchers.

As always, watch the fulcrums. The wash turn is focusing on a completely different choice — it has almost nothing to do with poaching. Does it refute or outweigh the original application? That's something for the judge to decide.

Contention: Financing Creates Irresponsibility.

Application: Mortgages. The ability to take out a loan that takes decades to pay off lures people into a false sense of security. It's not until they're facing foreclosure that they realize their mistake. Fulcrum: Homeowners.

Response: (Pure) Turn. Having a long-term financial commitment forces homeowners to make responsible, prudent decisions. They can't risk everything with a mortgage coming up. Fulcrum: Homeowners.

Response: (Wash) Turn. Banks know that many homeowners can't make payments, but they set up mortgages anyway and then collect on foreclosures. That's the height of irresponsibility! In reality, irresponsibility leads to financing. Fulcrum: Banks.

The more you know, the less you think. Most of the folks you see on the street holding signs are woefully ignorant about what they're protesting. If they knew more, they wouldn't be so stubbornly opinionated! A wash turn is like giving a Greenpeace protester a crash course in economics or forcing an abortion advocate to work at a pregnancy resource center. Like Socrates, wisdom lies in humbly realizing how little you truly know.

By over-informing the judge in a topic area, a wash turn reduces the judge's ability to have a strong opinion on it. It establishes nuance. Most of the time, a judge will turn to a different issue to make his decision.

If someone runs a wash turn against you, your top priority should be clarity. You need to keep the application simple. Cut through the confusion and get your point moving again. Don't let it get lost in a muddle of disagreement and reinterpretation. While you shouldn't attempt to explain to a judge what a wash turn means (again, the judge should never hear the terms "pure" and "wash"), you *can* explain what has happened. You'll need to make two points: the first shows that your original point was not refuted; the second refutes the new application.

You need to use forceful, direct rhetoric and an elevated level of passion to get the ship sailing again. Here's an example:

Your Contention: Consumerism Destroys the Environment.

Application: Elephant Poaching.

Opponent's Response: *Turn.* We need to be more consumerist and get a good material alternative to ivory.

Your Rebuttal: My opponent responded to my Poaching application by saying that we need an alternative. I have two responses. First: No Refutation. I made the point that consumerism motivates poachers to chase down magnificent creatures with assault rifles and chainsaws. My opponent said nothing to disagree with any of that! He did not refute the original point. Instead he essentially brought up a brand new application. My second response: As Close as Possible. We now have plastics that very closely mimic ivory —

66 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

but some people just want the real thing. Science has done all it can. Now we just have to stand up for an endangered species that will always be hunted unless we protect it."

Alternate Causality

Here's a response you can use against applications that follow an elaborate or incredible series of events. **Alternate causality** claims that the final result was brought about by a different cause.

Contention: Cheeseburgers Preserve National Security.

Application: U.S. Military. The U.S. has the highest cheeseburger consumption rate and the strongest military in the world. Coincidence? I think not!

Response: Alternate Causality. Our military strength is caused by incredibly high defense spending, not cheeseburgers.

If your alternate causality points the judge back to your position, you can make the application work for you. However, this is usually not a turn, because you are disputing the facts of the application.

Fact Correction

If your opponent presents an application built on some basic factual error, feel free to correct him. However, be warned: If you don't have evidence from a qualified source to prove your point, selling a fact correction is difficult. You should attempt this only if the point is obvious or you have a piece of evidence at the ready.

Contention: Nationalism Preserves Human Rights.

Application: Nazi Germany. The Nazis took great care of all their citizens.

Response: Millions Dead. My opponent claims that the Nazis respected human rights. This is factually untrue. Millions of innocent citizens were killed by their own government in one of the biggest genocides of the century.

As with a pure turn, this response is rare because it is usually only possible if your opponent makes grave errors in his case construction or research. That kind of thing should be caught before the case is run at a tournament.

Key 7

Master Tricky Theory

If you can run values, value links, contentions, and applications, you have all the tools you need for a great value debate. However, there is a grand buffet of additional arguments you can run — or that your opponent might run against you.

Tricky theory is intimidating because of the burden it places on the debater. You have to deeply understand an argument class, its logical construction, and its implications to run it well. Many debaters assume that if an argument class is confusing to them, it will be confusing to the judge. That concern has merit. (After all, you can't clarify anything beyond your own understanding.)

Here's a word of encouragement: The judge doesn't have to understand debate theory as well as you do. In fact, it's nearly impossible. I've been studying debate theory for more than a decade and I still learn new things every day. Instead, your theory should make you easier to understand. The whole purpose of theory is to create clear, logical argumentation; the better you get with theory, the easier it should be to listen to.

A judge doesn't need to know the difference between a good value and a bad one; he just needs to know that yours is better than your opponent's. He doesn't need to understand what a resolutional analysis is — he just needs to get the one point you're trying to make in that one round. As long as you explain yourself thoroughly, the judge will keep up. That means you have a license to try new, exciting things, and even experiment with advanced theory.

Observations

Many debaters will divide their cases into **observations**, or argument categories. For example, a case might have one observation each for the definitions, value, and contentions. This system is optional, but some find that it makes cases easier to follow. Trust your own preference on this one.

Observations should be identified clearly with a number and name. For example, "Observation 2: Value."

Thesis Statement

A **thesis statement** is a concise summary of your entire case. It is usually presented very early in the case—possibly even in the introduction. "Because civil rights are the best way to uphold life, I support the resolution."

68 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Thesis statements are only worthwhile in cases that are both simple and unorthodox. For example, if you are running a resolitional objection (more on those later in this chapter), you might want to begin with a brief sentence explaining what you're doing. "I'll be doing something a little different today. Instead of presenting a typical negative case, I'll be arguing that the resolution is basically flawed and cannot possibly be true."

It only takes a few seconds to present a thesis, but those are seconds you could spend somewhere else. If someone runs a thesis statement against you, regard it as his or her resolitional analysis and respond appropriately.

Resolitional Analysis

A **resolitional analysis** explains what the resolution means. The more vague or complex the resolution, the more you need an analysis. It minimizes possible misconceptions and clears up what you are going to argue. For example, consider the "Save Ami" case included in Appendix A. The resolution pits personal freedom against economic security. The case has a resolitional analysis clarifying that personal freedom never allows coercion of innocent people.

The responsibility of a resolitional analysis is very limited: it only *explains* the resolution; it does not directly support or oppose it. While a resolitional analysis can make your case safer from attack, it should never do the heavy lifting.

If you do run a resolitional analysis, it should be the first point of your case because it helps the judge understand everything else.

Definitions

Most cases use a specific kind of resolitional analysis called a definition observation or simply **definitions**. Here debaters list the key terms in the resolution and define them to suit their case.

Economy of Complexity applies here: you don't need to define every single word. Instead, define words that could be confusing or that your opponent is likely to try to redefine. "Giving is more blessed than creating" calls for definitions of giving, blessed, and creating. Terms like "Resolved" or "Valued above" are procedural and need no explanation.

The resolution belongs equally to the affirmative and negative. While the affirmative gets to go first, he has no special right to a definitive interpretation of the resolution. The negative is free to disagree by running counter-definitions. Contrast this with definitions of values or criteria. Because one debater presented them, he gets to decide what they mean. Trying to change their meaning is a straw man attack. If the resolution is "Government should favor justice over mercy," and the affirmative defines mercy as "chocolate candy with a sweet gooey center," the negative would be right to redefine it.

Most definitions come from qualified dictionaries like *Merriam-Webster* or *American Heritage*. My favorite way to find definitions is **www.onelook.com**, which searches hundreds of dictionaries and gives you links on one page so you can easily find one that will work for you. As with all material taken from other sources, you should offer a citation, letting the judge know which dictionary you are quoting.

You're allowed to use a definition that you made up, or compiled from several definitions. This is called an **operational definition**. While it is not as credible as one from a dictionary, it is still defensible.

Reasons to Prefer

When you run a counter definition — or you're defending your original definition against one — you should always offer **reasons to prefer** it. If you expect a definition debate, you might even want to run definition links in your first speech, explaining why your definition should be accepted and hopefully shutting down your opponent before he disagrees.

There are dozens of valid reasons to prefer a definition. Many of them are kritiks, which can make a definition debate pretty messy (more on kritiks later in this chapter).

Here's a list of some of the best reasons to prefer a definition, with Kritiks marked with a K:

Brightline (K) – *It provides a clear standard by which some other issue in the round can be decided.* If your opponent's definition doesn't help the judge make a decision — perhaps it's too broad or too vague — you can replace it with something more useful. Make sure you explain this reason to prefer as objectively as possible. You don't want to look like you're just changing the definition because it helps you win (even though that is what you're doing).

Clarity (K) – *It is easier to understand.* It's easy to overuse this reason to prefer. Only use it if there's a clear disparity between the definitions. Ironically enough, if they're both somewhat clear, this reason to prefer actually makes things more confusing.

Completeness – *It is all-encompassing, while the competing definition omits something.* Sometimes your opponent's definition is so narrow that it shuts your case out. Broadness doesn't automatically make a definition better, but if you can convince the judge that something is missing, he should be receptive to your new one.

Credible Source – *It is from a more experienced, knowledgeable, or respectable source/dictionary.* For example, *Black's Law Dictionary* should be considered more credible than *Oxford Collegiate Dictionary* when defining a legal term.

Framer's Intent (K) – *It allows us to debate the resolution as the league intended.* This reason to prefer should only be used against definitions that clearly violate the spirit of the resolution. The judge should be on your side before you even speak. If your opponent's interpretation is at all reasonable, find a different reason to prefer.

70 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Gives Meaning (K) – *Only with this definition does the resolution mean anything.* Use this reason against definitions that are either so vague or so extreme that they warp the entire debate. For example, if a definition changes the meaning of a comparative resolution so the two subjects don't compete, this might be a good reason to prefer your definition.

Man on the Street – *A layman would use this definition.* This is an odd standard to use because it is the polar opposite of Credible Source. You should explain why you're using it with language like: "Instead of getting tangled up in the semantics of various dictionaries, let's just use a widely accepted, basic understanding of the word." Judges who hate definition debates will respond well to this.

Multiple Sources – *My definition is supported by more sources than my opponent's.* To run this argument, provide a basic definition (an operational one is fine) and then read 3-5 qualified definitions that all say basically the same thing. Then give this reason to prefer. Executed properly, this can be very difficult to refute.

More Recent Date – *The English language is always changing. This definition was written more recently, giving it a better chance to be accurate.* If you're up against Webster's 1812 Dictionary, this is a no-brainer. It can also be fun to use when you have a more recent edition of the same dictionary. Some debaters try to contend just the opposite — that the judge should prefer a less recent date since it's less likely to be convoluted by political correctness. You can respond that the old definition cannot be used with a present-day resolution.

Standard Source – *It is from a standard, well-respected English dictionary.* Speak of your source with great reverence when using this argument, and use the dictionary's full title whenever possible. "The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* Forth Edition 2000 is the gold standard for American English. It has a revered place on bookshelves all over the country."

Topical Source – *People in this particular field use this source.* If the resolution pertains to computer science, a computer science glossary is better than a generic dictionary like Macmillan. If it speaks to constitutional law, a quote from a constitutional lawyer or a Supreme Court decision is best.

Unbiased – *It was written by someone who has no personal stake in the matter.* Use this argument against biased sources used by your opponent. For example, a resolution pitting the economy versus the environment should not quote a stockbroker or a member of the Animal Liberation Front.

Of course, there are plenty of other options. My students and I have found 64 different reasons to prefer a definition so far. Unfortunately, a good definition debate is rare in value debate; if you can master this skill, you'll have a big edge on the competition.

Background

A background gives the judge information he needs to understand the rest of the case. You're usually better off explaining as you go — e.g., information about an application is best explained in the application itself. Background points are best used if the resolution requires specific knowledge. A resolution like "American football is superior to all other kinds" might require an explanation of the differences between the distinctive types of football.

Meta-Framework

Most value resolutions create conflicts that boil down to a question of which value to use. For instance, the judge might vote based on whether he thinks Life is higher or lower than Liberty. These resolutions don't need meta-frameworks. However, normal value clash sometimes takes the backseat to a different battleground.

With the resolution "Governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need," a host of basic questions must be answered, such as:

- Should a government care what happens outside its own borders?
- In moral terms, what is a government? Can it have moral obligations?
- If so, are the moral obligations of government unique from those of individuals?

The answers to such questions — what I like to call "pre-value" questions — come before one can understand the value. If an affirmative just implies his answers to these questions and waits for the negative to attack, he's on the defensive for the rest of the debate. He can get a head start by running a meta-framework, which establishes an element of advocacy that is needed to understand the rest of the case. If your resolution comes loaded with such questions, a meta-framework will improve your rounds.

Run meta-frameworks between your resolutorial analyses and your value. Word them with a simple and direct tag. Applications can be appropriate. Perhaps most importantly, don't impact your meta-framework to your value — that reverses the relationship you're trying to establish. Your value lives in the protective shadow of the meta-framework.

By running the meta-framework in your constructive, you seize the high ground on what will likely be one of the key issues at the end of the round. You can't fully understand the meaning and justification of the value without hearing the meta-framework first.

Here's an example, using the resolution above:

Meta-framework: Morality is Borderless. Moral obligation does not change based on borders; we have the same obligations to all human beings.

72 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Value: Liberty. The obligation of government is to advance Liberty. By extension of the meta-framework, we see that this means spreading Liberty to the far corners of the globe.

Meta-frameworks are rarely necessary. You may consider adding one if you have a point that isn't working well as a resolutorial analysis, background point, or contention.

Objection

An **objection** is an argument claiming that something cannot be true, regardless of its current support. Suppose I make this argument:

You have kind eyes.
George Washington had kind eyes.
Therefore, you are George Washington.

You might refute this by saying that people find your eyes terrifying, or that there are millions of people with kind eyes, so my logic is faulty. These are strong arguments that do their job, but a better one is waiting to be made here: that there are big differences between you and George Washington. Because you have neither worn a powdered wig nor been the father of any country, you can't possibly be George Washington — regardless of the kindness of your eyes. Also, George Washington is dead; you aren't. In other words, my conclusion must be wrong no matter how strong my logic.

There is a difference between an objection in debate theory and an objection as part of courtroom procedure (“Objection, your Honor! He’s leading the witness!”) That said, defense attorneys like to use a certain kind of objection, called an alibi, to show that their client did not commit a crime. It proves that the defendant was at a different place when the crime occurred. “My client was on a business trip in Arizona at the time of the murder, so he can’t possibly be guilty.” In other words: “No matter how strong the evidence against my client, the conclusion that he is guilty cannot be true.”

Objections are used as arguments in debate all the time, but they’re part of a broader strategy. For example, if you present an objection to your opponent’s second contention, you don’t need to use the objection label. Just call it an argument. It’s a response; that’s all anyone needs to know.

On the other hand, you can turn an objection into a full-blown negative case by arguing that the resolution cannot be true, regardless of its current support. This is strategically powerful because it completely bypasses the affirmative case.

Resolved: Christopher Columbus.
Objection: The resolution contains no assertion, so it can't be true.

Resolved: Triangle is better than purple.
Objection: These two entities cannot be compared, so the resolution can't be true.

Key #7: Master Tricky Theory 73

Resolved: George Washington invented the steam engine.

Objection: George was born 30 years after its invention, so that can't be true.

Resolved: The U.S. government has a moral responsibility to win the War on Poverty.

Objection: Poverty can never be completely eliminated, so that can't be true.

You might also run an **Agnostic Objection**, where you contend that an idea cannot be supported because it cannot be proven. This is usually a weak argument because the opponent can say: "Sure I can prove it — just look at my case!" Still, it might be a good option against certain abstract or odd resolutions:

Resolved: We have been possessed by alien ghosts.

Agnostic Objection: This is pure guesswork. Until an alien ghost detector is invented, vote negative.

Supporting a resolutional objection can be difficult. Because you're arguing that the resolution cannot possibly be true, you have no use for a standard value/contention structure. Instead, use these points to prove it:

Thesis – This is the perfect time for a thesis statement. Your case is simple, but it also differs from the norm. Briefly explain your case logic: "The resolution is false because it cannot be true." Then present the core idea behind your case: Your defendant was in Arizona; George Washington is dead; purple and triangle cannot be compared.

Conflict – Prove that your thesis and the resolution cannot both be true. The best tag for a conflict is usually "X vs Y." For example, you might say: "Arizona vs Crime Scene," or "Alive vs Dead." You're trying to setup a basic point of contention here, something for the judge to make a ruling on at the end of the round.

If you like, you can add a **Burden** point here, where you explicitly lay out how the judge can make the decision in the conflict. "If the draft is slavery, vote affirmative. If not, vote negative."

Alternative – Here, you propose a competing explanation: "Murderer was Hank," or "Totally Different Person," or something along those lines. Whereas the thesis focuses on why your opponent's position cannot be true, the alternative focuses on what *is* true. This is an important step from a persuasive standpoint because it gives the judge something to vote for. Now he's not just voting against your opponent, he's voting for you.

Impact – Wrap up your objection by connecting it to the judge's decision. A standard resolutional objection tag is "Resolution is Impossible." An impact doesn't need to be longer than a few sentences, but it is not optional. The judge needs to be crystal clear on how your advocacy fits on his ballot. Spell it out carefully.

Kritik

A **kritik** is an argument that does not impact to veracity — it doesn't care about whether or not an argument is true, but instead about its implications or desirability. This is a complex idea that some novice debaters run it unintentionally. It is one of the most complicated aspects of debate theory and should rarely be used. Still, debaters may choose to run one occasionally.

Most kritiks argue against a mindset or assumption that is usually implicit in the argumentation or behavior of one's opponent. This contrasts with typical debate arguments, which either support/oppose the resolution or counter an opponent's argument.

Traditionally, a kritik argues that the opponent has done something that needs to be punished or immediately discontinued. For instance, you might say: "The negative should be punished for the foul language in the last speech" or "The affirmative's mindset is ruining the debate" or "In use of the word 'he' to describe a hypothetical person, my opponent was sexist."

Kritiks tend to push the debate away from the resolution toward something that is less educational and more generic. For instance, if you're running a kritik arguing that debate resolutions are immoral, you're likely to have a very similar debate every single round, in which you argue inane theory instead of practical philosophy and real-world applications. For this reason, kritiks are frowned on in many debate circles. Even in leagues that widely accept them, a kritik should never be your primary plan of attack. Use kritiks if absolutely necessary, but my basic advice: don't run them.

Reactional Kritiks

Reactional kritiks are a response to the behavior or arguments of your opponent. If you're accusing your opponent of something, it's probably a reactional kritik. If he should be punished for pushing an idea (feminism, hegemony), saying something (swearing, quoting Vlad the Impaler), or using a certain tactic (making a new argument in rebuttals, speed and spread), it's a reactional kritik.

This is not to be confused with an **ad hominem** (or "attack on the man") — a kind of fallacy which argues that something cannot be true because of the person arguing it.

Argument: We spent too much money this weekend.

Reasonable response: I kept careful track of everything. I don't think we went overboard.

Ad hominem: He's always whining about money!

Kritik: We shouldn't even be thinking about money at a time like this.

Many debaters unknowingly use reactional kritiks all the time. The most common example is the **fairness kritik**, in which a debater argues that a certain argument should be rejected because it is unfair. This has no bearing on the round because it does not prove that the argument in question is untrue. Instead, the debater is asking the judge to penalize his opponent to equalize the round. Few debaters realize what a big request this is. It can be translated to: "Even if this argument is completely

true, it should be thrown out for my benefit.” Fairness is a bad kritik — it is whiny and evasive. It makes you look weak and it does nothing to help you win.

If someone runs a fairness kritik against you — or one of its many variants, like a definition reason to prefer of Provides Equal Ground — bury it by explaining the impact.

“In the last round, I presented a definition from a well-respected mainstream dictionary. Rather than disagreeing with it, my opponent pointed out that it was unfair because it was helping me win the round. Well, I have news for my opponent: everything I said in the last speech hurt his chances of winning because all of it proves that the resolution is true. If the round is exactly even, you can’t make a decision. My job is to make your job easy by conclusively proving the resolution. If you think my points are valid, vote for me. It’s that simple. So let’s get back to the actual arguments.”

A similar flaw exists in **mindset kritiks**, which argues that the debater or his arguments are propagating some evil mindset (e.g., hegemony, competitiveness, communism, capitalism, naturalism, etc.). The judge’s ballot is hypothetical, but the mindset implications are real, a mindset kritik argues. If you vote for a nationalist case, you’re helping to spread nationalism! If you don’t want to be a part of that, vote against it.

Mindset kritiks are among the least problematic of any reactionary kritik, but they still pose serious problems. After all, if a certain argument is correct and also happens to be nationalist, is that enough reason for the judge to vote against it? Should a judge be forced to rebuild his or her entire judging paradigm around hatred for an idea? If the nationalist argument is true, maybe nationalism is correct and the kritik is wrong.

Instead of running mindset kritiks, debaters are usually better off arguing about whether or not the argument is logical and true. A happy middle ground: run an objection. Say that the argument is nationalist, so it can’t be true.

Another kritik common in all forms of debate is the **dropped argument kritik**, which contends that an argument, having been dropped, should be considered a de facto victory for the person who ran it. Debaters rarely argue that their opponents should be punished for dropping an argument, but they do say things like: “It’s too late to bring this argument up again — this is the last negative speech so I wouldn’t have a chance to respond.” In other words, “The only fair thing to do is flow this argument negative” or “Independent of the actual merit of this argument, I should win it.” (The next Key offers some ideas on impacting dropped arguments without straying into the land of the kritik.)

Then there’s the **speed and spread kritik**: “My opponent ran so many arguments in the last speech there’s no way I can answer them all.” In other words, “Regardless of their veracity, arguments I don’t answer shouldn’t be held against me.” This is also a kritik to avoid, mainly because you should be sufficiently skilled that you can refute an unlimited number of arguments. (Don’t worry, I’ll teach you how.)

76 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Ironically, some debaters will respond to a kritik by saying that it is abusive or destroys the educational value of debate. This is a humorously oxymoronic counter-kritik: “Throw out that kritik regardless of its veracity because kritiks are bad.” Even if you hate kritiks, you should avoid this argument.

Kritiks don't necessarily reject the consideration of veracity in critiqued arguments. They may also contend that the argument is true, but the kritik outweighs it. “The resolution might save money, but that's nothing when you consider the fact that it encourages tyranny.” In this argument, a counter-warrant is used to stretch the impact of the kritik as far as possible.

While every judge is different, here are a few behaviors I would consider grounds for a loss: swearing, cheating, verbal abuse, heckling, going way over time, or making extremely inappropriate references. I wouldn't need the opponent to run a reactionary kritik. I'd just vote against the offender and walk out. If your judge is offended, he'll invoke a reactionary kritik whether or not you present it.

You should never plan to run a reactionary kritik, and you should do your best to avoid looking whiny. You should be able to go through hundreds of competitive rounds — maybe even your whole career — without using one. Stick to the truth. Let the judge decide what is fair. Don't whine and don't ask for special privilege. Fight clean, fight hard. Fight over the resolution. Be the better debater and person.

Resolutional Kritiks

The resolutional kritik is the ugly stepsister of the reactionary kritik. It contends that a fundamental assumption of the resolution is flawed or offensive, and therefore it should not or cannot be debated. In contrast to a resolutional objection, which claims that the resolution cannot be true, a kritik argues that it cannot not be supported even if it is true. Sometimes, the difference between these two can be tricky.

Resolved: Asians are smarter than people of other races.

Kritik: This resolution forces us to think in racist terms. Racism is evil, so we should avoid it by removing the resolution from the round.

Resolved: Stuff and other stuff.

Objection: This resolution does not contain an assertion, so it cannot be true.

Kritik: We should not be discussing meaningless resolutions like this one. Send a message by voting negative.

Resolved: The contender would have been a better president.

Agnostic Objection: We can't possibly know if he would have been better, so this resolution cannot be proven true.

Kritik: Questioning our current president by considering the merits of the guy who lost the election is treason. This resolution should be vetoed because it is treasonous.

Resolved: Blue and triangle are complementary.

Objection: There is now way to compare these two, so the resolution cannot be true.

Kritik: To suggest that blue is any more complimentary of triangle than orange is offensive to the color orange. Stand up for the less popular colors by rejecting the resolution.

Resolved: Ain't nothing can be valued above communism.

Objection: A double negative is incoherent, so the resolution cannot be true.

Kritik: The resolution forces debaters to use bad grammar. Preserve the educational value of debate by discarding it.

There are many ways to kritik a resolution. The key to all of them is that they do not argue about the veracity of the resolution, but instead question its place in the round. Resolutional kritiks tend to be more viable than reactionary kritiks, if only because they still pertain to the resolution.

Preparing a resolutional kritik is a fine tactic, but it can be difficult, so be prepared. If you want to move forward, here's how you do it. There are two formats for running kritiks. Both are valid; choose the one that works best for your advocacy.

Link-Implication-Alternative Format

This is a better format if you need to really sink your teeth into why the critiked thing is bad. It is also a good default format for reactionary kritiks.

The **link** shows what your opponent — or the resolution — did that was unacceptable. “The Negative's blind support of America is nationalistic.” If you're running a reactionary kritik, try to set up your link with a cross-ex routine that leaves him with no escape. “I asked him if he supported America. He answered ‘yes’ — no qualification, no hesitation.”

The **implication** explains why the thing you're kritiking is bad. “Nationalism destroys lives.” Try to connect the round to a real-world result. Voting for nationalism means placing more lives in danger. The round is no longer hypothetical. Show the judge that the implications of voting for your opponent are potentially catastrophic.

Some theorists call implications “impacts.” I discourage this because it can be confusing compared to something like an application impact.

The **alternative** gives the judge a way to respond to the kritik. Here you don't always have to demand a punitive loss. Maybe you just want your opponent to stop a certain behavior, or you want a certain argument conceded to you. Explain that in the alternative. It's the way we avoid the implications. “To prevent the further spread of this insidious idea, we must vote against the negative.”

Here are two more examples.

78 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Link: Rude to Judge. My opponent called you a “dirty, low-down, snake-in-the-grass scum.” His words, not mine.

Implications: Forensics Endangered. This isn’t just an affront to you. This shows that it’s acceptable to be rude to judges. My opponent is undermining the entire activity of speech and debate. If he is allowed to continue, there’s no telling how much damage he could do to the world of forensics.

Alternative: Punitive Loss. Send a clear message by voting against my opponent.

Link: Abortion. My opponent ran an application of abortion.

Implications: Bad for Debate. Abortion is a complex and emotionally-charged issue. It is not suited to this debate because we can’t do justice to it unless we ignore everything else.

Alternative: Disregard. I ask my opponent to refrain from any further use of this application and I ask the judge to strike it from the flow.

Standard-Violation-Impact

This format is best if the argument or concept you are kritiking is obviously bad – like Nazism. It’s also a good default for resolutional kritiks.

The **standard** establishes something that should not be violated. This could range from Evidence Transparency to Basic Etiquette to Equality. Briefly explain why the standard is good. It should be obvious that the opposite of the standard is bad.

The **violation** shows how your opponent or his position did not meet the standard. This is where the format shines best. Because you put all the “this is why it’s bad” stuff into the standard, you can focus the violation on proving that your opponent is guilty. Again, cross-ex admissions work wonders here.

The **impact** shows how the judge should respond. Unlike the implication format — in which the judge is given an alternative to the bad stuff — in this format, the bad stuff already happened and the judge has to respond to it. Debaters wanting to show real-world impacts in the kritik should do them here.

For example, consider the standard-violation-impact format of a jury trial:

Standard: Property Rights

Violation: Theft

Impact: Jail

The Hidden Kritik

Talk to more experienced debaters and coaches about the popularity of kritiks. Some leagues and regions accept them wholeheartedly — even encourage them. They love hearing crazy new philosophies and quotes from obscure thinkers like Slavoj Žižek. If that’s the case for you, rejoice! You don’t need to worry about hiding your kritiks. Unfortunately, other judges hate them.

You're not here to crusade for a better understanding of kritiks in your league. You just want to run good arguments that win rounds. You need to adjust your strategy if your judges are likely to have a knee-jerk bad reaction to a kritik. Unless you're confident that your judge can handle it, adopt the following approach.

The first step is to cut the word "kritik" from your speech vocabulary. Protect your judge's ears from it. Run all the substance and logic of the kritik, but don't call it one. If your argument is valid, it will be given the light of day.

Second, disguise your kritik. If you run it as just another response, or structure it as a case, or as a "negative philosophy," it will be easier to stomach. A spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down. Inexperienced judges will be uncomfortable with anything other than a six-minute affirmative case with a value, a contention or two, and at least one application, followed by a similar negative case.

Converting a three-point kritik into a standard case format is no easy task, and there are no real shortcuts. Work through the standard framework-contention-application structure and try to find something to fit into each slot. If you can't, note it and explain why. Best-case scenario, you will be the only person who knows that there is a kritik in the room.

Finally, stick to your guns when you run a kritik. Don't run it conditionally; don't qualify it; don't apologize for it. Be aggressive. Many kritiks are exclusive — they can't be run alongside normal arguments. If you're arguing that the resolution can't be debated, don't argue that and then go ahead and debate it anyway (thereby disproving your kritik). If you explain each argument carefully and your arguments pass the laugh test, you'll win rounds.

Burden

A **burden** establishes conditions you must meet to win the round. The implied burden of each side is to present a coherent, well-supported contention-framework position that supports or disproves the resolution. If you don't have anything to add to that, don't run a burden.

However, if you feel that your advocacy is somewhat complex — or incredibly simple — and you want to focus the judge's attention on a specific issue, consider running a burden. For example: "If I can prove that democracy leads to bad governance more often than monarchy, you should vote for me."

Burdens should be reciprocal. Explain what has to happen for your opponent to win, too. As with your framework, a burden should come across as being neutral. It is a way for the judge to understand the stakes in the round before the proper advocacy, like contentions, comes along.

Remember, most rounds don't need an explicit burden. Just stick to value-contention if that can work for you. If someone runs a burden you don't like against you, invite the judge to evaluate based on the standard issues instead.

Case Order

You should never try to run everything included in this chapter. In fact, you should only run any of these points if not running them makes you weaker. That said, here's a hypothetical case order that shows you where to place each point. (Just skip the points that don't pertain to you.) This is the most logical, accessible way to construct your case, but be willing to adjust it to make the case function for you. Because applications are subpoints that can go anywhere, they are not shown. Points that are typical for most cases are shown in bold.

- Reactional Kritik
- Resolutional Kritik
- Resolutional Objection
- Resolutional Analysis
- Definition**
 - Background
 - Thesis Statement
 - Burden
 - Meta-Framework
 - Framework
- Value**
 - Value Link**
 - Value Reason to Prefer
- Criterion
 - Criterion Link
 - Criterion Reason to Prefer
- Contention**
 - Case Study

Voting Issue

A **voting issue**, or “voter,” is a reason for the judge to vote for you. It is run in the last speech of each side — the NR and 2AR.

Imagine that the round ended after the 1AR. You shake the judge's hand, pack up, and leave the room. The judge goes to the judge's lounge. In a normal round, you wouldn't be allowed to go with the judge. But in this world, you can. You, your opponent, and the judge walk into a big room full of round tables. You help yourself to some macaroni salad and cucumber water. You sit down at the table. You wait in tense silence as the judge reviews his flow. As the negative speaker, you're dismayed when you see the judge move his pen toward the Affirmative Win box.

“Wait a second,” you say. The judge looks up from his ballot. “How could you possibly vote affirmative? He dropped the applications!”

“Well, that’s a good point,” the judge admits.

“And my reason to prefer the value — I had two great applications for it and he had nothing! You should give me the value clash because of that.”

“That’s true,” the judge concedes. He glances at the negative box.

“I also proved that his second contention actually supports my case. So that means his case is incoherent and mine is doubly supported!”

“OK, you win,” the judge says.

That’s the feeling that you should have when you get up for the NR or 2AR. The round is done. You’re not going to explain why you *should* win, but why you *already have* won. Speak of the round in the past tense. And most importantly, focus the speech on ways that you won.

A voting issue does not introduce new content. Instead, it helps the judge see the round clearly. It helps him understand why you won. I like to flow voters separately from the rest of the arguments. They aren’t part of refutation — they’re a voting guide. Think about a way to efficiently sum up some important part of your advocacy. While “Values” is an okay voting issue tag, “Justice is Paramount” is better.

You should run between one and four voters. More than that, and you aren’t focusing the round. You should also make sure that your voters are unique — don’t respond to your opponent’s voters.

There are three ways to run voting issues. Here they are, from least to most risky:

Voter as Summary

Go through the flow as you normally would, usually meaning from top-to-bottom through the negative case and then on to the affirmative case. As you go, you group certain arguments or argument classes into reasons why you won. For example, when you get to the value clash, you run your first voting issue: “Justice trumps Common Good.” Then you go through the reasons to prefer one by one. Further down the flow, you run “Application scope,” and focus on how your applications are much more significant than those of your opponent.

This tactic is great because it still lets you do a thorough point-by-point refutation of the opposing case. It’s weak because it does nothing to tell the judge what issues are the most important.

Voter as Point of Contention

Go through the flow as you would in a 1AR — without any specific voting issues. Save a minute or two at the end of the speech. When you’ve refuted everything, slow down and go into your voters.

82 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

This tactic is great because it lets you focus the round more than summary voters. It's weak because after the point-by-point, you probably don't have much time left for voters. It's also hard to deliver Point of Contention voters without rehashing what you already said.

Voter as Flow Alternative

This is a riskier approach with a high potential payoff. Instead of doing point-by-point responses, go right into the voting issues that you really want to focus on. Within those voters, you can do some refutation if need be, but you're not worried about covering the flow. You already said what you need to say in the previous speech.

This is much easier to pull off in a 2AR than in an NR, if only because the judge is more sympathetic to the time restraints of a three-minute speech.

If Flow Alternative is too risky for you, you can try this middle ground:

“I'm going to be giving you two voting issues. Each one is a unique and compelling reason to vote against the resolution. But before I get to that, let me just clean up the affirmative applications really quickly.”

This is a great way to make sure some non-critical argument doesn't cost you the round. Just don't spend more than thirty seconds cleaning up the flow.

Key 8

Flow Everything

It's not enough just to know what to say — you need to say it well. This chapter covers the basics of debate speaking skill.

Debaters use a system of note taking known as **flowing** to keep track of arguments. Everyone's flow is personal and unique. You don't need to follow anyone else's method as long as your flow makes sense to you in the round. Feel free to use bad handwriting, doodles, abbreviations, and funky symbols if they help you.

That said, two styles of flowing have risen above the rest: flowing by speech and by argument. I'll teach you both here, with thoughts on which one is best for you. No matter how you flow, you'll want a large sheet of paper — the yellow legal pad is a classic, but others use notebooks or buy tailored flowpads — and at least one comfortable pen.

Flowing by Speech

Flowing by speech marks each argument in five columns, with the AC on the left and each subsequent speech following.

Hold your paper in landscape position (wider than it is tall). Draw four evenly-spaced vertical lines to separate your page into five columns. In the far left column, flow the affirmative case from top to bottom in chronological order..

To make reading easier, identify argument classes with large underlined headers. Separate arguments of the same class with small horizontal dashes. Put applications in parentheses and quoted evidence in vector marks. Abbreviate as much as you need to. Try to catch key words in definitions or evidence.

Here's a sample flow for a case supporting the resolution: "The use of Native Americans as mascots is immoral."

DEFS

NAans - Pre-euro tribes

-

Mascot - adopted as symbol

-

Immoral - conflict w broad acctd prcples

84 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Res A

Amoral Res

VAL

Racism “race dtmns inherent suprtty”

VL

Clearly Immoral

-

Dscrbs Conflict

CONT

NA Mascots Racist

(Chief Wahoo, Cleveland mascot goofy)

<Boston Globe ‘05 - warpaint like blackface>

This gives you an outline of what was said during the speech. You should flow every relevant part of the speech and nothing else. The more you write, the more cluttered your flow becomes. That means 90 percent of your flow will be tags, with the rest being argument class headers, evidence sources, definition summaries, and the like.

The NC will be flowed in the next column (second from the right). Find an open part of your flow to write the negative case, usually in the lower half. (This is easier if you hold the paper in portrait mode.) Others use a separate sheet of paper for the negative case.

When the negative speaker responds to something in the affirmative case, draw a horizontal line from the original argument to the NC column. Then write the response tag.

For the 1AR, you’ll continue drawing lines across into that speech column. This means you can follow an entire line of arguments starting in the AC and proceeding to the right all the way through the debate.

Flowing by speech has a few advantages. First, it is easy to learn. This makes it great for novice debaters and beginning judges. I recommend this style if you’ve never flowed before. Most debaters learn this style early and become so comfortable with it that they never feel the need to change. If that describes you, great! Keep flowing by speech. It does have a few additional advantages; for example, it makes it easy to sense how full a speech was and makes dropped arguments very conspicuous.

But flowing by speech has its drawbacks. Another, more advanced style is available. Many debaters (myself included) find that it maximizes the space on the flow and makes tracking argument classes easier. If you’ve mastered flowing by speech, give the second approach a try.

Flowing by Argument

Flowing by argument requires different colors. I flow the affirmative case in red pen and the negative in black. Do not draw lines on your flow! You won't be dividing the flow by speech.

Flow the affirmative case in a column in the top left of the pad — as if you were flowing by speech. Flow the negative case in a column in the center. The flow is now divided, with the affirmative arguments on the left and the negative arguments on the right. You should still flow responses by drawing a line from the argument to an open space just to the right of it, using the appropriate color.

For voting issues, I find any open place on the flow and write them in big letters and circle them. Put miscellaneous notes in the top of the flow, which tends to be used the least.

This style is very flexible. You'll never run out of space because you can just draw a line to anywhere on the page you *have* space. It also conveniently divides the flow in ways that make strategic thinking easier. You can tell at a glance whether the values or contentions are being debated more. You can also tell whose case is controlling the round.

Again, everyone has his or her own techniques for flowing. Some use separate pages or even separate flow pads to track cases.

Five Benefits of Tags

To help judges track with your arguments, it is vital that you tag everything you say. A **tag** is a short phrase that functions as the name and summary of an argument. If you want the judge to write something down, it needs a tag.

There are five benefits of tagging your arguments:

1. **Accelerate Understanding.** Judges often understand what you mean instantly when you give the tag. In other words, your delivery is about persuasion rather than explanation, and you can move on to the next argument faster if you're in a rush.
2. **Name the Argument.** The argument now has a name, so it can easily be referred to in the future. "Under the negative meta-framework, I said Morality is Universal. My opponent said Governments are not People, and my response is Made of Individuals." That kind of language is a breath of fresh air to judges. For once, they can follow along!
3. **Increase Acceptance.** Propaganda experts know that it takes as little as three exposures for a brain to begin accepting a foreign idea. You can make your arguments more familiar in seconds by repeating their tags.

86 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

4. **Provide Flow.** Imagine you want to buy a new car. You go to a car lot and tell the salesman: “Safety is a priority, so I want dual air bags.” The salesman takes you to the first car. It’s a black Mustang GT with yellow flames on the side. “You’ll be the envy of all your friends in this bad boy,” says the salesman. “It has all-leather interior, and the engine can go from stopped to 60 miles per hour in just two seconds.” You nod your head as if what he’s saying is very interesting to you. But it’s not. You need a car with dual airbags. If this car doesn’t have that, he’s wasting your time. But if he started his pitch saying, “This is the safest car money can buy, and yes, it has dual air bags,” he’d have your complete attention from the beginning.
5. **Control the Pen.** This one is critical. When you get a ballot describing an argument that was never run in the round, it’s likely that the judge misunderstood and mis-tagged an argument. You need the judge to be crystal clear on your arguments, and that means controlling his or her pen

Some debaters will divide their judges into two categories: the ones who flow well, and the ones who don’t. “She’s a flow judge,” a debater might say, “so I’d better be really organized!” And for the next judge: “She has no idea how to flow, so I don’t need to worry about tags as much.”

Here’s a powerful tip that can significantly improve your debate performance: *every judge is a flow judge*. Even brand-new judges come into the room with a paper and pen, and try to write down what’s happening in the round. If judges can forget about coming up with their own tags, they can relax and listen to your awesome rhetoric.

Mastering Your Flow

Flowing is important because it helps you keep track of the dozens of arguments in the round. Before you get up to speak, you should try to **pre-flow** everything you want to say. That makes you more organized, more efficient, more confident, and drastically less likely to **drop an argument**, or forget to respond to it.

Unlike some other debate formats, you are given **preparation time** during the debate round. This means you must make the most of every precious second at the table. It’s hard to do everything at once. Generally speaking, these should be your priorities:

1. **Flow the opponent’s speech.** You only get one shot at this. When your opponent moves on to the next argument, it’s either on your flow or you missed it. Discipline yourself to stay focused on the opposing speech throughout. Many debaters tag poorly in the constructives and don’t tag at all in rebuttals. It makes their speeches harder to understand, but it’s their loss. In all likelihood, the judge’s flow of their speeches is rife with inaccuracy and confusion. If you must, invent tags for your opponent’s arguments. Set yourself apart by being the clear, organized debater. Make sense out of the previous speech no matter how disorganized it was.

2. **Pre-flow questions.** Success as an examiner often comes to exact wording of a question. Don't leave it up to chance. Pre-script your questions beforehand. You could use an extra sheet of paper or a large Post-It note. I like to fold my flow-paper in half, exposing part of the back, and write my questions on that. (We'll discuss cross-examination in much greater depth in Key 10.)
3. **Pre-flow the next speech.** Pre-flow every single tag before you get up to speak, along with additional notes if needed to jog your memory. The secret to this technique is good use of prep time, which requires practice. You only have around a minute of prep time to do all that, plus any time you have during your opponent's speech where you're not flowing what he is saying. Commit to pre-flowing and delivering a tag for every single argument, then work toward that goal. Your flow should be so complete that it requires no further attention during your speech. You need to set the stage for success on your flow, and the speech itself will become effortless and you can focus on *delivery*. (If you need extra work on this, Appendix C contains prep-time drills.)
4. **Engage the judge from the table.** With practice, you can flow and pre-flow everything in the debate round with time to spare. Make eye contact with the judge from the table. React to what's happening in the round. Be a part of the debate. Don't overdo it — you want to be courteous to the speaker — but subtle cues from the table here and there can make sure the judge doesn't forget about you, and in some cases it can even turn the tide in your favor. (More on table language in Key 12.)

Strive to do all four, and with practice you'll be able to handle them all fluently.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations or shorthand help debaters write complete concepts without spelling out every single word — if you try writing down everything your opponent says you won't be able to keep up. Find abbreviations that work for you. Here are a few I use all the time:

Affirmative: Aff

Negative: Neg

Definition: DEF

Resolutional Analysis: Res A

Meta-Framework: M-F

Value: VAL

Value Link: VL

Criterion: CRIT

Criterion Link: CL

Contention: CONT

Application: (In parentheses)

Quoted Evidence: <in vectors>

88 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Voting Issue: Big letters, circled

Justice: J

Human/Individual/Civil Rights: HR, IR, CR

Life, Liberty, and Property: LLP

Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness: LLPoH

National Security: NS

General Welfare: GenW

Argument rehashed, no new content: Swirl

Note to self after the round: ☆

Philosophy: Reverse pilcrow (¶)

Moral: M

Upholds, Preserves, Ensures, etc: ↑

Violates, Infringes, Prevents, etc: ↓

Leads to: →

Does not uphold, violate, or lead to: Corresponding arrow, crossed out

New and Dropped Arguments

New arguments and **dropped arguments** both occur in the rebuttal portion of the round. Debaters are supposed to present their entire advocacy in the first two speeches, known as the constructives, and the two sides refute them in the rebuttals. The format is so short that arguments presented later don't really get a fair hearing. This could mean that a bad argument doesn't get refuted, or that a good argument is casually dismissed. Because rebuttals are meant for refutation only and are not meant for constructing one's advocacy, running new arguments in the rebuttals is strongly discouraged.

Determining exactly what constitutes a new argument can be tricky. Refutation is not the same as repetition. Sometimes, defending your original argument against a new attack means introducing some analogy or logic that wasn't there before. Good debaters develop the arguments rather than let them stagnate, so every speech should feel somewhat new. There are no hard-and-fast rules for introducing new arguments, but a good rule of thumb is this: if the argument occupies a new vertical position on the flow, it's probably new.

Dropping arguments is also frowned on. When your opponent presents a new piece of advocacy, you're expected to give a response. You can accept it, cross-apply a different argument to it, or say that it doesn't matter. If you drop it, the only available position is your opponent's. Effectively, your opponent automatically wins it.

Impacting New and Dropped Arguments

Impacting new and dropped arguments requires discretion. You don't want to just say: "He dropped it, so I win it," as if the rules dictate that you win. That's a poorly-constructed kritik. The precise impact is up to the judge. If you tell him you win automatically, you run a good chance of alienating

him. You also run the risk that the judge doesn't agree it was dropped. Perhaps you just missed the argument, or a different argument could be cross-applied here.

To avoid being presumptuous, let the judge decide the final impact; you should just point out that the drop occurred. For example, you might say: "In the last speech, I pointed out that the affirmative applications actually support the negative side. Here we are at the end of the debate round, and there's still no response from my opponent on this issue. The only position in the round is that these applications flow negative — and that means every single application in this round disproves the resolution."

Key 9

Ask Insightful Questions

Cross-examination (cross-ex, or CX) is widely considered to be the most important part of debate because it is the only time the judge can see both debaters interact directly. If your opponent's positions are weak, if he lacks confidence, or if he is insincere, cross-examination should expose that. There is no recovery from a masterful cross-examination.

Cross-ex lasts 3 minutes. The person who just gave a speech is the witness and answers questions. The other debater, who will present the next speech, is the examiner and asks questions. Both debaters seek to control the cross-examination, but in different ways.

In cross-ex, both debaters stand at the podium, or the examiner stands off to one side. Questions and answers are directed at one's opponent, but both debaters face the judge; looking at your opponent is considered tacky. This will feel strange at first, but eventually you'll get used to it and appreciate the purpose. The judge is your audience; give him or her your attention and make sure your face is unobstructed. The true conversation is between you and the judge; your opponent is just giving you things to talk about.

Hunting the Mammoth

Most cross-examinations are easily won by the witness. Why? Because the witness has many tools at his disposal for evading and shutting down questions. He can claim that a question is irrelevant, unclear, or flawed, or give a nuanced or irrelevant answer. As an examiner, you have two bad choices: push your witness and look mean ("Answer the question! Yes or no?!"), or be nice and get walked over.

I like to think of cross-ex witnesses like woolly mammoths being hunted by cave people. The mammoths are enormous, with long tusks, thick fur, and heavy, stomping feet. In a one-on-one combat, the hunter will be crushed or impaled easily. He has to use his wits to bring down his foe.

"10,000 BC" is a terrible movie with a beautiful soundtrack. In an early scene, we see a tribe of primitive people attack a herd of mammoths. They swarm all over the mammoths, hurling spears to almost no effect. Some of them are trampled; others are caught in the nets they used on the mammoths and dragged along the ground. In the end, a mammoth kills itself through dumb luck, no thanks to the efforts of the hunters. I remember watching this scene in theaters and laughing aloud. "If early man really hunted like that," I thought, "we wouldn't be here today."

92 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

At intermediate levels, cross-ex tends to involve a heated back-and-forth in which both debaters raise their voices. The examiner tries to corner the witness and make him admit defeat; the witness dances a verbal jig. Such cross-exes are fun to watch — they're intense and exciting. But don't be fooled. The witness won a handy victory; the examiner lost control. The examiner may have gotten loud, but he walked away with nothing to show for it. He was like a hunter, shouting and throwing his stone spear against the thick hide of the mammoth to no effect.

The cause of this failure is simple, but profound. In a normal cross-ex, the witness has only one objective: to extract an admission from the witness. The witness likewise has one objective: to *not* give an admission. Examiners learn the hard way that it's very difficult to make someone voluntarily say something that they know will come back to bite them. There's no good way to do that. If your only goal is to get an admission, the mammoths will crush you. There's a better way.

Three-Dimensional Cross-Ex

Instead of trying to force your witness to say a certain thing, **3D cross-ex** allows you to embrace the nature of the questioner. "What do you want to say? Where do you want to go? You want to go over here? So be it!" You don't fight your witness; instead, you let him use his own strength to destroy himself.

This approach has three unique objectives, all of which can help you win the round:

Admission

An admission is something your opponent says that you can use against his advocacy. One of the funky things about debate theory is that an admission is the strongest evidence you can use. The judge has to choose between the available positions in the round. (He's not supposed to introduce a third position that no one argued.) If there is only one position available, a judge has to agree with it. If your opponent says something in cross-ex and you agree with it and use it against him, the judge must accept that point. That's why admissions are so devastating — and why they are pursued so zealously by beginning examiners.

A witness will never willfully concede an argument. "Oh, I realize I was wrong." If you try to make him do that, he'll squirm away somehow. Instead, think about pushing your opponent right up to a cliff. He's teetering on the edge, ready for that final push. But you don't push him in cross-ex — he can talk his way out. Instead, you do it in your speech, when there's no escape.

To find an admission that you want to pursue, convert your opponent's argument into a logical syllogism. For example, suppose he makes the argument that human rights are the only valid pursuit of government. You want to argue that there are other valid pursuits, but you can't just ask: "Aren't there other purposes?" You break it down into a syllogism, incorporating the analysis he used to support his point:

- Government should only do what no one else can do.

Key #9: Ask Insightful Questions 93

- Only government can protect human rights.
- Everything else can be accomplished by a private function.
- Therefore, government should protect human rights, and nothing else.

You're not going to attack the conclusion or ask the final question that alludes to that, but the supporting assertions are fair game. Here are routines you can use against each one, starting with: "Government should only do what no one else can do." (We're attacking it from a specific angle, but remember the argument we're trying to take down: "Government should protect human rights, and nothing else.")

Do you support the United States Constitution?

Yes.

Does the Constitution list valid pursuits of government?

Yes.

So if it's in the Constitution, you support it?

Yes.

Later, in your speech: "My opponent conceded in cross-ex that anything in the Constitution is a valid pursuit of government. But the constitution goes way beyond human rights. It includes bankruptcy laws, currency regulation, post offices, roads, and a host of other pursuits. We can only conclude that valid government pursuits are much broader than just human rights."

Let's try it again with: "Only government can protect human rights."

Has any individual person ever protected human rights? Like a police officer?

Sure.

Was it a one-time thing, or would you say it happens all the time?

On a daily basis.

Can you name a government that has not restricted human rights?

Maybe not one that respected human rights perfectly.

So, every government in history has harmed human rights?

I guess so.

In your speech: "My opponent claimed that government has to protect human rights because no one else can. But in cross-ex, we established that every government in history has violated human rights, while individuals protect human rights on a daily basis! I'm not an anarchist, but my opponent's logic just doesn't hold up. Government's purpose goes way beyond human rights, or it wouldn't be worth having."

One more time, with: "Everything else can be accomplished by a private function."

Do you have anything against counterfeit laws?

No.

94 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

So you think it's good that you can't just print money in your basement?

Sure.

If I print money in my basement, what's going to happen to me?

You'll go to jail.

Who runs the jail? Is it a prison corporation, or the government?

The government.

Who runs the Federal Reserve?

The government.

Suppose we eliminate the Federal Reserve. We let companies and individuals print as much money as they like. Would that be good or bad?

Bad.

In your speech: "My opponent asserted that human rights were the only domain exclusive to government. But in cross-ex, he said that government regulation of a standard currency was a good thing, and that no one else could do it! So there's more to valid government pursuits than just human rights. We need government to do much more, from stopping counterfeiting to enforcing zoning laws to maintaining public roads."

Finding a good admission to go after can be a challenge, but practice helps. Appendix C has a few useful drills for identifying potential admissions.

Another valid sub-set of the admission is a **pin admission**, in which you eliminate some convenient ambiguity in your opponent's case so he can't decide on the details after you make your arguments. Pins aren't as useful as normal admissions, but they are sometimes helpful against squirrely opponents. For example, suppose your opponent runs a value of "Purpose of Government," and doesn't give a definition afterward. This is not a value, it's the implication of one. It means your opponent can make up his value later in the round, after he sees what you argue. So you pursue a pin admission:

What is the purpose of government?

To protect the people.

Anything else?

To uphold the constitution.

Anything else?

No, that's it.

You've pulled your opponent's dual values (Protection of Citizens and Constitution) out of the murky cloud in which they were hiding. Now, you can argue against them and your opponent won't be able to wiggle away.

Absurd Position

If your opponent says something ridiculous, the judge won't take him seriously again. His entire case will be thrown into a shadow of doubt. If he thinks that ridiculous thing, what ridiculous things are hidden in his case? Sample absurd positions:

- The president is a lizard-man.
- The United States should be destroyed.
- The Ku Klux Klan was a harmless recreational club.
- Suicide bombing is a valid form of political expression.

When your opponent gives an absurd position, the whole room should be in shock. But you can't bring an absurd position back later in the speech: "He support euthanizing people when they turn 60! How can we trust him?" That would be considered an ad hominem fallacy. Thus, you need to make sure that the absurd position does maximum damage to your opponent's credibility during cross-ex. In a few pages, I'll teach the techniques to make that happen.

Absurd Non-Position

The third and least common cross-ex dimension is achieved when your opponent refuses to take a position on something that is obviously relevant. If he's dodging just because he's afraid of you, his sincerity and credibility will be shattered. For example, if your opponent runs a value of Life but has no position on whether Life is inherently good, he's given an absurd non-position. Again, you need to do maximum damage in cross-ex, because you usually can't use a non-position against your opponent in his next speech.

The Technique

Good cross-ex is deliberate, restrained, and inexorable. It unfolds with the precision of a stopwatch, while adapting to answers on the fly. It offers no resistance to the witness' shenanigans, but offers a smorgasbord of lethal poisons.

Along the way, an examiner incorporates a number of question types to achieve his ends. Think of these question types as your cross-ex playbook. They're a set of tools that let you adapt to any situation. Incorporating the following question types will make you a terror to any witness:

1. Neutral Start

You're hunting a mammoth. You follow its tracks to a valley, where you see it sleeping next to a swamp. You have two options. First, you could charge straight toward the mammoth. You'll go across a dry gravel bed with the wind at your back. But if you do, the mammoth will see you, hear you, or smell you coming and bolt. Instead, you take the second option. You circle around to the far end of the valley and go through the swamp. The soft ground absorbs the sound of your feet. The musk in the

96 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

air covers your smell. The vegetation hides you until you're close enough to strike your sleeping quarry.

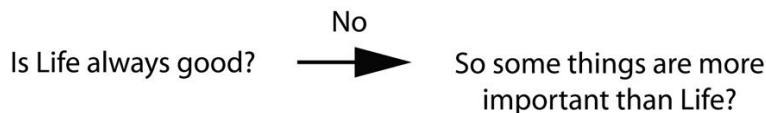
Decide what you want your opponent to say. You have an admission in mind, but *don't let him know what it is*. You must be stealthy. Ask questions in such a way that the witness has no idea where you're going until it's too late. (Better yet, make him think you're going in a different direction.)

Suppose your opponent runs the value of Life with the value link of Highest Moral Good. You want the admission that some things are more important than Life. An obvious start would be to ask: "Aren't some things more important than Life?" If you go that route, your opponent will just say: "Certainly not. Other things are more important, but Life comes first." That's a valid answer that completely deflated your line of questioning. You have no choice but to move on. This is what we call an "escape" — when the witness finishes a line of questioning without hurting himself. You must prevent any escapes.

To keep your opponent from getting unruly, begin with a very neutral question. You'll "back up" from the admission until you're at a safe distance. In this case, a good starting question is: "Is Life always good?" From here, the witness is unlikely to squirm because it's such a basic, general question about his value. That's a neutral start. From here there are three possible directions the witness can go. "No" brings us closer to the admission; it's a cooperative answer. "Yes" takes us away from the admission. Finally, the witness could say he has no position. Each answer puts us in a different dimension, gunning for one of the three objectives. For now, let's assume he cooperates and gives us the answer we're looking for: "No, Life is not always good."

2. Safe Lead

We'll be tracking this routine on a diagram. When the witness cooperates, we move horizontally.



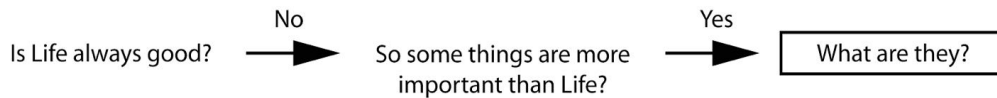
If the witness is cooperating, you don't need to fight him. You should ask a safe, reassuring question known as a Safe Lead. The most important ingredient of a safe lead: vagueness. Witnesses love vagueness because they feel like they still have wiggle room. They'll be able to adjust the specifics of their plan later. You don't ask: "So Liberty is more important than Life?" — for now, you just ask about "some things."

Ask the question in a non-hostile, friendly way. The witness will never trust you (with good reason), but you can make him think that you're just setting the stage, and the shoe-drop is still a long way away. What he doesn't realize is that this is the **crescendo question**: the question immediately preceding the result you want to get. The crescendo is one of the most important parts of a cross-ex routine, and the key to pulling off a safe lead crescendo question is to be as non-threatening as

possible. If you pull it off, the witness will casually answer “Yes,” not realizing how dangerous that answer is.

3. Happy Confirm

You got the admission you wanted: that some things outweigh Life. You could stop there, but now that you have the witness where you want him — cement his position firmly so you can exploit the admission as much as possible. That doesn’t mean you’ll push him over the cliff; it means you’re shining a spotlight on what he just said so we all understand it clearly.



A happy confirm forces the witness to repeat or clarify the admission. The primary purpose is to make sure that the admission sticks in the judge’s mind. As with the safe lead, this question should be asked in a non-threatening way. Maybe the witness won’t even realize that he has given an admission. No one has to know how brilliant you’ve been, because you’ll drive your point home in the following speech.

During the safe lead, you placed a trail of carrots that led into a reinforced cage. The mammoth unwittingly followed the trail and is now standing in the trap. All you have to do is gently close the trap door, and the mammoth is at your mercy. There’s no need to slam the door — all that will do is spook the mammoth.

A happy confirm can be as simple as a non-threatening repetition of the answer: “So, it sounds like, at times, some things are more important than Life?”

This particular routine’s happy confirm demonstrates a few additional tricks to keep in your bag.

This appears to be an innocuous question; just asking for details about the previous answer. But to a witness, this question is devastating. The safe lead kept things vague and lured the witness into a false sense of security, but the following question eliminated the vagueness. Imagine the inner dialogue of the witness:

If I say Life is always good no matter what, he’ll read a Patrick Henry quote or find some obscure loophole. I should be fine if I say there are rare exceptions.

Next question. Yes, some things are more important than life; I’m still safe because later I can say those things don’t include his value.

Next question. Uh-oh ... now I have to list things that are more important than my value.

I’ve seen this routine used many times against many different values. It’s not uncommon to see a witness list his opponent’s value when answering the final question. Needless to say, that sets up an

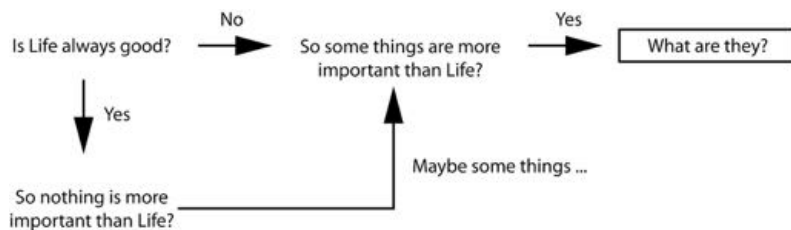
98 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

almost unbeatable reason to prefer the competing value in the next speech. “My opponent mentioned that Freedom is more important than Life, so I’m going to use that as my value.”

This question also demonstrates a key principle of cross-ex: *Always put the burden of knowledge on the witness*. Never let the witness turn the tables and solicit your position. Volunteer possible answers as little as possible. Let the witness figure everything out on the fly, or force him to admit that he doesn’t know the answer.

4. Push

What if your opponent doesn’t cooperate? He might be walking away from the admission, but you’re going to give him a chance to get back on the yellow brick road. You’re going to break out one of the most powerful tools in the cross-ex arsenal: the push question.



By now, you’re probably wondering: With such a disadvantage, how *did* early man hunt mammoths? Here’s the answer: they used the strength of the mammoths against them. They would herd the mammoths toward a cliff or pit, then bang drums, blow horns, wave torches, and shout at the top of their lungs. The mammoth herd would be terrified of the noise and fire. Thinking they were running to safety, they would stampede to their doom. Using this tactic, a tribe could harvest an entire herd for winter without throwing a single spear.

The push question deliberately terrifies the witness by eliminating wiggle room and putting enormous pressure on him. It says: “If you go any further down this road, you’ll get burned.” It spooks the witness into adjusting his position and moving toward the admission. A witness’ greatest fear is giving you an admission. He avoids this by dancing in ambiguity. Give him a question with one ambiguous answer and one non-ambiguous one, and he’ll recklessly stampede toward the former.

Note that the content of the neutral start, safe lead, and push questions are all the same. Only the wording changes to control the amount of ambiguity. Your exact choice of phrasing is enormously important to proper cross-ex procedure. Improper wording is the biggest cause of escapes; you must be precise and controlled at every moment to create the result you want. There are many ways to ask a question, but only one will help you.

Whereas your tone should be friendly when asking questions from the top row, it should become a bit more threatening as you progress downward. Threatening doesn’t mean hostile or confrontational; it

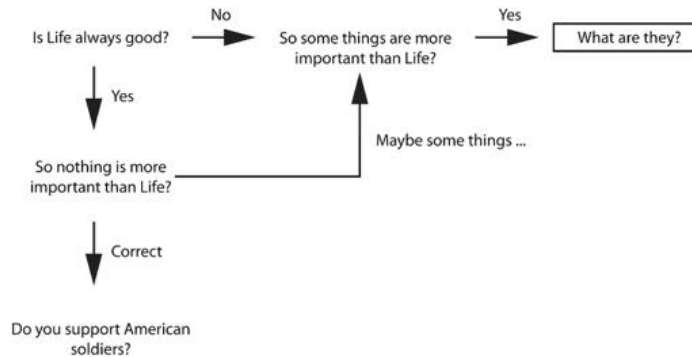
means there should be a warning in your voice. The subtext of your question is: “Are you *sure* you want to say that? You can if you want, but I won’t be able to protect you from what happens next.”

If you successfully spook the witness with your push question, he’ll give you an ambiguous answer that indicates that he is ready to head back toward the admission. “Well, I’m sure there are some exceptions ...” If he does that, drop your threatening tone immediately. The mammoth is cooperating again! Bring out the carrots. Feed him safe leads and happy confirms as long as he’ll let you.

On the other hand, if the witness pushes past the push question, he’s made it clear that he won’t give you the admission you were going for. A wise examiner immediately changes his approach. He is no longer trying to get the admission. The mammoth has chosen a different poison. Now, the witness just wants to look ridiculous.

5. Fake Restart

Your questions should always seek to disarm the witness — to lower his guard or make him believe he’s protecting himself when he’s really rushing into a trap. One powerful way to do that is to pretend that you’re moving on to a new line of cross-ex.



Remember, confrontation for its own sake only hurts you. Let the witness think he’s escaped. Let him think he outwitted you. He’ll soon learn how wrong he was. A fake restart should come after a brief pause. You should ask it somewhat abruptly, with no transition words like “so” at the beginning. Most importantly, the subject matter should be different enough from what you were just talking about that the witness will mentally “reset.”

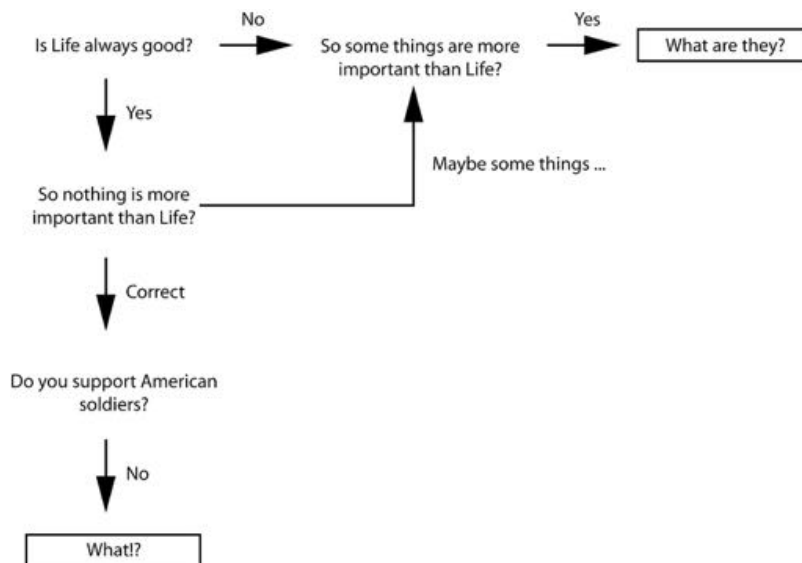
The longer a routine lasts, the more evasive a witness will become. This is because they assume (mostly correctly) that a routine takes two or three questions to get interesting. This is compounded by beginning examiners who ask throwaway questions like “Your second contention was such-and-such, correct?” before getting to the meat of the routine. Therefore, when a witness thinks a new routine has begun, you have a brief window of opportunity during which his guard is lowered. He will never be more cooperative than this moment.

100 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

In this case, the fake restart is “Do you support American soldiers?” It’s a question that seems different enough from the earlier questions that some witnesses will lower their guard. If the witness isn’t fooled — advanced debaters probably won’t be — no harm done. You were just setting the stage for the final part of your routine.

6. Silly Confirm

What if the witness goes way off the tracks and gives you a ridiculous answer?



Congratulations! You’ve reached the second goal of cross-ex: the absurd position. Your opponent said something that should compromise his credibility and shock the judge. “No, I don’t support American soldiers.”

You’ll follow this up with a silly confirm — a question designed to maximize the damage of this absurd position. The execution of the silly confirm is critical, because the next few seconds are all you get. You won’t get to bring this routine back up in a speech. It’s now or never. The mammoth charged off a cliff; now you just need to make the fall as hard as possible.

A silly confirm turns you into a surrogate audience member. You show the judge how he’s supposed to react by reacting in shock yourself. You don’t argue, you just repeat his answer back to him while sounding incredulous. A silly confirm is best preceded by some phrase like: “Wait, so you’re telling me ...” or “Let me get this straight ...” or “So your position is ...” Your expression should be confused, even baffled. You can’t believe anyone in their right mind would say such a thing! If delivered correctly, the judge will be shocked too.

It's perfectly acceptable to stretch the silly confirm out over several questions, with each one building in intensity. Don't stop until you've achieved the desired level of shock.

Do you support American soldiers?

No.

Hang on, you're saying you oppose American soldiers?

Right.

So — just to make sure we're totally clear — you think the brave men and women protecting this country are throwing their lives away?

Right.

After the silly confirm, have a brief nonverbal conversation with the judge. You don't want to overdo it, but you want to make sure you can connect in that moment; that the absurdity of your opponent's position sticks to the judge's mind. Your eyes should say, "Wow. Can you believe this guy?"

Absurd positions cannot be forced, which is why you shouldn't set out to get them. Always start with an admission in mind. You're not a bully. You're not here to fight. Absurd positions only happen when a witness fights you. You let the witness do the damage to himself; your job is simply to shine a big spotlight on him.

Silly confirms do double duty as push questions, in that many witnesses frantically modify their position when they realize how absurd it is. You're fine with witnesses backing off. When they change their position on the fly, they betray their insincerity. They also look like they don't know much about the topic and haven't thought it through. But most importantly, *they haven't escaped* — they just took a sip of poison and went back to the smorgasbord for more.

Do you support American soldiers?

No.

Hang on, you're saying you oppose American soldiers?

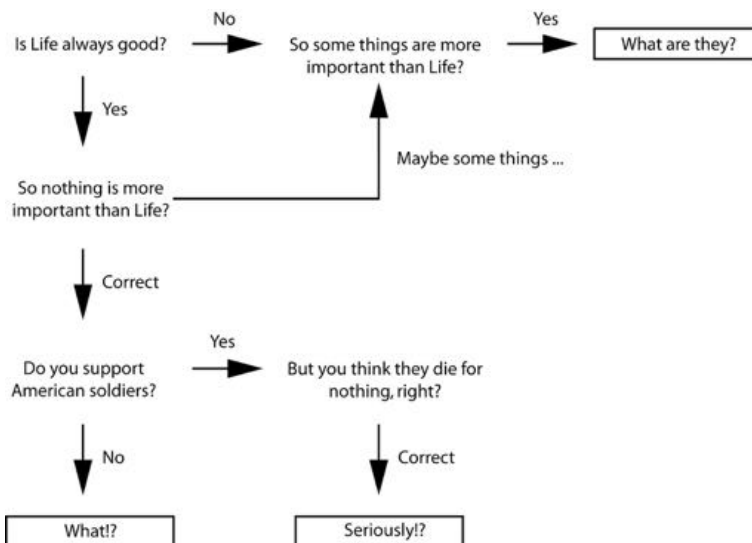
Oh — actually, I do support them.

When this happens, just back up in the routine and keep going.

7. Scary Assumption

In all likelihood, your witness won't want to give you a silly confirm. He'll give you a more palatable answer.

102 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*



Scary assumptions are asked in a casual, low-key way, as if you were saying: "You want to go to the six o'clock showing, right?" The content should be some extreme, shocking assumption about the opponent; if he doesn't answer as expected, you get an easy silly confirm.

Scary assumptions can be used as **one-offs**, meaning your routine has only one question that sets up either a silly confirm or an admission. They can even be used at the beginning of a long routine. Just don't overuse them — more than once per cross-ex is probably excessive. Treat them as nuclear push questions. The standard wording is to state the absurd position, then follow it with "right?" or "correct?"

You can predict the answer to a scary assumption with great accuracy. All but the most foolhardy witnesses will say some version of: "Of course not!"

Scary assumptions are the only time when it's appropriate to just state a position and solicit the witness' opinion. All other questions are either neutral, or they build off a previous answer. They let the witness choose the direction. In any context other than scary assumptions, you should never just give the witness a position. And remember, you should use scary assumptions very sparingly.

Weak: "Would you agree that terrorism is bad?"

Strong: "What is your position on terrorism?"

Scary: "You support terrorism, correct?"

Weak: "Shouldn't people vote?"

Strong: "Do you believe that voting is good or bad?"

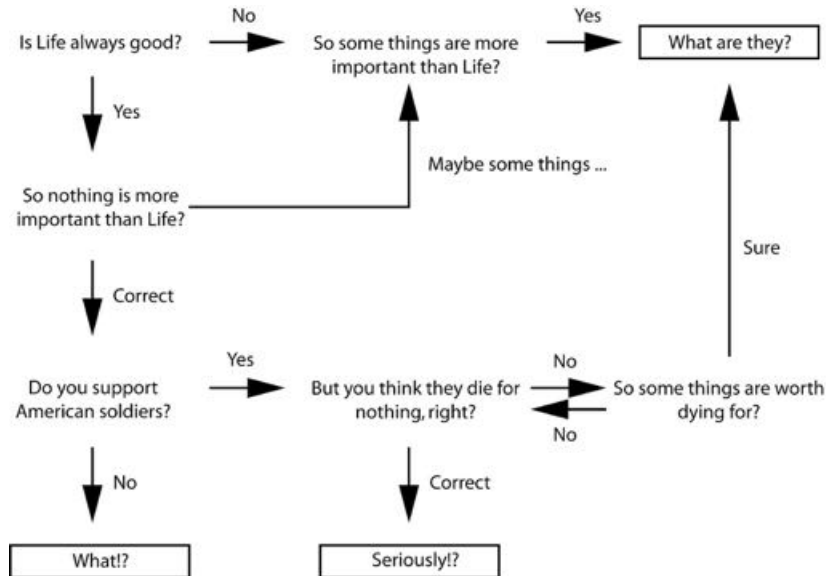
Scary: "You oppose democracy, right?"

Weak: “Would you say that all races are created equal?”

Strong: “Does race have any impact on a person’s inherent worth?”

Scary: “Whites are the superior race, correct?”

We’ll move on to the last three question types in a moment, but first, let’s put the finishing touches on the routine with another safe lead.



The final question is a very safe one; it summarizes the “Of course not!” from the scary assumption and sets you up to go right back to your happy confirm. Because the witness is back on track, you’ll ask this question as a safe lead with plenty of ambiguity. This is the fourth re-word of the original question. Look how similar the two safe leads in this routine are:

So some things are more important than Life?

So some things are worth dying for?

The second question is stronger, but we had to ask a few setup questions to get there so the witness couldn’t escape with a clever answer.

If the witness answers “no” to this question, he’s contradicting something he said earlier. As with any change in position, go back to that question and go from there.

Do you support American soldiers?

Yes.

But you think they die for nothing, right?

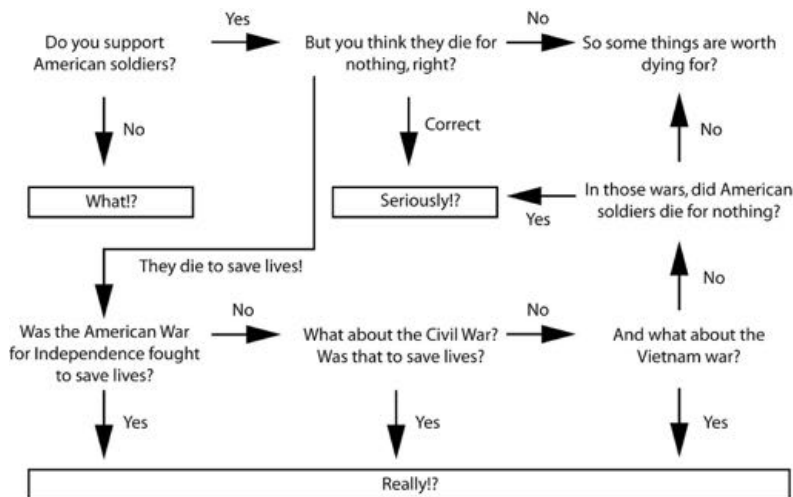
104 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

No way!
So some things are worth dying for?
No.
So ... American soldiers do die for nothing?

Backing up after a changed position is a critical technique to prevent escapes. Remember, you're not missing your chance at an absurd position, you're setting up an even juicier one: "So your new position is that you think our brave American soldiers are throwing their lives away for nothing, but you totally support them!?"

8. Repeated Confession

The routine above is considered complete — the witness can't escape it without giving either an admission or an absurd position (absurd non-positions can't be diagrammed; more on that in a few pages). Of course, witnesses are quick thinkers. One way they could foil this routine is by saying that American soldiers die to save lives. This keeps them from looking ridiculous and it keeps them from having to say that some things other than life are worth dying for. How do we beat it? With a repeated confession. Let's revisit the latter part of the routine.



You could ask: "What about the American war for Independence?" — but that leaves too many openings. You should ask the question in a focused way that leaves only one opening: admitting that the previous answer was bogus. But you won't stop there; you didn't like that "saving lives" answer and you're going to make it costly. You ask the same question again about different wars. With each one, your opponent has to either concede his bad answer from earlier or look ridiculous.

When you're done with the repeated confessions, get back to business — but don't just ask your opponent to straight up admit that he's wrong with a question like: "Do you still think American

soldiers die to save lives?” That’s too direct; the witness will fight you. Instead, you say: “*In those wars, did they die for nothing?*” You’ve basically reworded the scary assumption from earlier, but now there’s no room for funny business. Now you’re back on track.

You can build an entire routine out of repeated confessions:

Did you respond to my Salem Witch Trials application?

No.

How about my Ashcraft vs Tennessee application — did you respond to that?

No.

And any response to the Victim’s Rights Amendment application?

No.

With each response, the immensity of the witness’ failure becomes more obvious. Used in this way, each answer is a mini-admission or mini-silly confirm.

You should only use repeated confession when the answer is painfully obvious. It’s less a routine and more of a rhetorical technique to draw the judge’s attention to something. Contrast the above routine with:

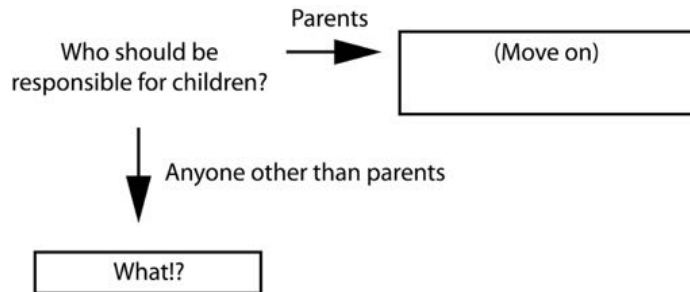
Did you respond to my applications?

No.

It doesn’t have the same effect. Flesh it out by asking more detailed versions of that question.

9. One-off

A one-off is a complete routine in just one question. It produces either an admission or a silly confirm.



One-offs are useful for getting pin admissions. Sometimes you don’t even care what the position is—you just need it specified so it can’t be changed after you argue against it. Don’t belabor one-offs; keep them quick and clean. But do write down the answers you get so there’s no room for confusion later.

Even one-offs should not provide positions to the witness. The question is not: “Shouldn’t parents be responsible for children?” — that’s weak. Instead, you ask a neutral question. “Who should be responsible for children?” The pressure is all on the witness to come up with an answer.

Popular cross-ex advice is to never ask a question to which you don’t know the answer, or to only ask yes-or-no questions. That advice can help, but ultimately it has the potential to limit the full scope of your routines. Instead, follow this rule: Only ask questions to which *every possible answer will help you*. That’s a harder rule to follow, but when you master it, you’ll be unstoppable.

10. Familiarity check

Perhaps you want to start a routine that assumes your opponent’s knowledge about something, like the situation in Somalia or some historical event. Don’t assume his knowledge; many witnesses will give ambiguous answers about things they know nothing about. Instead, start the routine by asking: “Are you familiar with the Napoleonic Wars?”

Both outcomes are favorable to you. He could say that he isn’t, in which case you look more knowledgeable than him. Move on to the next line of questioning. If he says that he is familiar, he can’t plead ignorance later. (He said he was familiar!) If he starts dodging later in the routine, ask, “I thought you said you were familiar with this topic?”

Familiarity checks won’t help you ask inane questions. For example, the witness being familiar with golf doesn’t mean he knows the number of dimples on a golf ball. The judge won’t hold him to that standard. On the other hand, if he says he’s familiar with the government structure of the United Kingdom but doesn’t know what a Prime Minister does, he’s going to look very bad. Meanwhile, you look perfectly reasonable; after all, you gave him an out.

Cross-ex is a complex battle. Of course, there are more than 10 “plays” you can use in a routine — but if you can master these 10, you’ll be very powerful as an examiner. From here, all you need to do is practice. As you go, you’ll develop a few unique plays that develop your signature cross-ex style.

Asking Questions

All those cross-ex diagrams can be a little overwhelming. Let me reassure you: you don’t have to memorize them. In fact, doing so would hurt you. Cross-ex is dynamic; only the most thorough cross-ex routines can survive it. You don’t want to be in a situation where you’re holding a cross-ex script (or you memorized it) and the witness suddenly throws you a curve ball you didn’t plan for.

On the other hand, precise wording is critical to execution. You need to be able to control the ambiguity of each question; to spook the witness in the proper direction; to shut down tangents without looking like a bully. The solution: practice, practice, practice.

Get the Most from Practice

Appendix C has several drills to help you focus on cross-ex. One of my favorites is the piranha pack, in which one debater reads a case and then another debater has unlimited cross-ex time. The piranha pack is intended to benefit the first speaker because it helps identify potential lines of attack, but it's also great practice for building and executing routines. Welcome the chance to be the piranha for other's cases.

Another tip: Analyze your cross-exes after the round. If you're in practice, discuss the cross-ex question by question with your opponent. Things to discuss:

- What outcome did you want from this routine?
- How did you design the routine to get that outcome?
- Did you succeed? Why or why not?
- If you did not succeed, what could you have done differently?

Try to be as honest with yourself as possible. Acknowledge when you got into a heated tangle with a witness who knew exactly where you were going, or when you missed an escape and lost control to an evasive witness. The more you can admit mistakes, the faster you can improve.

Avoid Pleasantries

Many debaters begin a cross-ex by exchanging a few lines of pleasantries.

"Hey Sarah, how're you doing?"

"I'm doing great Peter!"

"That's awesome! Just got a few questions for you here."

"Go for it."

"Do you oppose slavery?"

This seems like harmless courtesy, but the examiner is actually shooting himself in the foot. Pleasantries like that are reserved for the beginning of a conversation. Starting your cross-ex this way tells everyone that you weren't involved in the debate until that moment. But you were involved in the debate — from the moment postings went up. You greeted everyone before the round started. You're engaging the judge from the table. Don't undermine all of that — and waste 15 precious seconds — on pleasantries. Introduce yourself to everyone as soon as you see them. When cross-ex arrives, jump right in.

"Sarah, do you oppose slavery?"

Avoid Transitions

I used to work as a salesperson at a health club. When potential members came in, I would always begin by asking a few questions. "Have you been to the club before? Have you ever worked out in a gym or health club environment?" From here, I could identify two types of guests. First, I'd have the

108 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

new exercisers — folks who had never followed a workout routine since high school. They were scared of me and everyone else. They were afraid of being judged. They were ashamed of their bodies. They didn't know what they were doing. It was my job to make them feel welcome. How did I do it? By filling the air with noise. The moment I discovered that they were new, I would begin talking. "Well hey, the hardest part is walking through the door! Good for you. Let's have a seat over here and get to know each other a little bit, OK?" Then we'd talk for 10 minutes about their history, goals, what they were looking for, and how the club would meet their needs. The more I talked, the better the guests felt.

The second kind of guest was very different. This was the guy who had just moved in from out of state. He was buff, trim, and wearing workout clothes. He was ready to go! I would often hear something like this when I first met them: "I don't want the whole pitch; just show me your weights and your prices." I wouldn't say another word. I'd lead them to the weight area, gesture at it, and stand patiently. I'd give the guest plenty of time to take it all in. Things might get a little awkward. And then, invariably, the guest would ask me a question — if only to break the silence. That was my chance to start the dialogue. Now I wasn't a salesman getting in his face; he had sought me out with a question. The awkwardness was a very important tool in my tours.

It's easy for debate rounds to get awkward. All you need to do is stop talking while the clock is running. Unless you're supremely confident in that pause, people are going to squirm. The hardest thing for a dancer to do is stand still; the hardest thing for a debater to do is stop talking. But you need to learn how. You need to embrace the awkwardness.

Everything you do in cross-ex should move you toward an objective. You should have absolute control of it. Nothing is wasted. Nothing is out of place. That means cutting out all your transitions — fluffy talk that fills the air with words just to put you at ease.

Fluff:

Under your second contention, you said that human rights are a subset of Justice. What are the other aspects of justice?

Equality and the rule of law.

OK, great. So can you have Justice without those other aspects?

No.

OK. Moving on to your application of ancient Sumer. Did they have rule of law?

Controlled:

Besides human rights, what are the aspects of justice?

Equality and the rule of law.

Can you have justice without those other aspects?

No.

(Pause) Did ancient Sumer have rule of law?

No one in the room needs to know where you are on the flow, where you're going with the current routine, or anything else. Your witness just needs to hear your question and either give his position on

it or decline to have a position. If he asks filler clarifying questions, he betrays insincerity. Shut that down immediately.

Are you familiar with the Roman Empire?

Yes.

Was it a just society?

I'm not sure what that has to do with anything.

That's fine, just answer the question.

I don't really see how that relates.

Don't worry, you'll find out. Do you have a position on whether or not the Roman Empire was just?

If a witness has to know where you're going, he's saying that he's just picking answers strategically to try to foil you. That looks terrible in front of a judge. I once saw a girl in a national round answer a question in cross-ex with: "I'm not sure where you're going with this, and I'm afraid you'll use it to hurt my case in the next speech. So I refuse to answer." Needless to say, the judges couldn't take her seriously from that point on.

By cutting the fluff, you force everyone to pay close attention to everything you say. You gain better control because the witness is less likely to know where you're going. You also open up advanced plays like the fake restart. Finally, you can execute confirms to their maximum potential.

The Confirm

Every routine ends with either a happy or a silly confirm. The most important part of a confirm is what comes after: a long pause. If your opponent gives you the admission, you finish with a happy confirm. He answers. Then you're silent for three or four seconds. Confidence is key here. Don't let the judge think that you're silent because you don't know what to say. Jot something on your flowpad. Flip through your notes. As long as you keep calm and don't use any verbal pauses ("um," "uh," etc.), the judge will trust that you know what you're doing.

Did ancient Sumer have rule of law? (Neutral start)

No.

So, just to confirm, the rule of law was not upheld by the Sumerians? (Happy confirm)

Correct.

(long pause)

What's more important: life or property? (Neutral start)

That silence is important because it helps the judge remember the admission. There should be no doubt in his mind when you bring it up in the next speech.

For silly confirms, that pause is essential because you *need* things to get awkward. The witness just said that George Washington was an alien! How could it not be awkward?

110 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Imagine that your silly confirm starts a fire. During the silence, that fire keeps crackling and spreading, burning your opponent's credibility to the ground. Things are awkward, but that's 100 percent the fault of the witness. You're not the one who called our first president a Martian! Confidently jot something down. Let that horrible answer hang in the air while the judge shakes his head incredulously.

How does the government fund itself? (Neutral start)

Through fees.

Does it collect taxes at all? (Push)

No.

You're saying the U.S. government does not impose any taxes on its citizens? (Push)

Correct.

One more time to make sure I'm hearing you right: The current federal government of the United States does not use taxes? That's your answer? (Silly confirm)

Yes.

(long pause)

What's more important: life or property? (Neutral start)

The fire will continue to burn until you speak again. If you speak right away, the witness has escaped. Make friends with awkwardness. Make silence a weapon. Suppress a smile. If you listen closely, you'll be able to hear your opponent's credibility sizzle away.

Dealing with Unruly Witnesses

The third dimension of cross-ex is the absurd non-position. It cannot be diagrammed because you have a chance to enter that dimension at any moment. Imagine that you're rising out of the diagram. The third dimension means that your opponent doesn't know something he should, or refuses to answer a basic question, or has no position on some essential part of his advocacy.

The key to this dimension: do not demand that your opponent answer the question. Instead, just clarify that he's not going to answer it. Don't fight the witness; serve the poison he selected.

Here's an example, starting from a neutral start and assuming a very antsy witness:

Is Life always good?

That's a complicated issue.

Do you have a position on it?

Well, you could argue that there are some cases where ...

Hang on, I already know what I could argue. I'm asking what YOU think.

That's something that people have debated back and forth for generations.

So you don't have a position on whether or not life is good?

Well, I do have a position.

Great! What is it?

I think it could vary depending on the situation.

So in some situations, some things are more important than Life?

I wouldn't say more important than Life.

So nothing is ever more important than Life?

Some things could be.

So which one is it?

Well, it's not a simple yes or no.

Let me get this straight. Your value is Life, but you have no position on whether or not it's always good?

Not per se.

The witness will try to muddy the water anyway he can. He'll dodge and qualify. Don't get sucked into it. Just get him to admit that he won't answer the question. If he ever does start hammering himself down to a position, you're back on the other two dimensions; proceed as usual. If he refuses to answer even basic questions, you go for the silly confirm. Make the judge laugh at how much he's dancing. This should be a funny moment in the debate. The witness is making a fool of himself. He's so afraid of you that he can't even give a straight answer to a simple question. Don't be afraid to smile incredulously as the routine continues.

Unruly witnesses win when you try to force them to do something — like answer a yes or no question. If he won't do it, you can't force him! Pushing him makes you look like the bad guy. "Answer the question! Yes or no!" It's far too easy to make you look mean and unreasonable. So don't push. Ask a question, then get the witness to acknowledge his answer. If he doesn't have one, acknowledge that.

Some witnesses like to give incredibly wordy answers, or even talk over the examiner. While you're allowed to interrupt within reason (like if the witness is misunderstanding the question), you shouldn't get tangled into a battle for control. You have a little spear. He has two giant tusks. You *will* lose that battle and you *will* come away looking like a jerk — and you won't get any admissions or silly confirms along the way.

If you sense that your witness is so unruly that you can't even have a conversation, just show that to the judge.

Is Life always good?

That's a question that philosophers have debated throughout the ages. Some would say that ...

Hang on, that's not what I'm asking.

... that Life is so important that it can't be sacrificed. I think there's a lot of validity to ...

Excuse me.

... to saying that taking life to save life is acceptable, like self-defense cases, or ...

Excuse me.

Yes?

I asked you if Life is always good. What is YOUR position on that?

Right, that's what I've been talking about.

112 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

No, you've been explaining every possible position. What's yours?

Well, if you'd let me finish: self-defense cases could arguably be an example where it's OK to take life.

Is that your position?

There's more to it, though. Like a soldier who dies for his country, or ...

So country is more important than Life?

... or dying for a family member, or a cause you believe in. For example Buddhists ...

Excuse me.

... Buddhists revere a certain monk who set himself on fire to protest his government ...

Excuse me.

Don't talk over your opponent; don't raise your voice. Keep your cool. If he won't stop blathering about something that's not related to your question, just keep putting in a quiet, polite: "Excuse me." If you get a chance, to talk, re-explain your original question. Be the bigger person. Create a clear contrast between you and the witness.

If you absolutely can't get a word in edgewise, there are two techniques you can use. First, disengage. Gently press your lips together, drop your hands to your side, and take a half step back. Visually show the judge that the witness is treating this cross-ex like more speech time. If the witness still won't stop talking, quietly go back to your table and sit down. With every passing second that the witness continues his one-man cross-ex, he looks more and more ridiculous. This should be considered a nuclear option — only use it if you've given the witness every chance possible to engage in polite discourse. Once seated, you must not continue cross-ex. You've lost all faith in the witness. If the witness finally engages you, there are plenty of things you can say. Read the room to make sure you don't come off too aggressive.

Oh, are we done? Do you have any more questions?

Not until you finish the one I asked ...

Remember, you're never forcing the witness into anything. You're just serving him a heaping portion of whatever he wants. You're putting him on the fast train to a destination of his choosing. If he wants to dance, get off the dance floor.

The absurd non-position can also be used when your opponent pleads ignorance on something he should know about.

Pre-flow

Because wording is so important, you should pre-flow your routines. This can pose a challenge because you don't get prep time between your opponent's speech and the ensuing cross-ex. With practice, you'll learn to flow the speech and pre-flow cross-ex at the same time. Let your next speech take the back seat here — you can always use prep time after cross-ex to prepare. The benefit of writing your routines down beforehand is too valuable to pass up.

Of course, you can't draw a full flowchart for each routine — and don't try; it limits your flexibility. Instead, write the starting question and a few follow-up questions based on the answers you expect your opponent to give. If he surprises you, follow him off the script.

Here's how I might pre-flow the "Is Life always good" routine:

Life always gd?
Some cases other v more imp?
Like what?

As with arguments on the flow, I like to draw a short dash to separate routines. Here's the full preflow to a cross-ex I did in a recent coaching session:

Familiar w/ greenhouse gas effect?
Does speaking asst G.H.?
-
Define obl?
-
Any econ reason to go to war?
Like what?
-
Any rsn not to trade?

It could be translated like this:

Are you familiar with the greenhouse gas effect?
Does speaking assist the greenhouse gas effect?
-
Did you define obligation?
-
Is there any economic reason to go to war?
Like what?
-
Is there ever a reason not to trade with another country?

Asking those questions — and following up on new leads that arose as the cross-ex unfolded — took the full 3 minutes. In fact, I'm not sure I got a chance to use the final routine. But it only took me a few seconds to write, and the result was a much better cross-ex.

Use this technique rather than trusting yourself to remember routines (or putting question marks on the flow) and you'll immediately become more precise and successful.

As mentioned, some like to use Post-It notes to track cross-ex. That works great, though I prefer to fold my flow paper in half and write the questions on the back half. This makes it easy to switch back

114 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

and forth without cluttering up the flow. As with everything else about flowing, there is no “right way.” Experiment until you find what works for you.

Answering Questions

Persuasion is no accident. As a debater, everything you do should be deliberate. It should be calculated, practiced decision based on sound strategic principles. But the judge shouldn’t realize that’s happening. To him, you’re a simple lover of truth. You’re here to defend the facts against opponents. You’re bursting with sincerity; you’re open to anything. You need to communicate that without harming yourself in cross-ex.

Answer Any Question

If you speculate on what the question is about, it means you’re answering questions based on strategy. This makes you look insincere. So don’t worry about it. No matter how obscure the question is, give it your best shot.

How many planets are there?

Um ... eight.

Are any of them volcanic?

Well, one is a gas planet I think. I don’t know about volcanic.

How many planets have water?

Oh, I have no idea.

You don’t know how many planets have water?

(laugh) I sure don’t.

The exception is a question that is highly personal, intrusive, and irrelevant. If you’re asked something like that — and you’re not comfortable answering — say so directly. But up until the point where you’re uncomfortable, you should still answer irrelevant personal questions.

Do you know Samantha Rynders?

Yes, I actually debated her before lunch today.

Do you think she’s cute?

Um ... sure.

Would you marry her?

That’s not an appropriate question for a debate round. I’m not going to answer it.

As with any time you refuse to answer a question, you must be firm. If your opponent pushes you at all, he should look weak and petty.

Come on, answer it.

(long pause)

Come on.

I said no.

The exception to this rule is a question that is so flawed that it cannot be answered. In that case, begin with: “That’s a flawed question,” and then explain why. Depending on your speaking style, you can turn flawed questions into jokes.

Would you marry her?

Absolutely. Get her out here. Let’s do this.

There are No Good Questions

Much of how the judge perceives a question is how you react to it. So let the judge know that good questions are your department.

Here’s how you want to present yourself: Everything the judge needed to hear was presented in your speech. Thus, any questions your opponent asks you are either irrelevant or because he wasn’t listening (or both). Don’t take the questions too seriously. It’s fine to look surprised or ambivalent. Refer back to your speech regularly to reinforce the perception that the witness didn’t need to stand up at all if he had just listened more carefully.

The exception here is when the examiner bungles by giving you an open-ended, easy question that takes some time to explain. Say: “Good question,” and then give your leisurely, confident response.

Don’t Squirm or Speed

You’re an open book. You’re not afraid of the examiner; in fact, you welcome the chance to further explain your position. Give short, direct answers to questions. Be helpful. Don’t deliberately waste the examiner’s time. Everything you say should be worth hearing.

That said, you should control the speed of your delivery carefully. Witnesses have a natural tendency to speed up — because of the pressure, or because they’re copying the examiner’s speed. When you speak faster, you look stressed. You also allow the examiner to ask more questions. You should never go faster than a conversational speed; if the examiner tries to rush you, admonish him.

If you’re asked an obvious question that is setting up an admission, just give your opponent the admission. It’s better to give the admission than look insincere or compromise the logic or your case. Don’t guess where the examiner is going — let him get there on his own. As long as you answer with confidence and you have a coherent case, you’ll be able to deal with the argument when it comes up.

Admit that You Don’t Know

We all have someone in our lives who can’t admit when he’s wrong or when he doesn’t know something.

116 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

What's the capital of Peru?

Buenos Aires.

No, it's Lima.

Right. I thought you said Brazil.

Buenos Aires is the capital of Argentina.

I knew that. I was just testing you. I'm actually really great at South American geography.

What about African geography?

Yep, great at that too.

Such people can't be taken seriously. Ironically, we'd be more likely to take them at their word if they just admitted that they were unsure/mistaken from time to time.

What's the capital of Peru?

I don't know. I'll guess Buenos Aires?

No, it's Lima.

Oh, Lima! OK. I'm not very good with South American geography.

What about African geography?

I'm great at that.

I'd believe the second person when he said he knew about African geography — even though the witnesses displayed the same amount of actual knowledge.

Nothing fries your credibility like refusing to admit your ignorance or error. If you're asked a question that stumps you, admit it right away. As long as you do so with confidence, you'll be fine. With your mouth, you say: "I have no idea." With your tone, you say: "I have no idea because your question has nothing to do with my case."

Lampshade Silly Confirms

You should never compromise the logic of your case for the sake of an answer. Unfortunately, that means your opponent will sometimes force you into giving a ridiculous-sounding answer. While answering with confidence can help reduce the damage of the silly confirm to a degree, you need another tool. You need a way to keep your credibility while arguing that you are in contact with Martian beings or that the Internal Revenue Service operates efficiently. You need to **lampshade**: to directly acknowledge dissonance with the audience.

Lampshading is a time-honored literary technique. Shakespeare used it in *Twelfth Night*:

Sir Toby Belch: Is't possible?

Fabian: If this were play'd upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction.

This line is used at a point where the plot has been stretched so far that some audiences may lose their suspension of disbelief. It says: "It's OK. I know this story is getting crazy. Stay with me."

The trailer to a recent Muppets movie offers another great example of lampshading. It begins looking like a typical romantic comedy: light-hearted male narrator, cute actors, and big cities. Halfway through the trailer, a muppet fills the entire shot and shouts something goofy.

I remember watching the trailer in theaters. At that moment, the audience members all shifted a bit in their seats. They were uncomfortable. *Wait*, they were thinking, *there are muppets in this movie!?* The next shot showed the male lead as he looked directly into the camera and said: “Wait, there are muppets in this movie!?” The audience laughed and their trust was restored, because they knew that the writers understood what they were going through.

Compare these two lines:

“Can I cut in front of you for the copy machine?”

“I hate to ask because I know you’ve been waiting, but can I cut in front of you for the copy machine?”

We don’t want to hear either one, but the second says: “I understand what you’re going through.” Even though it doesn’t explain why the person is cutting in line, the lampshade is a powerful way to lower emotional guards.

You can use this technique in cross-ex by acknowledging that your answer is strange. “I love my country, and I know this sounds unpatriotic, but I don’t support American soldiers.”

As a side note, lampshades work great beyond cross-ex. Use them when you’re doing anything surprising or hard to accept. For example, you should preface a resolutional objection or kritik with a lampshade. “I know most people run values and contentions, but ...”

Ask for Time

If your opponent asks you a complex or unfair question, you have a few bad options. You could refuse to answer, which would undermine your sincerity. You could try to explain it, but that might make you look cagey. Instead, try this powerful response:

“The answer to that will take about 30 seconds to explain. Do you have time for that?”

From here, the examiner has two bad choices. If he says no, you’re off the hook. You don’t have to answer the question. If he says yes, you have 30 seconds to carefully explain your position in a way that can’t be misinterpreted.

You shouldn’t use this question more than once per round, and then only with a question with a complicated answer. Don’t give a simple response and then spend the rest of the 30 seconds giving fluffy points to support your case.

118 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

The trick to this — and any time you negotiate with the examiner — is that you hold him to his answer:

Did America invade Germany to stop the holocaust?

The answer to that will take about 30 seconds to explain. Do you have time for that?

OK.

America was originally an isolationist country. We were only pulled into war after Pearl Harbor, and technically that only meant war with ...

I'm just asking about the ...

Hang on. Don't interrupt. So: we were technically only at war with Japan.

Just tell me if ...

You said I had 30 seconds to answer the question. Did you change your mind?

I just want a yes or no.

If you're going to go back on what you said earlier and you won't let me answer, it sounds like you should move on to the next question.

Can't you just tell me why America invaded Germany?

That's up to you. You decided not to let me — which is funny, because if you hadn't kept interrupting, I'd be done answering by now.

More is at stake than just the risk of being misconstrued. Cross-ex is a direct interaction between the debaters. The judge is learning a lot about who is the most dominant, confident debater in the room. Don't let the examiner push you around. Remember: you gave him the option of not giving you those 30 seconds. He decided to give them to you. You're just holding him to his word.

Cross-ex is one of the most challenging skills in debate. It requires deep knowledge of the topic and theory, practicing your routines to a razor edge, and delivering in an environment where one incorrect word means failure. It's a big challenge — and that means you have tremendous opportunity to shine. Good luck!

Key 10

Speak Strategically

Logical, understandable refutation is critical to your success, but it is only the first step. The true battle in a debate lies in strategy. **Strategy** is a broad plan to achieve a goal. If the goal is a victory in the round, the strategy says how you get there. It helps you pick between options and decide on the best course of action.

To understand strategy, we must understand a few painful truths.

Decisions are Emotional

It happens without warning. I'm sitting at home or at work, minding my own business, and suddenly: I get Taco Bell cravings. I'm not just hungry, I'm hungry for Taco Bell. There are other options that are more convenient, or cheaper, or healthier, or have better atmosphere. Frankly, there are places that offer tastier burritos. But I don't want any of those places. Forget logic. I want my Taco Bell.

When you decide where you want to eat, you have a number of options to consider. You could make a chart analyzing the pros and cons of the 20 nearest restaurants. You could take a poll from people who know the area and tally up their recommendations. But this is rarely useful because most of the time, you just *know* where you want to eat. Maybe you can't even explain it.

Human beings use two basic tools to make decisions: logic and emotion. Logic is useful for evaluating and comparing ideas to find the most useful ones. But in terms of what people want — which is the most important aspect of a decision — emotion is king. In fact, 80 percent of decisions are based on emotion.

I want Taco Bell because of how it makes me feel. It's a combination of the restaurant aesthetic, the taste, the feel in my belly, and my self-image. So telling me some other burrito place has better food may be logical, but it's unlikely to influence me. On the other hand, if you inspire me to be a healthier person and show me how eating at a better restaurant will give me great abs, I'll race you to the car.

That goes for "logical" people too. When someone known for his logic makes a decision, he wants to make a decision that's consistent with his self-image — so he tries to be logical. He may even ruthlessly disregard the feelings of others, thinking he's being a better person by not letting emotions cloud his judgment. But really, he's as emotional as everyone else.

120 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Generally speaking, human beings decide what they want based on emotion and then use logic to justify it. That may not paint a pretty picture at first, but it's absolutely true. And really, it helps make us compassionate and caring creatures.

When judges sit down to fill out their ballots, they may consider the logical merit of the arguments. But the way they use that logic is going to be controlled by emotion. You cannot expect a judge to vote for you just because you "won the flow." Being logical is just step one in the journey toward being an effective debater.

Bias is Ubiquitous

The average community judge decision—whether “correct” or not—is blatantly illogical. Many parent judges don't know how to make good decisions, and of the ones that do, very few actually understand their own paradigm. Alumni judges and young coaches always have something to prove, and you're at risk of being an unwilling martyr for the cause. The result: At each tournament, every debater gets at least one ballot that is frustratingly incoherent.

With the latest advances in artificial intelligence, computerized judges seem more and more attainable. Perhaps we can imagine our grandchildren debating into a microphone that tracks every argument, fairly applies the principles of logic, and uses standard debate theory to formulate a decision. Then, even if you didn't like the computer-rendered ballot at the end, you would at least know that it was fair. Sadly, no matter how sophisticated our computers become, it is impossible to have such a judge.

Consider this hypothetical line of arguments:

We must protect the environment for our children, even if it means we get a little poorer.
The environment works for us, not the other way around. Let's live well at the cost of the environment.

This is reasonable argumentation from both sides, with no logical flaws. A computer might be able to understand these arguments, but it would ultimately be faced with a choice: environment or economy? A computer would freeze up, because there is no code sufficiently complex to make an intelligent value decision. The ballot would simply read: “ERROR ERROR ERROR.” The only way to resolve the error would be to flip a coin — what could be more frustrating or less competitive than that?

Humans may struggle with questions like economy versus environment, but a judge would be able to make a decision by using a dirty little secret. This secret is a powerful truth that can transform how you read ballots. It enables the next step in persuasion because it lets you truly understand when something goes wrong.

Here's the little secret about forensics: *It is usually impossible to fill out a ballot without invoking personal bias.* Even a seasoned judge like Vance Trefethen — an internationally respected policy coach with decades of experience — has to use bias. Vance gets more complex; he uses his vast

experience and knowledge to crunch the debate down to its most basic logical level first. But in the end, he has two competing value notions that could both be true. He has to pick the one that appeals to him the most. In a policy round, his area of expertise, the question may be something like: "Are the health benefits of the affirmative program worth the taxpayer expense?" The competing values are Public Health and Saving Money. The decision is illogical, even arbitrary — it is decided by intangible factors like emotion.

Logic is not a decision-maker. It just processes facts. You put facts into logic, and related facts come out. The more you put in, the more you get out. But you can't put values into the logic machine and get anything back. Logic says "A, ergo B." It cannot say "A is better than B," because somewhere along the line one of the prepositions was arbitrary. A computerized judge would only be able to make a decision if it were coded to think like an emotional human, which would defeat the purpose.

Not all rounds are like that. Especially at lower levels, it's possible that one (or more) debaters will run logically untenable arguments. In some cases, they may even be self-refuting. Assuming both debaters aren't in such a predicament, making a "correct" decision should be easy. But those situations are rare, and when they do arrive, judges are usually too confused by the debate to make a good decision anyway.

Understanding that standard judging is impossible is the first piece of the puzzle. Soon, I'll give step-by-step instructions for thriving in an arbitrary and unfair environment without punting the flow. But first, consider the idea that emotional judges are actually a good thing.

The Judge is Always Right

Let me be clear: The system is far from perfect. It hovers at the brink of dysfunction, leaving some debaters to feel that their hard work will go unrewarded and that the round will be judged based on the better speaker. It can be unpredictable, unfair, and infuriating. When you invest years of your life into forensics, a single half-asleep community judge in an important round can be utterly heartbreaking. I've been there. I've seen the tears of frustration and heard the cries for answers as brilliant debaters get slapped in the face by ignorant judges who weren't paying attention.

As a competitor, I had my share of surprises too. I know what it's like to go to Nationals as a favorite to win, then not even break. I know what it's like to open the ballot that kept you out of outrounds and read about an argument the other team didn't even run. It feels like getting kicked in the chest. And when that happens tournament after tournament for years, it's easy to become cynical. You want answers. You want to fix the system so it doesn't happen anymore.

Understanding ballots forces us to turn back to the core motivations behind why we compete. There are four basic motivations: social life, praise, love of the game, and self-improvement. Of those, the most important is self-improvement. Forensics can be very involving, but a few years after graduation you appreciate it for what it does best: it prepares you to be a better person. Forensics is fun, but it's

122 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

also difficult, time-consuming, and frustrating. If it isn't making you a better person, it's not worth the investment.

If judges were always wrong — if they were so incapable of logical thinking and evaluation that any study of debate theory was pointless, decisions were random, and the awards ceremony was a joke — I would discourage participation in forensics at all. But somehow, judges get it “right” a lot. Debating excellence is powerful enough that winning a tournament is a big accomplishment.

Most debaters hit a point in their second or third year of competition where they hit a dependable 65 percent win rate (which usually means a 4-2 record). Try as they might, they can't consistently push past this barrier. They haven't learned how to thrive in front of arbitrary judges — either because they don't know how, or because they want debate to be a logic war and *refuse* to advance past that. I've worked with many debaters who promptly went up to an 80-90 percent win rate as soon as they embraced the fact that bias is ubiquitous. That's the magic bullet that can make you great. It's one of the most important truths you can learn from this book.

Too many debaters use the phrase “winning on the flow” — as if they could possibly know that; as if that were all it took to win. If you feel entitled to win just because your arguments were logical, you're still playing in the sandbox. You're limiting yourself until you embrace and master the critical skills beyond the flow. Winning in front of a seasoned judge is easy; in front of an untrained judge you must be brilliant or you'll flounder. You must go beyond just logic; you have to use skills that you'll use every hour of every day for the rest of your life to motivate and persuade and present. If you think untrained judges are completely arbitrary, the problem is not them — it's you. You just haven't grown enough to master those essential skills. That's a tough pill to swallow. It's easier to look down your nose in condescension when you get a ballot that doesn't make sense. In fact, it's much easier to do that, most debaters never advance past it.

The truth about victory lies in the mind of the judge, not in a rulebook or a score sheet. You can't win by pulling some sweet move and pounding your opponent to intellectual dust. You have to do it the hard way — by persuading. If you fail to persuade, you have failed to debate effectively — no matter how good your arguments were on paper.

Here's a new way of thinking: Imagine that your arguments are products that you want to sell. You are the salesman, and the judge is your customer. You need to beat the competition (your opponent) and convince the judge to buy your arguments. Ultimately, it's up to the customer to decide. (It's his or her money/ballot!) If you were a car salesman, you wouldn't tell an 80-year-old woman how fast your car could accelerate. You'd show her how your car is comfortable, safe, and easy to use. If a 19-year-old young man walked onto your lot, you'd help him visualize how great he'd feel showing the car off in front of his friends and his girl. If a customer chooses to buy a car from a different salesperson, that's not his fault — it's your failure.

The judge is always right. Even with the same car, you'd use different approaches to create emotional resonance in your customer. And with debate, you use different approaches to make your arguments desirable.

Every time you open a ballot and see a loss that you thought you won, you have a choice. You can complain about what a bad decision it was and refuse to learn from it; that's the easy way out. It feels good. It lets you whine and get comfort from your friends, which will make you feel superior. But if you really want to be a champion, you have to choose to do things the hard way. You have to say: "I thought I won that, so I obviously still have a lot to learn." And then you study your ballots and your technique and you practice and you get expert coaching until the concept of "winning on the flow" is silly — you're debating on a whole different level.

It's not a handicap for you to humble yourself and accept an "unreasonable" loss — it is rocket fuel. If you embrace it, it can become a powerful truth that transforms not just how you debate, but how you live your life. It's not easy. There will be days when you want to wallow in self-pity. On those days, scoop yourself some ice cream and read this section again. Challenge yourself to be better — to win every single judge.

The apostle Paul was one of the greatest persuaders in history. If he had lived today, he could have been the president of a lucrative advertising firm. He travelled all over the known world saying illegal things. He went into towns that hated him and somehow changed minds. Christians and non-Christians alike were filled with respect for him. Eventually he was put onto death row and guarded by one of the more elite military force in the world: the Praetorian Guard. Imagine being a Delta Force commando guarding a prisoner scheduled for execution. Imagine that the prisoner tries to convert you to the cult that got him in trouble in the first place. (I know I wouldn't listen to him!) Still, Paul was able to convert many of the guards.

Compared to the persuasive obstacles that Paul faced, a debate round is nothing. So how did Paul do what he did? Did he just say: "My beliefs are right, and you're going to have to deal with it"? No way! In 1 Corinthians 19:23, he shared his secret. Whatever else you think about the Bible, you should read this carefully. It's a powerful key to success in debate:

"I am not anyone's slave. But I have become a slave to everyone, so that I can win as many people as possible. When I am with the Jews, I live like a Jew to win Jews. They are ruled by the Law of Moses, and I am not. But I live by the Law to win them. And when I am with people who are not ruled by the Law, I forget about the Law to win them. Of course, I never really forget about the law of God. In fact, I am ruled by the law of Christ. When I am with people whose faith is weak, I live as they do to win them. I do everything I can to win everyone I possibly can. I do all this for the good news, because I want to share in its blessings." (CEV)

Paul adapted to meet the needs of his audience. He didn't change his message or compromise his beliefs, but he let go of arrogance that would have dimmed his message. Using this technique, he converted many of his jailers before his death. If Paul could do that in a Roman prison without complaining, you can read a "bad ballot" without complaining. You are not ruled by a certain debate textbook, but when you are with those who learned from it, you debate according to its teachings. When you are with community judges, you carefully explain every point instead of feeling like it's

their fault for not understanding you. When you are with those whose theory is weak, think as they do to win them.

Take a second to come to terms with what you've read so far in this chapter. If you can't embrace it, you shouldn't keep reading. You're only wasting your time. But if you're ready to learn how to communicate powerful truths in a way that the judge will understand and become excited about, read on.

Emotion and Logic are Complementary

Ninety-nine percent of ideas in the world are utterly bogus, but most of them are embraced by someone, if not many people. Click on a political convention on TV from either major political party and chances are you'll hear more fallacy than logic. This is particularly frustrating when you're hearing arguments you don't agree with. "How can anyone fall for this?" you wonder.

The reason is that people don't use logic to determine their opinions. Instead, they use logic to defend their emotions. This is not what logic is intended for and it has many unfortunate side effects. Among them: widely embraced logical fallacies. Making an argument that sounds logical enough to be true (even if it isn't) and is loaded with emotional punch is a popular tactic when addressing the masses. When it's a message the audience wants to hear and it's delivered well, this works wonders.

I've been stressing the importance of embracing emotion if you want to be persuasive. But let me be clear: Running illogical arguments that are fueled by raw emotion is a recipe for disaster. First, you're learning to persuade someone of something that you know doesn't make sense. That's a dangerous skill in anyone's hands; in real life, using that skill would be unethical. Second, illogical arguments are not as persuasive as logical ones. An illogical argument may see the light of day when powered by emotion, but it will survive only until a logical argument is brought against it on its own emotional footing.

Everyone needs to make sense of the world. The human mind is constantly searching for logic because we are born with a belief in Logos. Logical arguments are appealing at that deep subconscious level, and that makes them more persuasive than illogical ones.

So why do logical fallacies ever succeed? Because those presenting the logical arguments assume that logic itself is enough to persuade. It isn't. Aristotle contended that orators must have Ethos, Logos, *and* Pathos to persuade — they must be together credible, logical, and emotional. The greater the level of each, the more persuasive the argument.

Many in the forensics community believe that ignoring logic in favor of emotion is the best way to win. The implications are staggering. If emotion trumps logic, why develop argumentation skills?

The evidence for emotion is strong. As you go through your season, you'll see many rounds that are won by a debater who "punts the flow" — meaning he deliberately ignores the argumentation in favor of an emotional appeal, sometimes even one that has already been disproven. Such tactics can win in

lower levels, because emotion *does* beat logic (remember back to bias and decision-making), but they fail at more advanced levels.

Logic and persuasion are *complementary*, not *exclusive*. In other words, you don't have to choose between logic and persuasion — they work together. A debater that leverages both will beat a debater that only uses one.

One could classify the strength of a debater's approach as follows:

Weak: Pure Logic

If a case is logical, it should make sense to the audience. Some logical cases don't because they're not explained in a relatable or appealing way. That means judges get lost in pure logic; they vote against it in favor of something they can understand. Logical debaters are frustrated because they know they were right or that they had the only tenable position. But tenable doesn't matter if it can't move the judge.

Passable: Pure Persuasion

This satisfies the core prerequisites to victory of being understandable and connecting to audience emotion. That means persuasion will beat pure logic every time — even when it "shouldn't." Still, pure persuasion has a critical weakness: it is incoherent. Judges want to vote for logical things. They want to believe in something. Pure fluff is better than nothing (and pure logic might as well be nothing), but it doesn't go far enough.

Strong: Logic and Persuasion

Imagine logic and persuasion like the skeleton and flesh of a body. The skeleton holds up the body; it keeps it from being a meaningless twitching blob. But alone, the skeleton can't go anywhere and it looks terrifying. Flesh and muscles move the body and make it look nice, but they need the skeleton to stand up. Logic and persuasion are unique; together they eliminate each other's serious weaknesses.

Illogical arguments are not as persuasive as logical ones. That's the key to thriving in the real world, where judges make decisions based on bias. Yes, emphasize persuasion. But don't sacrifice logic. A tightly-constructed case powered by a compelling theme is your best chance at success, no matter how you measure it.

Thematic Core

A **thematic core** is a persuasive rallying point for your advocacy. Rather than a specific argument, the thematic core is raw persuasion. It's a way for the judge to look at the round, an argument, you, or your opponent. They're usually used for introductions and conclusions, but you'll also reference them throughout the speech.

126 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

While a thematic core may overlap with a thesis statement, the two are distinct: a thesis summarizes the logic of your case, while a thematic core tends to focus on a persuasive feature. Thematic cores are not arguments; they cannot be flowed. Theses can.

Thematic cores vary, but they always have a few characteristics:

Tangible

A thematic core should be something the judge can immediately latch onto. It could be something visual, like an analogy or anecdote, or slightly more abstract. It just has to be something the judge can immediately relate to because it's on a wavelength he thinks in every day.

“We live in a world of modern marvels. Some are conspicuous — like planes that fly thousands of feet in the air. But the ones that really matter are the subtle ones; the ones that impact how we live our daily lives. Inventions like the light bulb and the microwave are so common that we almost take them for granted. But hearing today's resolution, I think we need to take a moment to appreciate what we have.”

It helps to find a way to make the thematic core personal. Talking about a microwave is likely to connect to the judge. So would not getting enough sleep or taking care of young children. The more practical it is, the better.

Simple

If a thematic core takes a lot of work to explain, it's probably not worth the effort. Thematic cores should make the rest of your speech easier to listen to; a complex core can't do that. Find something that can be effectively explained in a sentence or two.

“My opponent read a lot of evidence in the last speech. I thought it was interesting how the only people he quoted had everything to lose from better transparency in campaigns. It's no surprise that incumbent senators and special interest groups are terrified of my position. You probably had that figured out before my opponent's speech. But here's the question: What do the experts have to say? Not the corrupt politicians who got us into this mess, but the independent researchers? I'm gonna show you what they think as I go over the negative case and then go back to the most important part of this debate: my applications.”

After a thematic core like that, dismantling the negative case is easy. With every argument, you characterize your opponent as the puppet of the corrupt system, just saying what he was told to say. You might even be able to run a group response of “biased evidence” against his contentions. Such a response will be much stronger because of your thematic core.

Irrefutable

You must be careful not to word your thematic core as an argument. It should be something that is so obvious — or so unrelated — that your opponent can't directly disagree with you. The thematic core doesn't refute the case on its own, but it can do a lot of damage.

Let's examine one of the best thematic cores I've ever seen. It's been more than 10 years, but I still remember it verbatim. It was run against my brother, who was arguing against tillage — the farming practice of turning your soil to soften it before you plant — because it kicked up dust and caused lung cancer.

“You know it's funny; it seems like every day some new study comes out that says some new thing causes cancer. Your microwave is giving you cancer. This cell phone is giving me cancer. Now we find out that even tillage is giving you cancer! Well, the good news is: you don't have to worry.”

Notice that there is nothing in that theme that the other side could disagree with *per se*. But the tillage case was just cast in a new light — one of paranoia and hokie science. It made the rest of the speech incredibly easy.

Finding a Thematic Core

So how do you come up with a thematic core? You have a few options. First, you can search your speech for a single point of contention. If your entire speech revolves around a basic, tangible issue, like the dropped arguments, that's a great core.

“I'm going to ask you to make a decision on this round based not only what has been said, but what has not been said. In the first speech, I presented three applications — each one a compelling indication that the resolution is true. In my first rebuttal, I further explored all three applications. I told you then that they were the most important arguments in the round. So let's take a look at what my opponent had to say about them ... (pause) ... oh, I'm sorry. The negative didn't breathe a word about my applications in either one of his speeches.”

Or you could put a personal face on an application. This is an easy and effective way to write a constructive introduction. Try something like the thematic core a former student named Michael used. He took his application of Sweatshops and made it tangible, simple, and irrefutable:

“Ami, a young native of India, is like any other 10-year-old boy. He laughs when he's happy, gets hungry when there's no food, and cries when he gets hurt. However unlike normal 10-year-old boys, Ami must work in an Indian Gap factory. His only possessions are a small plastic comb, an old comic book, and a toy stuffed elephant. Ami works 16 hours a day, is fed so little food that his ribs stick out, and is beaten with rubber rods until his hands and legs bleed. His wages? 10 cents. Not 10 cents an hour, 10 cents a day. This

128 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

kind of exploitation that personal freedom allows is unacceptable. Because of this, I have no choice but to oppose this resolution.”

Appealing directly to a judge’s emotions in this way should be done carefully. You don’t want the judge to feel manipulated, and you certainly don’t want the judge to not engage the emotional content and withdraw. Run a thematic core like this only if you’re personally moved by the topic. For example, I get choked up talking about malaria deaths in Africa. I could probably make a great thematic core about it. I’m less moved by dolphins getting caught in tuna nets — but maybe you can make that work for you.

There’s a big difference between how you read and how a judge listens. One of the biggest differences is in a judge’s ability to track with abstract philosophical ideas. Until he has been grounded in some sort of topic area, until the logic of the case has been explained step-by-step, sweeping philosophical observations might as well be delivered in Klingon. Therefore, avoid big summaries or wordy quotations to start your speech.

“Because only rehabilitation has the human focus necessary to reduce recidivism rates, I support the resolution.”

That’s not persuasive; it’s not even understandable. Even a punchy quote like this one doesn’t work well for an intro:

“The fundamental purpose of government is to protect its citizens.” -Senator Arlen Specter

If your value is Protection of Citizens, this quotation is golden. But reading it at the beginning of the speech, before the judge knows what your value is, will reduce its potency. Summaries and quotations should be reserved for the end of an argument or speech; and even then, you should still follow it up by coming back to the thematic core. Don’t give a judge a quote or summary until they know what it’s supposed to say.

Time = Importance

I like to call this Rule 1 of debate strategy (Rule 0 being that bias is ubiquitous). This is a powerful truth that will give you control of every round. It will help you understand ballots that appear arbitrary. Most importantly, it will improve your win rate considerably. It answers the question: “If I can’t control how a judge rules, what *can* I control?”

Suppose we were to debate the resolution: “Time is more precious than money.” I begin by reading the resolution, then devote the rest of my speech time to explaining why peas are better than carrots. I use a value of Taste and several empirical studies in my applications.

You reply: “Carrots are better than peas!” You follow up with your own negative case with a counter-value of Texture. We go back and forth on our own veggie resolution. At the end of the round, the

judge is confused. Isn't he supposed to rule based on time and money? How can he do that now? In the end, he'll rule based on the arguments that were actually run, even if they were all technically erroneous.

In a less stark fashion, this happens every round. A judge is barraged with arguments, and is probably confused by 20-80 percent of them, depending on his level of experience. He comes away with a flawed and incomplete flow. He has competing arguments, applications on both sides, and he's having a hard time even scraping up enough bias to have an opinion on anything. He'll wind up making a decision about the issues that appeared most important to him — and those are the ones that received the most time.

Time = Importance. You can't control *how* a judge will rule, but you can control *what he will rule about*. Too many debaters run five responses to an opponent's value and think that they're coming away ahead. "I totally killed his value. Look how many arguments I ran." Instead, they're shooting themselves in the foot because now the judge is going to make his decision based on whether or not the opponent's value is true.

On the other side, you must devote enough time to an argument to make the judge feel okay about voting on it. Suppose you run a reactional kritik in 30 seconds and ask the judge to punish your opponent by voting for you. Even if your judge agrees with you, she'd feel silly basing the entire ballot on it. That was 30 seconds out of a 45-minute round! Even if it is thoroughly explained, keep talking until you know the judge has come to terms with the seriousness of your argument. The same goes for anything else you want to build a victory out of: a value, a meta-framework, or even a set of applications.

To win consistently, you must control the round. Here are some practical ways to do that:

AC

Put everything you need to say in the AC. Don't hold onto any secret evidence or cool moves for later. You don't have the time or the strategic resources to pull that off. By the time you finish the AC, you should be confident that you could win even if you left the room right then and there.

NC

In military strategy, offense means going to the enemy and destroying their stuff. Defense means protecting your own. In debate, it's the opposite.

Your NC should be no less than 4 minutes 30 seconds. 5:30 or even 6 minutes is great if you can still cover the affirmative case. Don't run direct responses to affirmative definitions or values; instead, run reasons to prefer on your side of the flow. Never run two responses when one will do. If you can find a common flaw in a group of arguments, run a group response. For example, if you defeated your opponent's value, you can say:

130 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

“Moving to the affirmative case — I already refuted the value, and all of my opponent’s contentions assume the value. So my group response to the whole case is No Impact.”

That took 10 seconds — and those seconds weren’t even about the affirmative. They were cross-applying negative arguments. That forces the affirmative to spend lots of time on your case. Awesome!

Of course, you need to do your opponent justice. If his case is built around his applications, or if you accepted his value, or if one group response won’t work for any other reason, add more refutation. Defense is not as important as offense, but it is important. Do what you have to do, but no more.

1AR

Get through the negative case like you’re running on hot coals. In practice, track your “lap time” — the time it takes for you to switch from the negative case to the affirmative. That needs to be as early as possible. Three minutes is too long. Two minutes is okay. Ninety seconds or less is good. This requires tremendous discipline. In a few pages, I’ll show you exactly how to do it.

When you’re done with the negative case, spend time on your own. Even if your opponent breezed over it as the clock wound down, you must invest time on your case. You need to re-create its importance.

“In the last 10 seconds of the round, my opponent told you that my applications have no impact. So he’s saying that \$10 billion wasted every year on corruption doesn’t matter. He’s telling you that the lives lost in the holocaust and the Great Leap Forward don’t matter. That is not an acceptable response. In fact, I’d like to turn this argument and say Outweighs Negative. In the face of my applications, it’s my opponent’s arguments that are insignificant! These applications are important because each one is a unique reason why the resolution is true. Let’s take a look at the first one — Government Corruption.”

It doesn’t matter if you shout or whisper. Telling the judge that your argument is important does little if you’re unwilling to spend time on it. But every second that you spend on your case is reframing the debate in your favor. Discipline yourself to push through the negative case and then slow down to support your own.

No matter where you are on the flow, you want to give the impression that you refuted your opponent’s arguments before they even came up. Everything the judge needed to hear was in the AC. Refer back to it and cross-apply it as much as you can.

NR

A funny thing happens when you take control in the NC. You don’t just get into the judge’s head, you get into your opponent’s as well. In all likelihood, your opponent will respond to an NC with a late lap time by devoting most or all of his 1AR time to your case. He may even drop big parts of his own case. If that happens, don’t be the one to bring them up again. Focus on the offensive arguments —

the ones that help you win. Declare victory based on a few key voting issues that highlight the strongest parts of your advocacy. Use the 6 minutes to create an unsurpassable lead.

2AR

This is one of the most difficult speeches in the round. The negative has a strategic advantage with two long speeches that can be used to control the debate through brute force. To beat your opponent, you have to play smart.

Unless the NR was a systematic point-by-point, it's okay not to address every single argument. If you intend to drop something, let the judge know in advance.

“I want to spend these last few minutes focusing on the things that really matter so you can make the best decision possible. You already heard my position on the negative contentions, so I'm going to leave that with you. Let's talk about my value.”

As soon as possible, transition into one or two voting issues. Keep moving; 3 minutes burns away fast. You want to make sure all of your voters get enough time to move the judge. End on a strong point from your AC and increase your passion a little, then finish with a quieter yet still urgent conclusion.

That doesn't mean speaking faster; it means speaking more efficiently. Cut the fluff. You have just a few minutes to save the judge from the mistake of voting negative.

Analogies

Good analogies are rare. Most live in a place I call analogy hell. It works something like this:

Economic Security is like stuffing your money in a mattress, where nothing happens to it.
Personal Freedom is like setting the mattress on fire!
It's more like mass-producing the mattresses and selling them for profit.
But you loaded them with money, so you're actually losing out! Gotcha!

I can't help laughing when I judge rounds like this. By the final rebuttal, an analogy that was mediocre to start with has become an incoherent mess.

Used rhetorically, an analogy is a comparison between situations used to make one of them easier to understand. You can and should use good analogies in your rounds. There are several tips to doing this well.

Analogies are not Arguments

An analogy is unlike an application or a piece of evidence as it proves nothing. It is not an assertion, it is not grounds, and it is not a warrant. The great logician Stephen Toulmin probably hated analogies.

132 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Analogies are like lights on a photo shoot: the main attraction is the model, but the lights make her prettier and easier to see.

Suppose we are arguing that Liberty is more important than Life. We could offer a justification — perhaps Liberty gives meaning to Life; it is an extrinsic value leading to Liberty. Liberty is the only value with inherent worth, making it more important.

That's a logically coherent argument, but it's a little confusing. So we could offer the analogy of a book: the paper is important but only because it holds words. With writing, a paper can be precious. Without it, paper is useless. Life provides the paper upon which Liberty can be written.

Now we have a fine analogy. Hopefully, it helps the judge understand the relationship we want to establish. But by itself, the paper analogy does not prove anything. We could not say: "Liberty is highest because of the paper analogy!" It's not an argument; it's an explanation.

Find the Relationship

The hardest part of giving an analogy is thinking of one. But it doesn't have to be, as long as you know how to do it. Here's the process:

1. *Define two entities in your argument.* If you're arguing that gas subsidies are a waste of money, your entities might be the government and the subsidy. They might be the teamster and oil companies, or gas prices and consumers. There are plenty of possible entities to pick from; your choice just depends on your needs.
2. *Define the relationship between them.* Let's say we picked the government and the consumer. The relationship is one in which the government takes money away from the consumer through taxes and then gives it back to him with gas subsidies, with plenty of waste along the way. To simplify, the government takes something good (wages) and gives it back in much worse condition (lower gas prices).
3. *Find two other entities with a similar relationship.* What about someone who takes your last stick of gum, chews it, and offers it back? That's another example of someone taking something good (gum) and giving it back in worse condition (ew). Lo and behold, we have an analogy.

It's as simple as that: find two entities, define the relationship, and find a mirror relationship in an area that's easier to grasp.

Keep it visual

Rather than the gum stealer, we might use the story of a dishonest banker who took \$1,000 dollars of someone's savings and invested in the stock market. When the stock market rose, the savings did too. When the stock market fell, the savings fell too. When the stock market rose again, the savings had diminished and only regained a portion of what was invested. Thus, after years of unsteady growth in

the market, the investment had actually shrunk. The banker then gave the leftover \$800 back to the investor.

That's a technically appropriate analogy, but it's confusing. Explaining it would probably take its own analogy and maybe a diagram or two.

Analogies serve only one purpose: to make something less confusing. If they fail at that, they aren't worth using. Choose analogies that are simple and accessible — like already-chewed gum. It's gross and you don't want it? Then we understand each other.

Don't debate analogies

Your opponent runs a great analogy against you and you grimace. It's potent. But wait! If we were to change one detail of the analogy, it would actually help explain your viewpoint!

The result usually plays much like the script at the beginning of this section, and the judge has to deal with hopeless confusion over something that is neither an argument nor proof for an argument. You end up having the debate you should be having, but swapping out all your nouns for ones drawn from the analogy. It's the same debate, but without the "making sense" part.

Avoid the temptation to edit your opponent's analogies, get into an analogy war, or use analogies in cross-ex routines. Analogies should be used carefully and allowed to fade away with dignity. If your opponent runs an analogy you don't like, the best thing you can do is move on and let it be forgotten and overshadowed by your great arguments.

Analogies are a powerful tool to make complex arguments understandable. Use them occasionally and correctly to take your debate to the next level.

Response Rate Calculator

Math is a powerful tool in a debate strategist's arsenal. Its use goes beyond understanding a topic; it helps us solve real problems that would be otherwise insurmountable. This tool helps us analyze effective refutation tactics. Using the **response rate calculator**, you can refute an unlimited number of opposing arguments — even if the opposing team used speed-and-spread tactics in a negative block.

Speeding is the tactic of speaking as quickly as possible to maximize the volume of your arguments. **Spreading** is the tactic of running as many arguments as possible, overwhelming the opponent's ability to respond. Together, speed-and-spread is a strategy — popular in some leagues — that can have success in front of an experienced judge and an untrained debater.

Still, speed-and-spread is not generally effective. It compromises persuasion and makes you look abusive and desperate. If you're hit by speed-and-spread, you must cover everything so the judge has no qualms about voting for you. To do that, get comfortable with the Response Rate Calculator.

134 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

T = time to refute. This is your total speech time expressed in minutes, minus time spent on your introduction, conclusion, and signposting (telling the judge what you're going to cover in your speech). If you have a 30-second intro and a 15-second conclusion for a 5-minute speech, $T = 4:15$. Expressed in decimals, that's 4.25.

A = opposing arguments. This is the number of arguments your opponent has run against you. Dropping is not acceptable; you should respond to everything unless you're making a calculated choice in your last speech. If you are affirmative and the NC contained a value with two reasons to prefer, two contentions with two applications each, and three affirmative case responses, then $A = 12$.

R = response rate. This is the number of arguments you run per argument your opponent runs. If you do a perfect line-by-line response, $R = 1$. If you use multiple responses, R is greater than one: $R > 1$. If you group arguments and respond to them together or you cross-apply, $R < 1$.

S = seconds per argument. This is the amount of time you have per point in your speech to deliver the tag, analysis, and any evidence you want to present.

Combined, time to refute, opposing arguments, and response rate provide the following equation for seconds per argument:

$$(T * 60) / (A * R) = S$$

Assuming a 1AR like the one described above, this becomes

$$(4.25 * 60) / (12 * 1) = 21$$

That's 21 seconds per argument. Doable! But what if your opponent ran a spread, running 30 arguments in the NC?

$$(4.25 * 60) / (30 * 1) = 8.5$$

Now we're in trouble. 8.5 seconds is barely enough time to let the judge know where you are on the flow and give a tag! You'll be speaking as fast as you can but you'll still be hard-pressed to manage it all. Maybe you should cut your introduction and conclusion to save time.

$$(5 * 60) / (30 * 1) = 10$$

The addition of 1.5 seconds per argument makes almost no difference. You'll still come across rushed. Persuasion will be next to impossible; averting falling behind will be a real feat.

So how do you give a speech the judge can listen to without dropping arguments? The key is R — the response rate. By responding to your opponent in groups of arguments, you can regain control of the round and speak with a delivery speed you choose. Let's add our introduction and conclusion back in and speed up our response rates. Now check out the power of these response rates:

$$\begin{aligned}(4.25 * 60) / (30 * 1.3) &= 7 \\ (4.25 * 60) / (30 * 1.0) &= 8 \\ (4.25 * 60) / (30 * 0.8) &= 11 \\ (4.25 * 60) / (30 * 0.6) &= 14 \\ (4.25 * 60) / (30 * 0.4) &= 21\end{aligned}$$

With a controlled response rate, you can increase your seconds per argument back to the point that you can give a reasonable speech. Once you've mastered response rate, you can do some really fun things. Suppose the NC presents an argument every minute ($S = 60$), for a total of 7 arguments. With a great response rate ($R = 0.5$), you can run a full 30-second intro and conclusion and still speak slower than the negative!

$$(4 * 60) / (70 * 0.5) = 67$$

Suppose your opponent spreads you and runs 60 arguments. That's a new argument every 7 seconds for the entire speech, leaving the judge bewildered and confused. Everyone looks at you with pity; they *know* you can't address everything! You abandon your intro and conclusion, control your response rate, and actually *speak slower than the negative without dropping a single point*:

$$(5 * 60) / (60 * 0.5) = 10$$

That's still fast, but it's 43 percent slower than the negative. Once you get to this point, you'll be resisting the urge to finish the speech, turn to your spammy opponent, and say: "In your *face*!" This level of prowess feels great and it empowers you to counter a dangerous strategy without whining to the judge about abuse — which is always a bad idea.

Adjusting your response rate is not easy. It takes practice and self-control. Most debaters get stuck on the points early in the speech, burning a minute or more on extra sentences. Then they spend the last 20 seconds frantically covering the rest of the flow.

During practice, use the Response Rate Calculator to estimate how much time you have per argument. Then deliver with a stopwatch counting each second, moving on to the next argument when S has expired. Eventually you'll train yourself not to get stuck early in the speech and you'll be a much more effective speaker.

Adjusting response rate on the flow can be difficult, but it's perfectly doable through practice. The more arguments your opponents run, the more similar they all are. Look for common trends in the argumentation, refute those, and relax.

Takeaways:

136 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

1. **Don't abandon persuasion.** Removing your intro and conclusion does not significantly impact your delivery speed.
2. **Lower your response rate.** Grouping and cross-applying allow you to refute a virtually unlimited number of arguments while still speaking slower than your opponent.
3. **Spam doesn't work.** Speed-and-spread is not an effective tactic against well-trained debaters.
4. **Don't drop.** There is no good excuse for dropping an argument. If you drop arguments, you need to prioritize refutation drills and study the debate format.

Key 11

Build Strong Character

"For, if a good speaker, never so eloquent, does not see into the fact, and is not speaking the truth of that - is there a more horrid kind of object in creation?" -Thomas Carlyle, satirical writer

One of my greatest fears as a speech and debate coach is that I am helping develop a brilliant orator who will use his skills for evil. Patrick Henry was a great speaker, but so was Adolf Hitler. Knowing how to transfer enthusiasm is an extrinsic good. It can comfort, convince, and inspire, or it can confuse, deceive, and oppress. Thus, as with any activity, character is of the utmost importance. Here are some powerful life lessons that will help you get the most from your time in debate.

Accept Defeat

"I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed." -Michael Jordan, basketball legend

Let's briefly revisit the phrase: "The judge is always right." The judge doesn't have to abide by any particular theory or paradigm; he can decide to vote based on how his tummy feels and no one can stop him.

Believe it or not, speech and debate is one of the fairest things you'll ever do. When you graduate and get a job and a household, you'll find a world rife with unfairness. People will make decisions that change your life based on things much sillier than anything you found on a ballot. And if you can't find a way to communicate and persuade and empathize with those people, you'll flounder.

Debate isn't just a sport. It's about giving you the tools you need to succeed. It's about putting you in front of complete strangers and teaching you to get on their level and speak to them in a way that will make them want to help you. If you can't — or won't — do that, you're missing the whole point.

When you read a ballot that references your opponent's tie, don't grit your teeth in anger. Take a deep breath, and learn from it. Maybe you can't learn anything about the arguments. Maybe you just need to learn not to feel entitled to victory. Humble yourself.

I entered my third year of competition as a favorite for the national title. I had come in fifth place the year before, and everyone ahead of me had graduated. I was feeling good – too good. I was surprised when I experienced a string of tournament performances that were way below my goals. I was bitterly

138 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

disappointed, and I fell prey to the temptation of explaining why it wasn't my fault. With each loss, I became more cynical — because admitting that I wasn't God's gift to debate hurt.

One day, a friend of mine at a tournament abruptly cut me off to say: "You know what? You're really arrogant." It was a slap in the face. I still remember it as if she said it to me 5 minutes ago, because it really hurt. It was exactly what I needed. I had to go home and confront the ugly character flaws within myself. I prayed and resolved to be humble. For the rest of the season, I was undefeated on affirmative and won several state and regional championships.

At Nationals, I didn't break to outrounds. It was the ultimate test of my character, to see if I had learned anything from the year. I was disappointed, but I was not discouraged. I had learned to smile in the face of defeat.

I went on to compete for two more years and won many accolades. But that third year — the year of disappointment — was the most important for me. It changed my life.

"We must expect reverses, even defeats. They are sent to teach us wisdom and prudence, to call forth greater energies, and to prevent our falling into greater disasters." -Robert E. Lee, general of the Confederate Army

Be Ethical

The use of evidence requires two basic ethical considerations. First, **always cite your source**. Any words you utter that aren't yours need a source and date, whether they amount to a quotation, a headline, or a definition. You should also be able to show how you got that evidence if it is challenged (e.g., a hyperlink).

Second, **capture the author's intent**. Lightly editing the evidence to condense the meaning or remove hyperbole is acceptable. But be very cautious as you add and remove words. Don't give the author a meaning he didn't intend. Don't even explicitly say something he seems to be implying. Imagine how you'd feel having someone else chop up your words and restate them. Debaters must be gentle, accurate, and scrupulous.

Show what words have been removed by reducing their font size. This helps you to read the card clearly, but still see what has been changed. Here's an example from a case written by one of my students named Grant Kalasky:

Dr. Theodore Curry, Associate Professor of Sociology, said in 2010:
<http://borderzine.com/2010/08/diagnosing-crime-the-failures-of-rehabilitation-in-the-justice-system/>
Some criminals are just not interested in changing," says Dr. Curry. "This does not make them good candidates, which makes rehabilitation programs a waste of time, money and effort ... There is no rehabilitation." [Elipses in the original]

Be Gracious

Debate is a highly competitive sport. The desire to win is a healthy and necessary part of a debater's mindgame. But when the inevitable losses come your way, you'll find yourself tested.

The natural human reaction to disappointment is to find someone else to blame. In debate, this expresses itself as indignation at a judge for making the wrong decision. This is easy, but it won't make you feel better and it will keep you from learning. Take responsibility for every round. Fight to win. If you lose, find a way to explain it and learn from it. There is almost always something you could have done differently to pull off a victory — study your ballot carefully to find out what it was.

Keep a positive attitude at all times. In defeat, congratulate the victors (whether or not you think they deserved to win). In victory, be gracious to the losers. Disappointment is a powerful emotion — you can channel it into a constructive drive to be even better or a destructive drive to make other people as miserable as you. Harness disappointment with maturity.

Be Humble

Disappointment hurts. To avoid the pain, debaters tend to assume that they're going to fail, and scale their goals accordingly. This expectation creates reality.

After a few tournaments, a novice should aim for more than just getting through every round. To the experienced debater who thinks a mere winning record is satisfactory: you can do better! After several whole years of practice, you should demand nothing less of yourself than greatness. Not a passing, workable familiarity with occasional, smash successes — consistent greatness.

But be careful. False humility is arrogance in disguise. It's a slap in the face to the loving creator who blessed you in a thousand different ways. I'm not talking about that cheesy Barney-the-Dinosaur-style "you're special!" I'm talking about hard truth: You were given gifts that allow you to be exceptional, and shrugging them off is nothing less than a sin. True humility means embracing greatness, accepting deserved praise, and acknowledging the sources of your success.

Think about what you're achieving right now. Now think about what you would be achieving if you were great. Now go do it.

Be Strong

At some point this year, you're probably going to get bullied.

No, you're not going to be taken into an alley and forced to give up your lunch money. But even in the Christian leagues I coach the most, bullying is widespread. Teenagers can be incredibly mean, oftentimes not realizing it.

140 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

What does bullying look like?

Bullying is teasing someone about their case as they walk to the room.
Bullying is bragging to your opponent about how much you will or have beat him.
Bullying is bringing up someone's insecurities in conversation (like height or acne).
Bullying is sitting in the back of a room whispering while someone is trying to give a speech.
Bullying is using arguments that you know will antagonize your opponent.
Bullying is telling someone they don't stand a chance when they see postings.
Bullying is hanging out only with the cool kids.
Bullying is using your status to feel superior to the rookies.

There are various and complex reasons for bullying. Some learn it from emotionally maladjusted friends, siblings, or parents. Others are trying to compensate for hidden insecurities. Generally, bullies are struggling with selfishness and poor social skills.

I've coached national-level students who suffered from vicious emotional bullying. The bullies probably didn't realize what they were doing — many don't — but the damage they were doing was serious.

Here are a few tips on coping with bullying at a forensic tournament:

Use the Learning Opportunity

One of the reasons I love speech and debate is that it teaches so many critical life lessons beyond how to think and persuade. As you grow older, bullying will only get worse. Learning how to deal with it now will make you a stronger, better human being. If you can handle it with grace, without building a grudge, without letting it tear you down, while working for the betterment of yourself and your antagonist, you have a skill that will only be more valuable with time.

Love your Enemy

This is the most important and hardest thing to do to a bully. You're a mortal, and that means you're not in a position to judge. You don't know what that bully is going through, but for him to act as he does means he's probably in a lot of hidden pain. Bullies need love as much as anyone. Remember that you don't need to like someone to love them (if you don't believe me, ask your parents). Nor is it up to you to change their behavior. Try to cultivate a genuine hope that they be happy and successful, no matter how badly they hurt you.

Build a Museum

Here's a technique for coping with aggressive emotional attacks. Imagine a museum full of magnificent specimens of art and antiquity. Every day, the curator receives dozens of boxes with objects people want added to the museum. Some of those boxes contain beautiful masterpieces of lasting value. Others contain jagged black rocks from an old volcano. The curator mounts the masterpieces; he lights them properly, he places placards near them, he surrounds them with

guardrails and display glass. These are objects to be treasured and dwelled on. But the volcanic rocks? He throws them in the dump and doesn't give them another thought.

You are the curator over the museum of your heart. Everyone in your life is sending you boxes of emotional content they want you to display. Some send you affirmation and love: your family, your dear friends. But others send you jagged black rocks. These are the bullies, and what they send you should be tossed in the dump; don't dwell on them.

The human heart is perverse, finicky, and wicked. If left to its own devices, it will destroy you. You have to take care of your heart and grow it in the right ways by using your most powerful weapon: your mind. Don't feed your heart garbage! If a bully suggests that you're not valuable or competent or smart or pretty, choose to reject it. Shrug it off and do not dwell on it. Make this a habit. Eventually you can start searching out and removing the volcanic rocks that have already been installed in your museum.

It's not Personal

When people are dealing with a lot of conflict in their lives, they should find constructive ways to cope with it, such as prayer, friendship, perspective, and hard work. Sadly, not everyone is strong enough to do that. When a bully is miserable, he needs everyone else to be miserable too. He says and does things that hurt others just to try to alleviate his own suffering. He's like a wounded bear lashing out in a blind rage.

When you're treated thoughtlessly, remember that it's not a reflection on you. It's a reflection on how much the bully is suffering. Rather than get angry or hurt, be filled with pity.

Check Yourself

Remember that emotional bullying is often perpetrated unwittingly. Analyze your own actions and thoughts. Are you taking your pain and insecurities out on others? That's never, ever appropriate. Get help from mentors you trust so you can find constructive ways of coping with life.

Here's the bottom line: bullying will never go away, but with practice and prayer you can thrive in a negative environment.

Be Competitive

"A champion is afraid of losing. Everyone else is afraid of winning." -Billie Jean King, tennis player

Every human being is born with the natural urge to succeed. This translates into a number of instincts, such as survival, competition, and excellence. These God-given instincts are powerful motivators that drive us to be better. In academic forensics, the urge to succeed gives you strength when you've been speaking for days; it makes you take every round seriously; it drives you to study every ballot to learn

142 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

as much as you can from it; it keeps your eyes open when you're scrolling through court decisions and census data and scientific reports.

Without the urge to be the best you can be, academic forensics would die overnight.

But caring about competition hurts, because you don't always succeed. Sometimes you lose a round you just *know* you should have won. Sometimes your goal of quarterfinals is met with a failure to break at all. Sometimes a speech into which you sank your heart and soul performs terribly at a tournament. It's easier and less painful to just relax and let the chips fall where they may.

When you're in the student lounge and you ask your friend how his round went, there's a good chance he'll give you an answer something like this: "I'm hoping I won, but I'm assuming I lost so I'm not disappointed." Do not be this person.

Depending on the league, region, and leadership at your tournament, you may face official efforts that discourage competitive spirit—such as a ban on cheering when someone gets an award. Do not let this get into your head.

Just as you'll face a constant barrage of negative energy in the “real world,” you'll have to deal with plenty of people who don't think you should care about doing well. Some are your close friends. Others are the “cool kids” who concern themselves with more important things like dressing well, gossiping, and making fun of you. And, most tragically, there are many adults who have fallen victim to the lie that kids will be better off if they don't try their hardest to win.

It pains me to have to say this, because it should be obvious: *It's not cool to not care.*

You should invest emotionally in everything you do. You should commit to being your best. And if and when you fail, you should be disappointed. Not discouraged, but disappointed. If you're not, you don't truly care. Of course disappointment hurts! Use that pain to push yourself forward. Let it drive you to be even better.

In the thousands of years of human existence, not a single human being has succeeded in life without experiencing heart-breaking disappointment. It's a rite of passage. If you never experience disappointment, it means you're not trying hard enough or aiming high enough, and that's true failure. Invest yourself completely in what you do, and you'll be a more successful human being.

“I firmly believe that any man's finest hour, the greatest fulfillment of all that he holds dear, is that moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle – victorious.” -Vince Lombardi, football coach

Be Professional

There are big differences between a professional swimmer and the average member of the local swim team. Those differences run through every part of their existence. Most obvious, the athlete has a

body that is trained, strong, and sleek. The athlete can close his eyes and feel the water against his skin; he can imagine how it feels to streak through the waves because he does it for hours every day. Stand the two next to each other, and it's clear which one is the athlete.

But there are other, deeper differences as well. When the athlete dives into the water, he isn't just doing something to kill a morning or stay fit. He has come home. This is his profession and his place of mastery. There is a seriousness to a professional swimmer when he meets the water.

Ask a young teenage member of the swim team what he wants from swimming and he'll say something like: "I want to have fun, do my best, hang out with my friends, and get some exercise." Ask a professional swimmer, and he'll say: "I'm training to go to Olympic finals in the 200 meter freestyle."

Both of these people will get what they set out for. But unless the swim team member learns to reprogram his thinking, he will never swim in anything but a local pool. This reprogramming is not easy or simple. It does not come naturally. Training in this kind of thinking is one of the primary responsibilities of a high-level swim coach.

The local swimmer will have fun, do his best, hang out with his friends, and get some exercise. Then he'll go home with nothing to show for himself but a slightly healthier body. The athlete will have fun, do his best, hang out with his friends, and get some exercise. He'll come home with an Olympic medal, lucrative sponsorship offers, the acclaim of the entire world, and a body that could wrestle a saber-tooth tiger and win.

Ask yourself: Are you an amateur speaker, out to have fun and pick up a few skills? Or are you really serious about this activity? Are you willing to invest in it? Will you settle for a pat on the back from your best friend, or will you look at the top of your field and aim to be even better? Will you accept what you are in this moment, or will you constantly adapt and challenge and redefine what "best" really means?

The spark of excellence dimly flickers within you. It will grow with practice. It will grow with study. It will grow with expert guidance. But without that key element of professionalism, that spark will never shine beyond the lighting of a match.

Make your light shine brightly. Shovel coal on that spark — pour gasoline on it. Let it flare up into a bonfire that can be seen across an ocean, and give warmth that will stay long after you are gone. If you want to be that kind of person, you need to embrace a different mindset. You need to reprogram yourself to be a professional.

Be Visionary

There's a creature in speech and debate who copes with a completely unique experience. Competition, club meets, research, and making friends — everything tastes different and means something special to this creature.

144 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

I am speaking of the senior novice: the competitor who is simultaneously going through both his first and last year in academic forensics.

For those who caught the “debate bug” late, being a senior novice is hard. “I’m just learning how to do this. Right when I start figuring it out, I’ll graduate!” This plight is lamentable, but the thinking behind it only makes it worse.

Whether you’re in your first year or your sixth, you’re vulnerable to *short-term thinking*. This is the most exciting, changing, empowering time of life you’ve ever experienced. You’re dressing well, you’re travelling, and people are listening to you. In all likelihood, your fondest memories and closest friendships have all come from this activity. It’s easy to think of graduation as the end. You’ll go on to college; you’ll say your goodbyes; a different phase of life will begin that probably won’t be as great as this one.

Assuming you’re on good terms with your family, it’s safe to say that this really is a wonderful time of your life. But it’s hardly the last, and it’s hardly the best. Importantly, it’s not even the conclusion of your study of speaking, thinking, and persuading.

The “real world,” which exists just past your final graduation and your transition into the workforce (or whatever you plan to do with your life) is a very different place. The real world is less fair than a sleeping community judge, faster paced than cross-ex, less organized than flowing on a Post-It, and more disappointing than an 0-6 record. You don’t get prep time, time signals, or ballots. But the friendships you form and carry on will be closer, the victories more magnificent, and the memories more wonderful.

Speech and debate is just training. I know you’ve heard that before, but stop and consider it for a moment: *it’s just training*. When you flunk out on the interview for your dream job, you’ll know how to take rejection. When your co-worker asks about your faith, you’ll know how to speak to the heart without offending. When your customer asks you what you sell, you’ll make it the most magical thing she’s ever heard of. When your mother-in-law insults you, you’ll be able to keep your cool.

Whether you’re a senior novice or a three-time national champion, your journey has just begun. Don’t practice this event just to win a tournament (though that’s a great short-term goal). Reprogram your thinking. You will keep studying and getting better for the rest of your life. Imagine what an awesome speaker you’ll be at age 50! Instead, adopt *long-term thinking*, and you’ll be more successful both now and in the future.

Be Honest with Yourself

Over the course of the last week, you made mistakes. Not just a few slip-ups, but serious, major mistakes. You missed great opportunities. You burned bridges. You made yourself and the people around you more miserable. And you have no idea that you did it.

It hurts to admit that you're wrong. Doing it on occasion is bearable, but doing it on a regular basis is very humbling. To compensate for the constant error, your brain has devised a nifty mechanism called **backwards rationalization**: the use of convenient logic to justify an emotional decision.

Theoretically, you should make decisions in accordance with your values. You should be smart; you should be self-controlled; you should think ahead. But in the heat of the moment, with emotions running high, you don't think. You do what you want, and later you look back and come up with a non-emotional reason so you don't feel bad about it.

Suppose I go to a mechanic to get my car fixed. While I'm there, the mechanic talks me into getting my car repainted with flames on the side. Even though I can't really afford it, I do it because I want to feel in control and impress other people. Subconsciously I trick myself into thinking: "I'm sick of losing my car in big parking lots. Now it will stand out, which will save me time, and therefore money in the long run." It's still a bad decision, but I'm not willing to face it.

I get a bigger apartment because "I deserve it" and justify it with "We need more space."
I listen to music I hate because "It will make me cool" and justify it with "It's an acquired taste."
I quit my job because "I'm tired of working" and justify it with "My band is about to take off."

Backwards rationalization is an obstacle to your success in speech and debate and keeps you from getting better. Maybe all your ballots say that your case is too confusing, but you think it's brilliant. You justify "I want to keep talking about my pet issue" with "Judges are stupid sometimes." That might make you feel better for now, but it won't help you grow.

If you want to be better than you are right now, you need to catch yourself rationalizing your emotional, bad decisions. Doing your absolute best is work. Sometimes it's hard, sometimes it's boring, sometimes it hurts. But it's better to go through that than keep yourself from success.

We won't stop making mistakes — we're human. But if we can admit them, we can advance to the next level of speaking.

How are you fooling yourself to protect your bad decisions?

Conclusion

Debate is like anything else in life: You need to practice to improve. I wouldn't expect you to read this book once, get all you can from it, and go out and be excellent. Consider this book a resource and a guide. If you have a question about theory or strategy, turn here for an answer. If you're discouraged about the last tournament, come here. If you want to know how to construct your new, crazy case idea, come here. But when you're done, put this book down and go to a tournament. Lose. Be disappointed. Learn from your experiences. Then go out and do a little better each time until, through hard work and a willingness to change, you have become a debate titan.

I'm a professional independent coach, and I'd love to help you along the way. Stop by my website at travisherche.com for free tips, analysis, and news, or just to say hello. I love hearing from students.

I hope this book helped you along your journey to excellence, and I wish you the very best. God bless you!

Appendix A

Sample Cases

Below are six sample cases that should give you a point of reference going into a round. Some demonstrate tricky theory, like resolutional objections. Others are fairly straightforward. These cases include snippets of rhetoric to help explain a point. In prep, you probably won't have time to jot down more than a sentence or two. Nonetheless, your cases should follow these basic patterns.

Remember: There is no perfect, bulletproof case. The cases shown here have all been defeated in competition. One has a weak thematic core, the next a confusing value. There's always a weak spot somewhere. Don't study these cases to copy them, but to take what's good from them and then write your own.

Many of these cases are republished with permission from my students. In online coaching sessions, we collaborated to make them as strong as possible. Others are original cases that were written for competition in years past. Enjoy!

Affirmative: Freedom to Starve

By Michael Tcheau

Resolved: When in conflict, economic security ought to be valued over personal freedom.

The wording in each sentence is very carefully chosen. Notice how hunger is worked into the rhetoric in compelling ways, helping the judge to visualize and relate to (or at least feel bad about) starvation. The longer the judge had gone since the last meal, the better this case was. Notice how complex ideas like the value link application or Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs are presented cleanly and efficiently. This case is well-constructed, persuasive, and understandable; everything an application-centric Lincoln-Douglas case should be.

BBC World News reported on Zimbabwe in 2003: "Hungry people queue for meager rations ... children's hair has changed color from malnutrition. . . The elderly too are beginning to suffer terribly. Not much food, and not much hope of it either. . . some compete with wild animals for what they can scavenge." I believe that hunger is the most driving force of any action, and that only economic security can fill hungry stomachs. So I stand resolved: When in conflict, economic security ought to be valued over personal freedom.

148 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Today I propose the **Value of Life** defined by *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary* as, “the animate, universal condition of human existence.” I have one value link to show you why Life is the highest value.

Value Link: Most Foundational. Life is the start of any society, any value, and any desired object. Jefferson's and Locke's hierarchy of rights puts life before liberty and property, because it is fundamental. The **application** of the Russian province of **Chechnya** proves this perfectly. In the 1990's, Chechnya was an exporter of wheat and barley. However, high-powered officials were able to stir up the Chechnyans with words such “We must give up our lives, and our children's lives in order to live in a free country.”

In 1999, Chechnya waged a brutal, bloody, and ultimately futile war against its own country. The massive Russian army quickly put down the rebellion, but in the conflict, the wheat and barley fields were destroyed. Today, Chechnya is swept by famine because of the actions taken in conflict for personal freedom. The Chechen warlords got their wish. Today, their children are starving to death because of a decision taken for the reckless pursuit of freedom.

The **Criterion** — or means of achieving Life — is **Food**, which is operationally defined as, “something that provides physical sustenance.” Abraham Maslow outlines in his paper *A Theory of Human Motivation*, the basic needs of every human in a pyramid. At the foundation of the pyramid was the requirement: “Sustenance such as food and water.” Nothing is more essential to life than food.

Contention 1: Personal Freedom threatens Food. Personal freedom caused the Indian state of Bengal to suffer a horrific famine. Bengal was under tight control from the British East India Trading Company. This massive corporation regulated the farmers in every aspect — even telling them what to grow. The people of Bengal lived sustainably, with no fear of starvation. However in 1768, the local state government took over. It allowed the farmers to grow whatever they wished. So the farmers, motivated by physical pleasure, all switched to opium. Just one year after gaining freedom, Bengal's food stockpiles had depleted. One in every three people died. By the end of the famine, 10 million people had starved to death at the hands of personal freedom.

Contention 2: Economic Security provides Food. This is proven in two subpoints:

a. Regulation. The largest exporter of food per capita is the nation of Israel. Israel is so agriculturally successful that on average, it grows \$2 billion worth of food weekly. Israeli citizens voluntarily give up their freedoms to be economically secure. The Israeli government limits certain freedoms in order to establish a stable society, which requires the sacrifice of some freedoms including stringent agricultural regulations. But the Israelis are more than happy to give up these freedoms in order to have food.

b. Anarchy. In 1980, Zimbabwe was living happily under the English government, which provided restrictions that led to a flourishing sugarcane industry. Then the Zimbabwean people decided to take matters into their own hands by abolishing all laws restricting any freedom. Even crimes like theft and robbery became legal. But because Zimbabwe chose personal freedom in the place of economic security, it continues to suffer from anarchy to this day and 7 million people face starvation. The life expectancy of a Zimbabwean is just 37 years. This is what personal freedom can do to life.

President Franklin Roosevelt once said, “True individual freedom cannot exist without economic security. People who are hungry and out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made.”

Affirmative: How Many Fingers, Winston?

By Travis Herche

Resolved: that in the pursuit of justice, due process ought to be valued over discovery of fact.

This is a value-centric affirmative case that was designed to preempt the popular negative value of Safety. Notice how the rhetoric connects an abstract science fiction world to the judge. For example, Value Link 3 heavy use of the word “you” and describes actions the judge probably does all the time. The rhetoric in Contention 2 subtly implicates the negative speaker with tyrants. This case is also a good example of what you can do when you limit the number of points you want to make. With careful control of time, I was able to spend the last 2 minutes of the speech on the United Kingdom application — making it as visual, relatable, and scary as possible.

George Orwell’s 1984 describes a terrifying world. The government watches its citizens at every street corner and in every room with the help of telescreens, devices that record citizen behavior and broadcast propaganda. The year 1984 has come and gone, but Orwell’s potent warning still rings loudly, and it echoes in the resolution that I support today: in the pursuit of justice, due process ought to be valued over discovery of fact.

Before I prove this resolution to be true, let me offer you two **definitions**. All definitions in this case are from the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*.

Justice is “The principle of moral rightness; equity.”

Due Process is defined as: “An established course for judicial proceedings or other governmental activities designed to safeguard the legal rights of the individual.”

Value: Privacy. Privacy is: “The state of being free from unsanctioned intrusion.” This is a good value for three reasons.

150 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Value Link 1: Describes Conflict. At the heart of the resolution lies one basic question: how should privacy be handled in the pursuit of justice? Thus, this value is perfect for evaluating the round.

Value Link 2: Inherent Good. Privacy is a sacred, God-given right alongside rights like life and liberty. The founding fathers went to great lengths to preserve privacy in the first, third, fourth, ninth, and fourteenth amendments to the Constitution. They understood that your freedom to unsanctioned intrusion is a bedrock foundation to human existence.

Value Link 3: Extrinsic Good. Political scientists have a word for a society without privacy. It's "dystopia." Dystopian societies are described in political fiction like 1984 and V for Vendetta, but they're also approaching with the rise of hi-tech surveillance and counter-terrorist laws.

The basic need for privacy goes beyond just the individual. Society needs it to function. When you draw your curtains, when you lock your door, when you deposit a check, when you whisper a secret, when you choose not to tell someone about your personal life or your medical history or your financial situation: you are enjoying the benefits of privacy.

This resolution affirms the value of privacy, as I'll show in two contentions.

Contention 1: Due Process protects Privacy

The government's appetite for information is insatiable because government only sees potential threats to public safety. It doesn't realize that the biggest threat is the government itself. Left to its own devices, a government will steadily chip away at the privacy of its citizens. The police will make a few more arrests along the way and we'll all feel a bit safer until we look around and realize that we're living in dystopia. History has shown that, having reached that point, revolution is the only recourse.

The barrier between us and dystopia is a set of rules that limit the ability of government to engage in unsanctioned intrusion. We call this set of rules due process. Consider the **Application of Search Warrants**. When you're suspected of a crime, the police can't just raid your house on a whim while you're away at the grocery store. Your protection against unwarranted search and seizure ensures that police searches only occur when there is solid evidence suggesting that someone is a suspect.

Search warrants are just part of a network of barriers around your privacy. As long as they are in place, your God-given rights are safe and society can function.

Contention 2: Discovery of Fact opposes Privacy

In the pursuit of justice, discovery of fact is the belief that law enforcement should have access to any information it needs or wants. This is the polar opposite of privacy. Those who support unwanted

intrusion try to justify it with scare tactics. They point to dangerous criminals and terrorists. “We can keep you safe,” they promise — but the consequences of believing them are dire.

The discovery of fact movement is enjoying a lot of popularity in the **Application** of the **United Kingdom**. English Attorney General Dominic Grieve said: “It is not right that we charge our police with combating crime ... and then tie their hands behind their backs.”

This does seem like a harmless sentiment. Yet the price for this thinking is an explosion of privacy invasions. The government is using every tool at its disposal to keep track of its citizens. Here’s a menu of anti-privacy devices police can use, often without a warrant: fingerprint scanners, GPS tracking, secret databases, thermal and x-ray surveillance, license plate recognition, police stakeouts, closed circuit television, and secret recording devices in homes and cars.

Police can also force citizens to provide encryption keys for their private files. British prisons are currently holding a number of citizens whose only crime is refusing to unscramble their data for nosy police. The penalty for this behavior is up to five years in prison.

Police surveillance is like a bear attack. You never think it’ll happen to you, and that’s why it does. Provisions that were intended for dangerous criminals and terrorists are now ubiquitous.

The citizens of the UK are at the mercy of their government. No detail of their lives, no matter how personal, is safe. Citizens are put under surveillance when they go to work, have dinner, even when they are sleeping in their beds — just to check if they are misbehaving in some way, like going to the wrong school district or smoking underage.

The UK now teeters on the brink of dystopia because it ignored the need for due process.

Privacy is not negotiable. It is a human right and a necessary gear for a functional society. The resolution gives you the chance to affirm the importance of due process as a safeguard to privacy, so I ask you to vote for it.

Affirmative: Taming the Government

By Christian Fernandez

Resolved: A government’s legitimacy is determined more by its respect for popular sovereignty than individual rights.

This is a complex, amoral resolution. The case presents some pretty complex ideas, but makes them beautifully accessible with the use of an analogy and clear, direct language. Note that this case uses three contentions even though there are only two subjects in the resolution. This is a unique move to make sure that the full logic of the case did not become muddled. The result is a case that is easy to understand but difficult to refute.

152 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Daniel Webster once said: “I hold it (U.S. government) to be a popular government, erected by the people; those who administer it, responsible to the people...The people sir, erected this government.” It is because I stand by Webster that people are fundamental to government that I stand resolved: “A government’s legitimacy is determined more by its respect for popular sovereignty than individual rights.”

For clarity, I present the following three **Definitions**.

1. **Legitimacy:** Being justified in authority. -Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
2. **Popular Sovereignty:** The doctrine that sovereign power is vested in the people and that those chosen to govern, as trustees of such power, must exercise it in conformity with the general will. -*Random House Dictionary*
3. **Individual Rights:** That which people naturally possess, are inalienable, and fall within a moral boundary. -Philosophy in Practice by Eric Barnes/University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Ph.D./May 1998

Let’s move now to the Value of the affirmative case.

Value: Chartered Government. This is operationally defined as: “The doctrine that government can and should be legally limited in its powers, and that its legitimacy depends on its observing these limitations.”

Value Link: Topic Context. Chartered Government is a standard external to the resolution by which we can measure whether popular sovereignty or individual rights more determine a government’s legitimacy. Here is how Chartered Government applies to legitimacy.

Picture a herd of wild horses representing government. Now imagine that a fence is built around those horses. This fence is a charter for government. Chartered Government is one with a fence around the areas where its authority is justified, and outside that fence is where government’s authority is not justified. Chartered Government means the horses are prevented from straying into illegitimacy.

I now offer three contentions, starting with...

Contention 1: Popular Sovereignty creates Chartered Government

Having a fence around the government is great, but how does it get there? That is where Popular Sovereignty comes in. The people are the builders of Chartered Government. They limit government within the realms of justified authority. This is how Popular Sovereignty is linked to Chartered Government and in turn legitimacy.

This is historically illustrated in the **Application of Massachusetts**. The people established a chartered government through a state constitution that organized the

government. The first draft of the constitution was rejected by the people because it lacked the people's participation. Recognizing their mistake, state leaders used popular sovereignty as a key ingredient to the government they were building. The result was a harmony between the people and the government.

Contention 2: Popular Sovereignty enforces Chartered Government

In contrast to a medieval doctrine that people are the servants of government, popular sovereignty says that government is subject to people. Put another way, government authority is justified by the people, and the people enforce it.

Popular Sovereignty allows citizens to build and constantly repair the horse pen of Chartered Government. They limit government to justified authority, and prevent it from expanding into the wasteland.

All of these principles of Popular Sovereignty can be seen through the **Application of English Civil War**. The people were frustrated by the unjustified authority of King Charles I. Because he consistently ignored the people's concerns, his monarchy became illegitimate. The revolution that followed showed that when the people oppose a government's use of authority, government's authority is not justified, and the government in turn is illegitimate.

Government legitimacy is about authority being justified. As the affirmative, I am showing that the resolution provides an accurate measure for government authority. If you agree, I will urge you to side with me in favor of the resolution.

As Thomas Jefferson said, "The will of the people...is the...legitimate foundation of any government."

Contention 3. Individual Rights provide no limit

When government does not have a charter, it is free to pursue whatever end it deems most worthy. Government can expand in the name of protecting Individual Rights. While this pursuit can begin innocently, it can quickly become dangerous if left unchecked. Like a crack in a dam that begins as a gentle trickle and soon threatens to break the entire structure, placing too high a priority on individual rights can have dire consequences. Citizens create limits on government, and they enforce limits on government. A government left to its own devices is a disaster waiting to happen.

Consider the **Application of the Early Progressive Movement**. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Progressive movement constantly called out for government intervention in protecting the rights of workers. While at first this seemed innocent, the movement only grew more and more relentless in its demands for government involvement. This led to heavy-handed meddling in the lives of average Americans, both

154 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

in economic and social matters. In eleven short years, U.S. government expenditure more than doubled. By WWI, government size was ballooning with no signs of slowing down.

In conclusion, we have seen that a government's justified authority is determined more by its respect for popular sovereignty than individual rights. As 18th century British political philosopher James Burgh said, "All lawful authority, legislative, and executive, originates from the people."

Negative: Save Ami

By Michael Tcheau

"Resolved: When in conflict, personal freedom ought to be valued over economic security."

This case uses an anecdote to create a powerful emotional medium for the case. The goal is to make starvation less academic and more urgent. Ami's story is perfectly written for the spoken word. This case was very successful; affirmatives struggled with ways to neutralize the Ami story without looking heartless or simply amplifying it.

Ami, a young native of India, is like any other 10-year-old boy. He laughs when he's happy, gets hungry when there's no food, and cries when he gets hurt. However unlike normal 10-year-old boys, Ami must work in an Indian Gap factory. His only possessions are a small plastic comb, an old comic book, and a toy stuffed elephant. Ami works 16 hours a day, is fed so little food that his ribs stick out, and is beaten with rubber rods until his hands and legs bleed. His wages? 10 cents. Not 10 cents an hour, 10 cents a day. This kind of exploitation that personal freedom allows is unacceptable. Because of this, I have no choice but to oppose this resolution.

(If necessary) Economic security is operationally defined as: "Access to basic needs infrastructure such as food, shelter, and clean water."

Resolutional Analysis: Personal freedom is not coercion.

Infringements can only occur when there is direct force. For example, if Ami was physically forced by sweatshop owners to work as slave, then by definition his personal freedom would have been violated. However, since Ami chose to work at a sweatshop, then his personal freedom was not infringed. Therefore, personal freedom is only violated by direct coercion.

My **counter-value** in today's debate round: **Justice**, defined as: The equal administration of law for the protection of human rights and prevention of unethical or selfish behavior. Justice is the highest value because it is the goal of society. Daniel Webster once wrote "Justice, is the great interest of man on earth. It is the ligament which holds civilized beings and civilized nations together. Wherever her temple stands ... there is a foundation for general security, general happiness, and the improvement and progress of our race."

Contention 1: Personal freedom allows for injustice.

Personal freedom allows for injustice for two reasons.

a. Personal freedom exploits the poor.

Personal freedom exploits the poor because a total free market takes advantage of people for profit incentive. Take a look at the example of Pfizer, a pharmaceutical giant in the United States who, in skirting market regulations, released an untested children's antibiotic in Nigeria. According to a 2007 BBC report, one in four children who used the drug died. Valuing personal freedom allows corporations to skirt regulation as Pfizer never coerced the Nigerians to buy their drugs. Personal freedom is self-limiting, but its hands are still bloodstained.

b. Personal freedom exploits the young.

Personal freedom exploits the young because it treats children, like Ami, as cogs in the corporate machine's obsessive pursuit of cheap labor. Throughout the world, corporations use sweatshops to exploit children into back-breaking conditions without directly harming their rights. Here is the conflict: because children "technically" have a choice to work in the factory or not — they are never coerced. Economic security wisely prevents personal freedom from sucking the lifeblood from the innocent.

Contention 2: Economic security is just.

Since personal freedom exploits the innocent, Economic security becomes a just, protective shield against that exploitation. Consider the example of predatory lender laws. During the 1900s many Americans fell victim to lenders who push quick loans with abusive interest rates. Until 1994, these predators drove many people from the comfort of their homes into poverty on the streets. This tragedy is the direct result of personal freedom. Instead of allowing this abuse to continue, the United States established the Equity Protection Act, valuing Economic Security as its shield to prevent exploitation. Now before my opponent comes up here and says, that these companies and people were upholding their own economic security, I'd like to point out that those conducting the abuse can always provide for their basic needs. They valued greed, and personal freedom allowed this to happen.

Tolerating the evils personal freedom is unacceptable. Fortunately, you can do something about it. Voting for economic security puts a stop to the corporate machine that would take advantage of a child's hunger.

"What does it matter to the widow, the orphan, the dead and the dying, if their mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism, or the holy name of liberty and democracy." -Gandhi

Negative: My Hammer Objects

By Olivia Rogers

156 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Resolved: That governments have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need.

This is a textbook resolutional objection. (For more on the theory behind it, see Key 7.) Note that the reasons to prefer are not prescribed; this is because Olivia adapted her rhetoric to best take down her opponent's definition (if necessary). This case does not use a conflict observation because it is so obviously implied in the thesis. The tag would be "Gov vs Individual." This case also makes extensive use of analogies to try to demystify a very abstract idea. Some of the rhetoric is "missing" from this case – the reason is that the rhetoric is adjusted every round to counter the affirmative. Negative cases should never be run exactly as written; rather, they are starting templates that are tweaked each round for maximum strength.

I'm going to do something a little different today. Instead of the usual value and contention, I'll be arguing that the resolution is logically incoherent, and that means it can't be true. I'll have two main points: a thesis and an alternative to the resolution.

Before we dig into my thesis and alternative, let's look at a few definitions:

Definition: Moral Obligation

Key to understanding this resolution is a clear definition of the word moral. I offer a definition from the prestigious *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language Fourth Edition 2000*. It says: "Of or concerned with the judgment of the goodness or badness of human action and character."

Reasons to Prefer: Qualified Source.

Reason to Prefer: Standard.

Because my position refutes the resolution so completely, values have no place in the round. I will neither accept nor reject my opponent's value. Instead, I will argue that government obligation cannot be measured because it does not exist.

Now let's dig into the Thesis.

Thesis: Governments can't have Moral Obligations.

This is demonstrated through several subpoints.

a. Spiritless Objects can't have Moral Obligations

Imagine a hammer. A hammer can be used to build a house, or it can be used to greatly hurt someone. But either way, it's not the hammer's fault. It is the fault of the person using the hammer.

The hammer was only a tool for its owner. The owner was the one who made the moral decision.

b. Groups can't have Moral Obligations

My opponent and I are affiliates of the NCFCA. That means we get to participate in tournaments like this one. It does not create any new moral obligations. Neither does my participation in 4-H. I have obligations as a person, and they are not increased or decreased by my group. Whether it's the Boy Scouts, the US Army, or the Justin Bieber Fan Club, you're obligated to behave in a decent, upstanding way. Nothing more or less. My **Application** is **Household Chores**. If a family of five—like mine—had a group responsibility to do all the chores, nothing would get done. But because we divvy it up and give each person individual jobs, the house stays clean. Some nights, I have an individual obligation to wash the dishes. The family doesn't — and can't.

c. Governments are Spiritless Groups

The government is a tool. It represents its people — and its actions are limited by a legal document, like our Constitution. But government does not have a soul. It is not one massive superhuman, it's just a construct made by people. It has a constitution, law books, courthouses, police cars, aircraft carriers, and national parks. These things are staffed by human beings, but those people are not the government. Government is a thing made up of things. A government is not a person.

The government is only a tool or instrument. It has no moral obligation to help other nations in need. Like the hammer, it cannot make a moral decision.

People might work for the government, but that doesn't make the government a person anymore than McDonald's is a person because it has employees.

d. Legal does not mean Moral

Within certain restraints, gambling is legal in the United States. Every day, Americans travel to casinos and fritter away their life savings. The future of themselves and their families are ruined. They won't be able to afford rent or food. Their kids won't be able to finish school. That was an immoral action, but it was perfectly legal.

At the same time, many things are illegal that are perfectly moral. Examples include trading internationally without paying tariffs or ripping the tag off your mattress.

In other words, morality and legality can overlap, but there is no direct link between them. Governments have many legal obligations — but they have no moral obligations.

Alternative: People have Obligations

My opponent did a great job of drawing attention to the suffering all over the world. I couldn't agree more that people need help. I think it's great when governments and private charities send aid to other countries. But the resolution you're being asked to support does not say: "People in 3rd world countries need help." It says: "Governments have a moral obligation to assist ..." That's a very different argument. Governments don't have a moral obligation; individuals do.

158 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

Individuals grow food and earn money that can improve the lives of the suffering. Individuals create governments and vote for laws. Individuals set up and run private charities. Individuals make choices; they are moral agents, and they have a moral obligation to assist other nations in need. Whether individuals send the help themselves or use a tool like government or charity, the individual made the choice.

Suppose I gave you a Target gift card. You would have two options: one, you could thank the gift card for buying you something nice. But that would be silly because the card is just a piece of brightly-colored plastic! The card has no obligations because it has no moral agency. You would thank me - the person who gave you the card. In the same way, if governments provide food aid to starving countries, you thank the citizens of the country. They're the ones who made the choice to send aid and paid the taxes.

Let's use another example. If I hit you with my bike, it's not the bike's fault! It's just a machine with wheels and handlebars. It's my fault for riding it into you. If I ride you to the hospital to make sure nothing is broken, that's a good deed. Not the bike's good deed, but mine.

Just remember this: Things don't have obligations, people do.

Negative: Food for Thought

By Elizabeth Jacobs

Resolved: Privacy is undervalued.

This is a funky resolution because it includes fact advocacy as well as value advocacy. Elizabeth handles this beautifully with a single application loaded with evidence. She plans to be so prepared to discuss the dangers of GM that she can beat anything the affirmative throws at her. Many clever rhetorical phrases are used to bring out the thematic core: you could eat GM at any time, not know it, and get some disgusting disease or even die.

Genetic modification was a new and strange technology 20 years ago. Now, it is widespread - but it isn't any less scary. Every year, new evidence of the danger of GM comes to light. The scientists behind it are either secretive, defensive, or openly hostile. One GM scientist sent an angry email when confronted with the fact that his products were causing widespread infertility. Here it is, minus the extensive profanity.

"I am no traitor against humanity. If this **** causes infertility... Awesome!! The world is overpopulated [sic], and people need to stop having children. This is one of earth's largest problems. If the earth wasn't [sic] overpopulated, things like growth hormones wouldn't EXIST. The reason they do, is that the earth cannot produce enough food on its own to feed us all. This is why GMO is actually saving the planet. So **** you and your *****. I am doing humanity a ***** FAVOR!!! Sincerely, A REAL 'traitor to humanity' — Ed

I don't want to be involuntarily sterilized by Ed. I'm sure you don't either. That's why I believe that Privacy is overvalued.

To provide clarity in today's debate round, I will present the following **definitions**.

Privacy: *Oxford Dictionary*, "The state in which one is not observed or disturbed by other people."[#]

To provide an external weighing mechanism to the resolution I provide the **value** of **safety**. Safety should be the value for today's round for the following two reasons to prefer:

1. Purpose of Privacy: When we look at privacy we *must* value safety because safety is a prerequisite to privacy. If we have established safety, then we can look at privacy. Not the other way around.

2. Inherently Good: Everyone can agree that safety is valuable. Nations, society, and individuals all strive to be safe. Therefore, safety is an inherently valuable principle achieve.

Unfortunately privacy endangers your safety and health every day. This is shown in the following contention with two applications.

Contention 1: Privacy Endangers Safety

GM food is a big part of the food supply in the western world. You may have eaten some today. But you have no way of knowing because food companies are allowed to sell GM food alongside regular food.

Application: GM Health Hazards

You'd think that after decades of scientific scrutiny, we'd know whether or not GM was safe. The good news to you is: we do. The bad news: we're not doing anything about it.

Extensive scientific studies from highly qualified independent experts have all come to disturbing conclusions. GM has caused tumors, organ failure, disability, food allergies and intolerance, a host of crippling diseases, and even death.

According to Mike Stagman, PhD: "Genetic Engineering is a nightmare technology that has already caused MANY disease epidemics — documented but unpublicized."

One young boy was brought to the doctor with a horrific skin disease. Doctors were baffled at first. They even brought in forensic experts and biochemists. They eventually realized that the boy was being attacked by a swarm of parasites - but none of the medications they administered had any effect. Why? Because the parasites had been exposed to a GM toxin that made them gradually resistant. For years, doctors have been trying to find the cause of Morgellon's disease. Now we know: it's caused by flesh-eating GM parasites.

160 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

According to the Center for Global Research:

“Most people have been brought up with an innate trust that what they purchase from the stores is safe to eat. This is no longer true, since most processed foods contain genetically engineered ingredients that can have disastrous effects on both animal and human health. What you purchase from the corner store might just change your DNA and create such frightening symptoms that the general public simply does not believe it.”

A recent genetically modified product called L-tryptophan caused thousands of unsuspecting consumers to become permanently disabled; dozens even died.[#]

This is one example of a terrifying trend in modern food production - the secret use of genetic modification, with potentially lethal results.

According to the Agriculture Society, “It is the intent of the food industry and the FDA to convince consumers that [GMO foods] these substances have been approved through thorough long-term testing and studies. However, there exists absolutely no real testing standards or requirements. “Research” supporting their claims about the safety of these substances comes from the companies themselves.”

A former employee of Monsanto said “If you put a label on genetically engineered food, you might as well put a skull and crossbones on [genetically modified food] it.”

If you want to take the risk with your own health and eat GM food, that’s your choice. But if you don’t, there’s no way to avoid it because the privacy of food companies is overvalued. You’re probably exposed to GM food on a daily basis but there are no label regulations and most companies deliberately hide the nature of their ingredients. You have a right to know when you’re eating genetically modified products. Privacy is directly putting you and your family in danger.

Appendix B

Practice Resolutions

The more resolutions you experience, the better you'll get with each of them.

This resolution list gives you ammunition for practice rounds and drills. These resolutions are not intended for use in competition. In general, they're written with a slight negative bias to encourage creative case writing. Some are tremendously difficult. Others are goofy. These resolutions are great for challenging practice — nothing more.

Certain resolution tropes have been mostly avoided. For example, there are very few comparative resolutions with a specific context. If you'd like to add features to a resolution, you should find rewording to be fairly easy. This list was written for an American audience, but feel free to adjust them to discuss more familiar issues.

- Farming is the most important job.
- Order outweighs individual rights.
- Piracy is acceptable.
- It is better to be united than to be right.
- Individuals need families to be successful.
- Information is a public good akin to food and shelter.
- Community good should be valued over individual good.
- Country life trumps city life.
- The most important quality in a society is honesty.
- The use of Native Americans as athletic mascots is immoral.
- Capitalism is more effective than volunteerism at making the world better.
- Property rights should be valued over eminent domain.
- Form should be valued over function.
- Prudence should be valued over initiative.
- The use of deadly force in the defense of one's household is morally acceptable.
- When in conflict, just laws ought to be valued over self-government.
- Giving is more blessed than creating.
- Education should be valued over copyright.
- Interdependence ought to be valued over autonomy.
- Professional confidentiality should not be violated by the criminal justice system.
- The restriction of decency standards for the sake of artistic freedom is justified.
- Genocide is preferable to tyranny.
- Courage ought to be valued over intellect.

162 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

- The use of preemptive military force is morally acceptable.
- Home is worth killing for.
- Developed nations have a moral responsibility to fight world hunger.
- The restriction of property rights for the sake of the environment is justified.
- Hard drug use is morally neutral.
- A person's most valuable asset is the capacity to love.
- The use of military conscription for non-defensive wars is justified.
- A simple life is worth living in poverty.
- Compassion is greater than fairness.
- Batman is better than Superman.
- True success lies in the journey, not the destination.
- When in conflict, security ought to be valued over freedom.
- Justice requires peacekeeping military operations.
- When you can't breathe, nothing else matters.
- Racism has its merits.
- Charity is a moral obligation.
- A government's popularity determines its legitimacy.
- Citizens have a duty to serve their country.
- The highest level of human existence is on the plane of the mind.
- Human rights override any other governmental concern.
- Deadly force is a morally appropriate response to repeated instances of domestic violence.
- The death penalty is unjust.
- The protection of children merits the infringement of individual rights.
- Justice requires punishment for crimes of intent.
- Illiteracy is better than paralysis.
- Health should be the primary parenting concern.
- The use of deadly force to save one innocent person is morally permissible.
- Guns before butter.
- Silence is the highest form of eloquence.
- If suicide can save three or more lives, it is justified.
- A nation's greatest asset is its culture.
- Only the patient can make a good decision on euthanasia.
- Beauty has significant inherent worth.
- Reality television is evil.
- In some cases, torture is morally acceptable.
- It is better to burn out than fade away.
- Cooperation is better than competition.
- Economic strength ought to be valued over individual rights.
- Greed is good.
- The individual needs only love.

- The pen is mightier than the sword.
- Self-respect ought to be valued over discipline.
- Fame is more desirable than fortune.
- The use of weapons of mass destruction can be morally valid.
- The threat of violence is more effective than diplomacy.
- Apathy is akin to malice.
- Justice ought to be valued over the rule of law.
- Widely accepted moral standards are an appropriate limit to freedom of speech.
- Judgement of character should be based on actions alone.
- Society exists solely for the individual.
- Strength lies in one's friends.
- Capitalism is the most just economic system.
- Life is a secondary concern.
- Merit outweighs equality.
- Siblings make the best friends.
- Sometimes, assassination is morally appropriate.
- Art gives meaning.
- Evil can be outweighed by its outcome.
- Personality is more charming than appearance.
- Simplicity is difficult.
- A good citizen travels to other countries.
- Without logic, we are beasts.
- In wartime, national security ought to be valued above civil rights.
- Strategic bombing is a justifiable tactic in a total war scenario.
- Public health outweighs private property.
- Liberalism is an inferior social structure.
- Economic sanctions are an effective foreign policy tool.
- Appearance is worth great effort.
- Not all citizens should be treated as equals.
- Better a lifetime of hatred than a moment of violence.
- Ninjas are better than pirates.
- Romantic love is more desirable than prosperity.
- Split-second decisions are better than well-reasoned ones.
- Firm convictions are more important than perfect correctness.
- Civil disobedience for the sake of national heritage is justified.
- Civilization is worth a reasonable amount of oppression.
- Metaphysics are pointless.
- Judicial activism is just.
- Family ought to be valued over peace.
- It is better to be blind than deaf.
- Education doesn't matter.

164 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

- The use of violent revolution can be morally valid.
- Extreme wealth is worth the risk of death.
- Experience trumps innocence.
- An academic degree means nothing.
- Trial by jury is unnecessary.
- Taxes are immoral.
- A nation is best protected by a volunteer army.
- Prevention of child abuse outweighs parental rights concerns.
- Conscience is the best all-purpose moral decision maker.
- Iron Man is the best comic book superhero.
- Your haircut says more than your mouth.
- Space exploration is a waste of time.
- There is no important difference between courage and bravery.
- National borders do more harm than good.
- The Chronicles of Narnia is the best fantasy series ever.
- Democracy is more important than individualism.
- A little persecution is a good thing.
- The elderly give the best advice.
- A little boredom is a good thing.
- Belief in Santa Claus hurts kids.
- Abraham Lincoln was the best United States president ever.
- Excellence is only possible to those who do not strive for it.
- New Year's resolutions are counterproductive.
- A belief is only as good as its adherents.
- A person's first 10 years are the most important.
- Taxes are too high.
- Progress is possible without change.
- Good things take time, but really great things happen in the blink of an eye.
- Everything you do matters in some way.
- The most dangerous things look safe.
- Homeschoolers adapt better.
- Romance makes people wiser.
- The environment is more important than cultural development.
- The most important technological innovation so far is the printing press.
- Public speaking is an effective way to change hearts and minds.
- Happiness is achieved through contentment.
- A boy's best friend is his mother.
- Optimism is the best mindset.
- In 'n Out Burger is the best fast-food restaurant chain in the world.

Appendix C

Drills

Here's a repository of great Lincoln-Douglas drills. Each is divided by category and labeled with the expected time involved. You should usually add a few minutes to the time listed to account for getting set up, unlimited prep if you choose, etc. With the exception of the formats, the drills are sorted according to difficulty, from beginner to advanced. Many drills are significantly shorter than the norm; using pre-scripted cases in this setting can be difficult. Instead, use a resolution from Appendix B; allow for a few minutes to prep cases and deliver them **extemporaneously** (meaning "from notes" or with little preparation).

Alternate Debate Formats

While practicing an entire 45-minute debate is great, sometimes you just want to practice a specific aspect of debate strategy or theory. Shorter debates force better time efficiency in every area and are convenient for club meetings where every second is precious. Here are short debate formats for use in practice. All are balanced to give equal time to each side and not use fractions of a minute. The times listed in the title show the expected time to actually execute the drill, which is always more than the technical time allotted.

Prep times are offered, but unless you're practicing prep time management, unlimited prep in practice debates makes the speeches as strong as possible and encourages good pre-flow behavior.

Speeches begin with the affirmative and alternate each speech. Cross-examination times are shown in parentheses after the speech. The first two speeches are considered constructives; all following speeches are rebuttals.

Standard LD (45 min)

This is the normal, tournament format. Use right before a tournament to warm up or to test a strategy or case in the most accurate environment possible. Prep time: 3 minutes total. Cross-ex: 19 percent.

6(3)-7(3)-4-6-3

Shortened LD (30 min)

This format takes significantly less time, but each speech is only slightly shorter than Standard LD. Use when you don't have time for Standard LD but want to hear plenty of arguments. This format is technically balanced, but it's more useful practice for the affirmative because the time ratio of the NC

166 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

compared to the affirmative speeches is skewed. If you're using pre-scripted cases, you can give the constructives their usual times. This adds 3 minutes to the debate. Prep time: 1 minute total. Cross-ex: 17 percent.

5(2)-6(2)-3-4-2

Constructive LD (20 min)

I like using this format for testing a negative case or practicing affirmative rebuttals. The extra time creates a fairly realistic 1AR, supported in a balanced format that's substantially shorter than the normal. Prep time: 1 minute total. Cross-ex: 11 percent.

4(1)-5(1)-3-3-1

Mini LD (18 min)

This is my favorite practice debate format. It's less than half the length of Standard LD. The ratios allow the negative to use advanced NC techniques, while the affirmative still has a margin to maintain control. You can do almost anything with this format that you could with Standard LD, and you can do it in almost a third the time. Prep time: 30 seconds total. Cross-ex: 14 percent

3(1)-4(1)-2-2-1

Baby LD (10 min)

As with Shortened LD, this format has a skew that makes most standard negative strategies impossible. However, it's a very efficient way to explore a narrow resolution or a few specific points. This format has no cross-examination because building a solid cross-ex when speeches are less than 3 minutes can be difficult. When running this format, consider imposing a cap on how many arguments can be run per speech (four is a good number). Prep time: 10 seconds before each speech.

2-2-1-2-1

Speed LD (5 min)

This format is very short and has limited application. Use it to get brand new debaters talking, or to practice debate on a single argument. Prep time: none.

1-2-1

Cross-Examination Drills

Most cross-ex drills benefit from a debrief. Have the examiner go through each routine, explaining what he wanted from it, what he got, and, if the two differ, what he could have done differently. Demonstrating a debrief to your students can help; it should sound something like this:

“I started with Bill Gates. My question was probably too obvious — you immediately saw where I was going and said that it would have been wrong for him not to donate anything to charity. I tried to corner you with the inheritance question but you didn’t really look absurd. I could have done better by backing up more so you couldn’t tell where I was going; maybe asking about the inheritance of a poor person first. Then I asked about tax credits — you immediately gave me the admission, which was a good call for you because the answer was obvious. Domestic charity was pretty messy, but I got a few good admissions from you — the main one I wanted was that forcefully taking money from citizens to give to people in other countries was wrong.”

Piranha Pack (15-30 min)

One debater will present his case. If it is a negative case, he should refute a hypothetical pre-flowed affirmative case as well. His opponent then has unlimited cross-ex time. There are no follow-up speeches. This gives the witness a chance to see many possible arguments against his case - or things he needs to research. It gives the examiner valuable practice writing and executing routines. Because the time is unlimited, the witness can’t squirm away — that’s great training for both of them.

If your schedule is prohibitive, or if you have multiple examiners, impose a time limit of no less than 5 minutes.

Coaches, feel free to piranha pack your kids as well, with one new rule: the witness is allowed to change his position at any time. He just has to clarify that he has done so.

Piranha LD (30 min)

This format gives debaters a chance to apply cross-ex admission in a speech. Allow prep time before cross-ex; 5 minutes is a lot to plan. This format ends on a negative speech; do not use it for anything other than cross-ex practice. Prep time: 2 minutes total. Cross-ex: 43 percent.

4(6)-6(6)-3-1

Chain LD (20 min)

This format has shorter but more frequent cross-exes. This helps teach the use of admissions in speeches, but minimizes cross-ex strategy compared to Piranha LD. Prep time: 1 minute total. Cross-ex: 40 percent.

Prep Time Drills

Poor use of prep usually stems from a lack of experience, but you can never be too efficient. Some debaters can benefit from a few drills to help them build confidence and speed during prep.

Guided Prep (1 hour)

Do a normal round with unlimited prep. Guide the debater through prep by asking specific questions: “Did you flow everything? Now let's start at the top — do you have a response for that? OK, next point — what's your response?” Don't allow deviations or creative strategies. This is about strict organization and focus. Coming up with 13 points is intimidating; doing them in a systematic step-by-step way is not. If the debater is struggling to think of a response, offer one; thinking of arguments is not the purpose of this exercise.

Bonus Prep (1 hour)

Do a normal round, with students having a reasonable amount of prep time. If the debater is still struggling, increase the amount even more. Refrain from just giving the debater unlimited prep time — the goal is to have the clock ticking but for them to feel confident that they will be able to do everything necessary before time runs out.

Prep of Persia (1 hour)

Give students the option to pause speech time whenever necessary for however long needed. When time is paused, drop your pen to emphasize that you are disengaging from the round. Encourage the debater to use paused time to think about the next point they want to give — even deliver it in their head to practice. Once comfortable with that, give the student a maximum number of pauses and make each one last 30 seconds max. Gradually reduce the number of available pauses down to zero.

Road Paint (3 min)

Debaters are allowed to offer only one point. The affirmative decides what the point will be about; the negative must refute that point; the affirmative must respond, and so on. If the speech does not directly refute the previous speech, have the speaker give it again. Have unlimited prep time. Increase difficulty by adding speeches and banning the rehashing of arguments.

0.5-0.5-0.5-0.5

Scale-Prep Impromptu (10 min)

Every single forensic competitor should be fluent in impromptu; one of the two reasons for that is that the event is a great way to practice the use of prep time. Rather than imposing a 2-minute limit, just

use a stopwatch to track how much time the debater uses, updating him or her in a non-urgent way every minute. Let them know their total time and encourage them to go even faster the next time. There's no need to stop at 2 minutes — if they're on a roll, keep going, even faster. Impromptu speakers at the very top of the field need less than 10 seconds of prep to deliver a dynamic speech with a thesis and three uncanned points.

Delivery Drills

Lion Face/Lemon Face (1 minute)

This facial warmup is cheesy, but it really works. The debater begins by stretching his face out as much as possible: eyes wide, eyebrows up, mouth as big as possible. He should hold that for a moment, stretching the muscles as far as he can. That's lion face. Lemon face is the opposite: eyes clenched, mouth pursed, nose wrinkled. After that's done, they should alternate as quickly as possible between the two. You can lead this drill with a group:

Lion face!
AH!
 Lemon face!
OOH!
 Lion face!
AH!
 Lemon face!
OOH!

Two or three repetitions should be sufficient. Many people feel silly doing this drill, but it makes your face about twice as expressive. Try it!

120-Word Debate (5 min)

Debaters are given 30 words per speech (including verbal pauses). Stopping to think is allowed. This helps debaters think in terms of word efficiency, but it can be overused. Don't do this drill more than two or three times in a row with the same person or his mental filter will contract and verbal pauses will follow. This format shows words instead of minutes:

30-30-30-30

Shout at the Sea (3 min)

Here's a time honored speaking drill to improve enunciation and projection. It is the modernized practice of the great orator Demosthenes, who overcame a speech defect by speaking with pebbles in his mouth. The speaker is given an impromptu topic on which to give a 2-minute speech. He delivers with a clean pen in his mouth. If less than 75 percent of what he says is not understandable, have him

170 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

redeliver the speech. Debaters should be given time to rest after a minute or two with the pen in their mouths.

Metronome (8 min)

Set a metronome to 80 beats per minute. The speaker delivers his AC with one word per beat. It's important that he deliver entire words on the beat, not syllables. Some beats will be very short; in other beats, the debater will have to say the word very quickly to get through it in his allotted 0.75 seconds.

Equality
of
rights
protects
people
from
enslavement
and
a
violation
of
freedoms.

Adjust the metronome anywhere between 40-140 beats per minute. Advanced speakers can try doing impromptu speeches this way. This is a good drill for helping debaters take control of their speed, and force those who speak too quickly to slow down.

Um Wars

Here's one type of drill I do NOT recommend. There are many variations, but the idea is that the debater who uses the fewest number of verbal pauses wins. It's great in theory, but rarely works out. A coach puts a pile of jellybeans on a table and eats one for each verbal pause, giving the remainder to the debater; a crowd shouts verbal pauses back at the speaker. These can have some short-term effectiveness, but they are ultimately harmful because they focus on the non-positive. They get a debater thinking about messing up. "Don't think about a white elephant." Drawing attention to something makes it impossible not to think about it, and verbal pauses should not be the focus.

With practice and experience, debaters will naturally lose their verbal pauses. If you think they're a problem, try alternative drills that focus on building confidence and fluency rather than just drawing more attention to the problem.

Dynamic Snake (3 min)

This is one of my favorites. The speaker delivers a scripted case. The coach holds up any number of fingers, increasing or decreasing by one finger every few sentences. With five fingers up, the speaker

is conversational. At 10, he is at his highest level of frantic passion — pushing the limits of what is possible, speaking as if roof were about to collapse on him. At a 1, he is completely casual; “just so you know ...” Putting up one finger means the debater doesn’t care about the subject matter at all.

Numbers higher than eight or lower than three are not typically useful in debate. Let the debaters know that they’re not practicing a realistic speech; they’re stretching their ability so they can flow easily between three and eight. Polar numbers should be extreme to the point of comedic.

Try the drill with numbers representing passion, speed, volume, and pitch. If you’re not satisfied by how extreme the speaker is, stop the drill and restart from five. Demonstration can be helpful, especially with something like a one in speed, or about 20 beats per minute. (It’s hard to speak that slowly!) Advanced debaters should be able to follow a coach even if he doesn’t change by just one — e.g., if the coach jumps from three to nine.

This drill works wonders toward developing an entertaining, dynamic speaking style. It also helps debaters mentally separate different aspects of their delivery: speaking faster doesn’t have to mean adding passion and volume, for example.

Organization/Refutation Drills

Poor organization is by far the most common problem facing a growing debater. It’s easy to follow a speech when you’re delivering it; when you’re listening it’s much harder. Here are some drills to develop strong habits like identifying argument class, numbering, and tagging.

Flow Check (10 min)

A volunteer student delivers a speech; a coach or advanced debater flows alongside the beginner. The beginner must then dictate the flow back to the coach, with the coach identifying potential gaps in the flow. Sometimes all it takes to improve your flow is knowing what you heard and should have flowed but didn’t — or what you should not have flowed but did. For someone at this stage, don’t worry about developing a personal flowing style. Once the student can consistently produce a workable flow, he or she can worry about customizing it.

Letter Debates (15 min)

This is one of my all-time favorite drills. Debaters have untimed speeches during which they must give exactly 10 arguments. Each argument is a unique letter. Besides a letter, a debater is only allowed to point out that something was dropped. A speech should sound something like this:

“Let me begin with two definitions. The first is R and the second is E. Having defined R and E, I’ll move to my value of P ... P. P is a good value because of my two value links. Value link one: U. Value Link two: B ...”

172 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

“... my opponent gave a reason to prefer his value; he said D. I have two responses. The first is E, and the second is D. I would like to further point out that my value links were ignored; both are strong reasons to prefer my value of S.”

Here's a list of words you can use for letter debates.

AFTERSHOCK
AUTHORIZED
BANKRUPTCY
BEACHFRONT
BINOCULARS
BLACKSMITH
CLOTHESPIN
CUMBERLAND
CRAZYWOMAN
DUMBWAITER
EDUCATIONS
FARSIGHTED
FORMIDABLE
FLAMINGOS
JUDGMENTAL
LUMBERJACK
MONARCHIST
MONKEYSPIT
MOTHERLAND
PALINDROME
PATHFINDER
REGULATION
REPUBLICAN
SPRINGVALE
TRAMPOLINE
VOLKSWAGEN

Once this drill is mastered, you can turn to an advanced version under Strategic Drills.

Echo Tags (45 min)

Here's a great drill to do with a large group. Do a normal debate, with one difference: whenever a debate gives a tag, he has to pause and let the audience repeat the tag back. Until the crowd repeats the tag, he can't go on. Try to promote a lively echo in the group:

Contention one: Due Process protects Privacy.

Due Process protects Privacy.

The government's appetite for information is insatiable because ...

This drill reinforces good tagging and flowing habits, and it helps beginners keep track of the debate.

Journey LD (32 min)

This lengthy format forces debaters to confront the point of contention. Passing ships in the night and fluffy answers don't fly when you have so many speeches ahead of you. This format is good for teaching rebuttal techniques and strategy, as well as taking logical argumentation to the next level. A cap on the number of arguments can be useful if you find that the rebuttals become too crowded. The first six speeches are constructives. Prep time: 20 seconds before each speech.

3-4-3-3-4-2-2-1-1

Strategic Drills

Application-Only Debate (15 min)

Both sides are only allowed to present and refute applications. Count the number of seconds spent on each side, regardless of who spent time on it. At the end, the person whose applications got the most time wins the round. This is a great way to help intermediate debaters come to terms with “Time = Importance.” Run this drill until the time they spend on opponent’s applications is under 30 seconds.

3-3-3-3

Advanced Letter Debates (15 min)

Do normal Letter Debates (found in Organization Drills), but with this difference: rather than 10 letters per speech, the number of letters vary to represent the standard format. Here’s the format, counting letters instead of minutes:

12-14-8-12-6

The speeches are still untimed, but this version helps the students take strategic control. Each letter represents 30 seconds of real speech time. For intermediate students who are learning the basics of strategic control, declare a winner by counting the number of letters on the affirmative vs negative sides of the flow, regardless of who delivered them. Advanced debaters won’t benefit from this; they’ll do the bare minimum number of letters against the opponent no matter what.

Afterword

Final Considerations

Chris Jeub, president of Training Minds, here again to congratulate you. You've arrived! The end of the book. *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate* is a collaboration of the professional coaching Travis has been giving for years. He's one of the best in the debate community, so I bet you'll bloom as a debater.

Make *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate* your key reference manual as you make your way through your competitive year. If something doesn't make sense, refer back to the section, chapter or page that will help explain it for you. Debate is an exciting sport, but it is always changing and flexing its prowess. Keep your bearing with *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate* at your side.

Now that you have finished reading the book, I would like you to consider two things. First, remember the greater purpose for your debating. The skills you are learning are second-to-none. Make no mistake about it; the great debaters today will be the leaders of the world tomorrow. Take this seriously. In my book *Jeub's Guide to Speech & Debate* I encourage debaters to keep the right perspective:

Competitions aren't the goal, nor are the awards. They're still important, but in this sense: competitions are arenas of preparation. Students learn the skills of speaking, persuasion, thinking, rhetoric, logic – so many of the academic tools needed for doing great things in the future – in speech and debate.*

Second, do your best to stay in touch. No competitor is an island. The community of speakers and debaters is a tight-knit community. You learn how to *think*, *speak* and *persuade*. Together with your peers, you develop leadership fundamentals throughout your high school years and beyond.

How can you stay in touch? You may have already subscribed to Travis' website www.travisherche.com. Feel free to subscribe to Training Minds' website, too, to stay in the action. We're a small organization that carries a big return, consisting of dozens of coaches that have the same desire as Travis and me: *train minds for action*. As a subscriber you will be kept informed on the latest news and how-to's, always perfecting your skills to champion levels.

Trainingminds.org is the central hub in everything we do. Even this book is an offshoot of its good work. Travis and the other coaches see Training Minds as your coaching support throughout the year of competition. The most focused debater will pattern their year with this kind of schedule:

* Chris Jeub. *Jeub's Guide to Speech & Debate*. Monument Publishing 2013.

176 *Keys to Lincoln-Douglas Debate*

1. Attend Training Minds Camp in the summer. Travis has headed up the camp for several years. His sessions are some of the most loved sessions in our camp program. You won't want to miss this material.
2. Read and follow Red Book guidelines, perhaps with a club and with the Red Book Curriculum. Don't settle for doing the most exciting academic activity *alone*. Get all your friends to do it, too!
3. Build a winning record and qualify to state, regional, and national tournaments. Keep us posted on your success and we'll make sure your success is posted on www.trainingminds.org.
4. Attend the National Intensive Training Camp (NITC, we pronounce it "nit-see") that Training Minds puts on to prepare for your league's national tournament. The camp is meant to make the grand finale of your debate year the best it can possibly be.

Put a few years like this into your high school career and you'll be one awesome young adult ready to take on the world.

You'll be *trained* and ready for *action*.

See you at the award ceremony!

Chris Jeub
President, Training Minds

About the Author



Travis Herche

Travis Herche competed in the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association for five years and won many prestigious accolades, including two entries in the Hall of Fame. Then he started coaching.

He started out as the Lincoln-Douglas director for a local club. Then he worked with a professional business coach to prepare his keynote speeches. From

there, he traveled all over the country and taught thousands of people how to maximize their speaking.

Travis' speaking techniques have been proven to take anyone to their maximum potential as a speaker. His novice students outperform all expectations, while his experienced students regularly win national accolades (including several national championships in Lincoln-Douglas debate).

Travis has been to 47 states, but his favorite is California, where he has lived since the age of five. He is married to a beautiful musician named Christina and has a pet turtle named Darlene. He loves experiencing good fiction, playing PC games, and performing musical theater.