2018

South African Schools Debating Intermediate Training Manual

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Debating Basics

Why Debate?

Competition – If you're competitive, then you'll definitely enjoy debating. Every debate is a take-no-prisoners battle to the death between two teams who want victory.

Confidence and public speaking – Debating helps to build confidence, by getting you used to speaking in front of people. This is a useful skill for social situations, as well as for class and in the working world.

It's good for your school work and your future – If you can make a good debating speech, you can write a top-notch English or History essay. They use the same skills of critical thinking and research. Moreover, the skills you learn in debating will help you get into university and maybe even get a scholarship. Many of the top scholarships awarded in South Africa every year go to people who did debating in high school.

Great opportunities to meet people and to travel – Debating competitions are a great place to meet interesting people from many different backgrounds. Many of the friends you make through debating will stay with you for life. Even better, you can see South Africa and the world while you make friends: if you get involved with debating you stand the chance of being selected for provincial and even national teams, which attend national and international competitions. In some provinces, even the provincial championship is an overnight event.

Engage with hot global issues – The argumentative skills that debating teaches you will enable you to engage with the biggest issues facing us today: poverty, AIDS, terrorism, international trade laws… If you can think about these problems properly, you might be able to help solve them.

And most of all…

It's fun! – Working with a team to make and defend your arguments, persuading the judges, and winning in front of an audience are all fun and exciting.

What is debating?

A debate is a contest in which two teams present reasons (or 'arguments') for and against a topic. One team is in favour of the topic and the other team is against it. Both teams try to persuade the audience and the judges that they are right.

The point of debating, then, is to be as persuasive as you can be. The focus is not only on whether you are a good public speaker, but also on whether you can come up with interesting and powerful arguments, present them clearly, and make people believe what you're saying.

And because both teams are meant to have the chance to persuade the judges that they are right and their opposition is wrong, the debate is very interactive. Speakers are allowed to interrupt each other (using 'Points of Information' – more on this later) and tell the other team exactly why they are wrong.

Just being able to argue well does not make you a good debater – just as being able to kick a ball will not make you a good soccer player. There are rules to debating, and you need to know them and abide by them in order to win a debate. The rules of World Schools Style are really quite easy once you get the hang of it, and change very little from competition to competition.

(The only thing that might change is the length of speeches – everything else is the same.)

The Teams

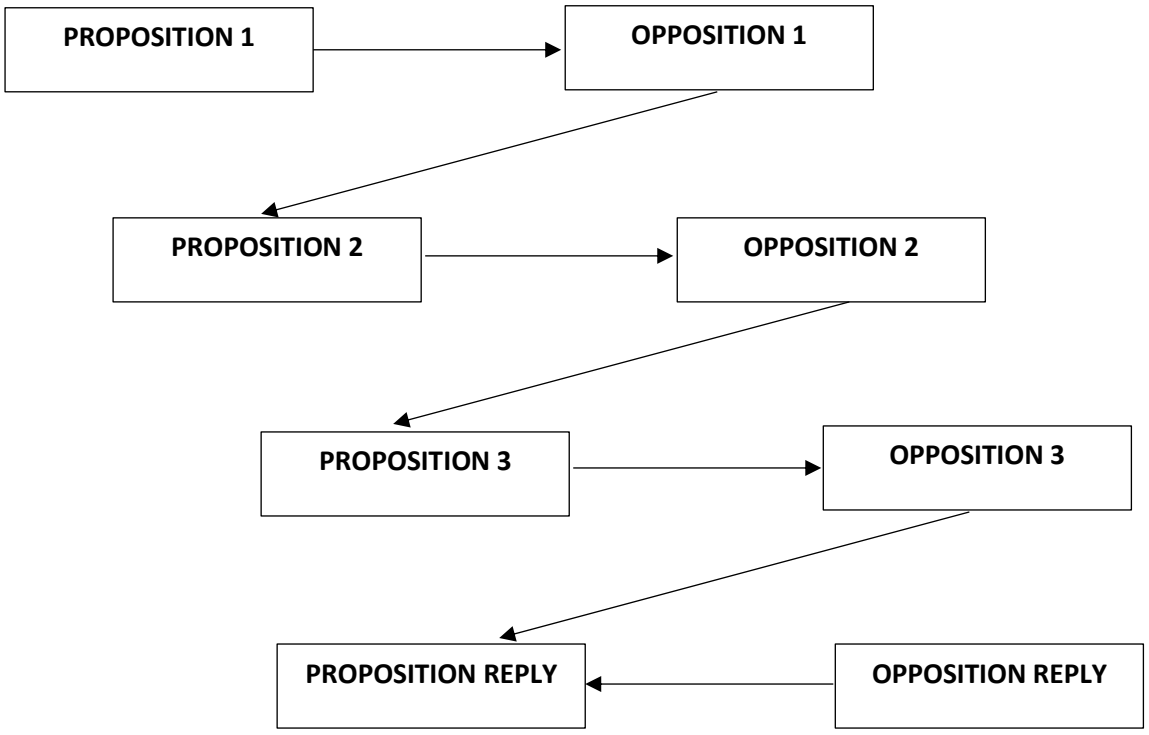
There are two teams in a debate. One team is called the PROPOSITION, and it is their job to agree with the topic, and argue for it. The other team is called the OPPOSITION, and it is their job to disagree with the proposition (and the topic). Each team has three speakers on it, and each of them will have a very clearly defined role – more on that later.

The Speeches

After every team member from proposition and opposition has spoken once, one speaker from each team will give a short "reply speech", which will let them summarise the major issues in the debate and close their team's arguments. The third speaker cannot do the reply speech, because they won't have time to sit down and write a reply speech after delivering their main speech. This means that either the first speaker or the second speaker must do the reply speech – you can choose.

The speeches are all done in a specific order, alternating from proposition to opposition. There is one little difference at the end of the debate, though. The reply speeches happen the other way around from the rest of the debate. The opposition reply speech will happen immediately after the opposition third speaker speech, and the proposition reply speech will finish the debate.

The order of the speeches will look like this:



Each speaker has a slightly different role in the debate, based on the position they are speaking in, which we will describe within role fulfilment.

Timing

All of the speeches in the debate, except the reply speeches, are 8 minutes long. The reply speeches are 4 minutes long. (This might be different in your local league – some provinces use 7 minutes/3 minutes, and all provinces have shorter times for junior speakers.)

The main speeches are “protected” for the first and last minutes – which means that you cannot offer points of information in the first or last minute of a speech. This gives the speaker a chance to start and end their speech well, without interference. To let you know that the first minute of protected time is over (and that you are allowed to offer points of information), the timekeeper will bang on the table once. You can offer as many points of information as you like until one minute before the end of the speech, when the timekeeper will bang again on the table.

Once the full 8 minutes are up, the timekeeper will bang twice on the table to tell the speaker that they must finish speaking. If you are speaking and you hear the two bangs, you must finish off your speech quickly. If you do not finish within the next 30 seconds (20 seconds in some leagues) the timekeeper will bang on the table non-stop until you sit down. Now, the adjudicators will stop listening, so there is no point in speaking any longer.

In reply speeches, there isn’t a bang after the first minute, because no points of information are allowed. The timekeeper will bang when there is one minute left, though, to let you know that you should start wrapping things up. When your time is up the timekeeper will bang twice, and you will have 30 seconds to finish before she starts banging non-stop on the table.

The times for a main speech look like this:

0-1 minute	Nobody can offer points of information. Single clap at 1 minute to indicate end of first protected time
1-7 minutes	Points of information are allowed
7-8 minutes	Single clap at 7 minutes to indicate start of last protected time. No more points of information are allowed. Start finishing your speech. Double clap at 8 minutes to signal the end of your speech time
After 8 minutes	You have 30 seconds before the timekeeper will clap you out either with a triple clap or with clapping non-stop

And for a reply speech, the timing looks like this:

0-3 minute	The main part of your speech. Single clap at 3 minutes for timing purposes
3-4 minutes	Start finishing your speech. Double clap at 4 minutes to signal the end of your speech time
After 4 minutes	You have 30 seconds before the timekeeper will clap you out either with a triple clap or with clapping non-stop

Note that nobody is allowed to offer points of information throughout the reply speeches.

To start off the debate, each team must have a clear understanding of the issues that they will be arguing about. This means that each team needs to bring up some important elements at the beginning of their first speech. In this section, we will talk about those elements.

Case building and strategy

The educated global citizen

In order to understand the perspective of judges and what expectations can be placed on each team in terms of reasonable definitions and knowledge, it is valuable to outline the perspective of the educated global citizen

An educated global citizen:
• Attempts to evaluate logically what the best thing to do is,
• Uses as inputs the arguments made by the teams,
• Has the sort of knowledge of someone who reads the front pages and world section of a high quality newspaper regularly,
• Has a grounding in world history,
• Is NOT a specialist in any subject, and thus will not be familiar with technical vocabulary or specialist literature,
• Comes from nowhere in particular. There are no 'domestic examples' requiring less explanation, even where everyone in the room comes from that country. Wherever you are from, assume your audience is from somewhere else.

The informed global citizen is, in short, a smart person who has a good deal of knowledge that is broad rather than deep. Imagine a bright and well-read university student who is studying a subject completely alien to the one that is being debated.

Definitions

The very first thing the first proposition speaker needs to do is "define the motion". This DOES NOT mean that you must give the dictionary definition of all the words in the motion! Instead, you must explain what the topic means to your team, and why you are talking about it. The point is to set the boundaries for the debate so that both teams argue about the same thing, and debate about the topic and not about the words in the motion.

When defining a motion, it is best to keep the interpretation as simple and straight forward as possible. The objective is to create a balanced and reasonable understanding of what the debate is about for both teams, not to try and create a definition that makes it easier for you to win the debate. Remember, the most obvious interpretation is often the most likely intended path to follow. Creating a definition is also not about providing dictionary definitions, definitions ought to be created around the key words within the motion that may have multiple interpretations.

In order to test if a definition is fair, <u>two</u> broad tests can be applied

i) Context test
Defining a motion that deals with a general issue to exclusively deal with a time or place that is not general knowledge and/or not current is called an unfair time or place setting definition
e.g. This House Would abolish the monarchy
If the Proposition defines this motion as abolishing the monarchy during the French Revolution that it an unfair time and place setting

Debates that require a specific time or place setting will usually explicitly include the time or place of interest within the motion
e.g. This House Would cut all financial aid to Egypt

However, if there is something happening in the world or region that seems to relate directly to the topic, ask yourself whether it is something that everyone in the room **should** know about. It could be a new law or ruling being debated by a government/organization. It might be a conflict has flared up or been the subject of significant media attention. If it reasonable to expect people to know about this issue, then you can make these issues the focus of the debate. Remember that this is also dependent on the tournament that you are attending; if you are attending an international tournament, debates would typically not be set in a single country unless explicitly stated

e.g. This House Would legalise the sale of rhino horn
It is reasonable to set this debate in sub Saharan Africa, as countries like South Africa have faced significant problems pertaining to the poaching of rhinos

ii) Spirit of the motion test
The 'spirit' of the motion means, "what sort of debate was envisioned when this topic was chosen? This test relies on the assumption that topics are chosen for a good reason – namely that a particular issue or conflict would make a good debate. Part of assessing the 'spirit' of the motion is being sure that your definition will generate a good, reasonably balanced debate, with interesting/important issues that are complex or sophisticated enough to be sustained over the course of the debate. There is no point defining the debate to a very controversial issue, which nevertheless is basically a single issue, and cannot be effectively extended into a debate with multiple speakers' each raising new issues.
e.g. THW implement quotas for the youth in parliament
Defining the motion to exclusively children under the age of 10 is not within the spirit of the motion, as the term "youth" in a political context refers to those between the ages of 18-35 years old.

e.g. This House Would financially incentivise schools to hire gay teachers
Defining the motion to mean "happy" teachers is clearly not within the spirit of the motion, but linguistically is a plausible interpretation of the word "gay". As a side note, "teachers who identify as LGBT+" is a better phrasing for the above motion

In the circumstance that multiple definitions pass these two tests and they seem relatively equal then either is acceptable. Clearly state the relevance of your chosen definition and the context that you used to form the definition.

If the definition is a reasonable interpretation of the motion, the opposition must accept it, and debate the case that the proposition presents. The proposition has the right to define the terms of the debate, and as long as their definition is reasonable the opposition must accept it.

If the motion is unreasonable, then the opposition can challenge it. This happens very seldom and always results in messy debates – please do not do it unless it is absolutely necessary!

How to launch a definitional challenge

If the definition provided by the proposition doesn't meet the criteria outlined above and you think that the debate cannot move forward fairly, you can launch a definitional challenge. The challenge

must be made by the first opposition speaker and should be right at the beginning of their speech. Importantly, a definitional challenge should only be launched if the definition is actively bad, not simply for unexpected interpretations of the motion that are still within the confines of the spirit of the motion. To launch a definitional challenge, the first opposition speaker should do the following

1. Explain why the definition is unreasonable
2. Propose an alternative definition

As the definition is contested, teams must create arguments for why their definition is more correct and these arguments can progress within the debate as convincing judges that your team has the correct interpretation of the debate becomes extremely important to who wins the debate. Once the definitional challenge has been presented, the first speaker must do the following

1. Respond to the arguments presented by the opponents as an even if layer "even if we accept their definition their arguments are still flawed because…"
2. Present the positive arguments under your teams definition

If the debate includes a definitional challenge, teams must progress the debate under both interpretations of the motion

Types of motions

Imperative/Change motions

Change motions require you to propose a change from the status quo. To successfully propose a change you need to identify what you want to change (the problem) and how you want to change it (the solution).

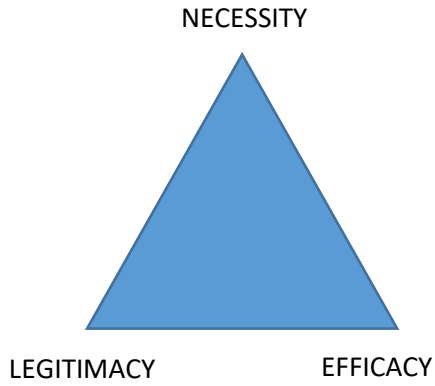
The problem: the harm needs to be identified as inherent and unique. The problem you identify can't be a problem that exists with almost everything in the status quo, unless you are also willing to perform the same action (banning, legalising, etc) on all other things that exhibit the same problem. If the harm is not inherent, your opponents can provide mechanisms to show that the implementation needs to be improved.

e.g. THW end all BEE requirements on businesses in South Africa

If your entire case is based on the fact that BEE has been implemented badly, your opponents can simply say that the conclusion is to improve this implementation not end the requirement. There is no inherent harm to BEE requirements

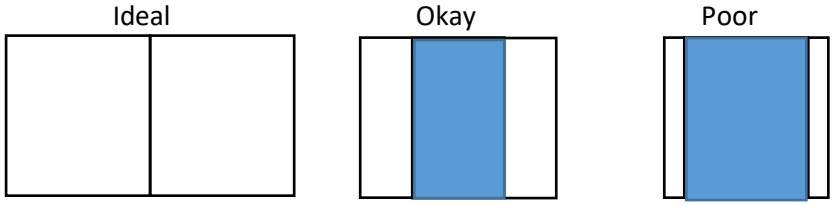
When outlining the problem, it is extremely important that one creates a NECESSITY to act.

The solution: the solution needs to be directly linked to the problem. The solution must be proved to be principally just (LEGITIMATE) and create the desired outcome (EFFECTIVE). When analysing whether a solution is principally just, it is important to create standalone analysis that is independent of the outcomes of this policy, to avoid creating a hung case. If you create an exclusively utility based principle, you need to prove the argument that the solution is effective at achieving the desired outcomes in order to win the debate. Your time prioritisation needs to reflect that the most important issue to win within the debate is that the solution is EFFECTIVE.



There are three options when opposing an imperative motion

a) Deny that there is a problem
   Question whether the problems identified are inherent or unique
   e.g. This House Would ban for profit universities
   People profit by meeting needs within society in many different avenues, would you also ban private hospitals. If not, what is the distinction?
b) Concede that there is a problem but suggest that the proposition's solution makes it worse
   This option requires proving that there is an active harm associated with implementing the motion
c) Concede that there is a problem and propose a different solution
   In order to propose a counter-policy you need to show mutual exclusivity. Similarity narrows the scope of the debate i.e. the more the policies overlap the less there is to debate about. The overlap makes issues non contentious.



   e.g. This House Would give more votes to poor people
   If the proposition advocates giving two votes to the poor and your counter policy is to give three votes to the poor you are conceding a lot of the principled ground and only contesting the implementation. A counter policy that advocates more votes to the youth concedes that you can give certain groups different amounts of votes based on access to the democratic process.

Normative/Belief motions

There are a large number of ways that a belief or value system can be enshrined and it is important to actively outline how that system is enshrined in your position. Often people are trying to achieve the same basic principles but in different ways, so it is important to explicitly explain your interpretation of a broad principles

e.g. This House Would create quotas for male workers in female-dominated professions such as teaching and nursing

General: Quotas are a form of positive discrimination to create equal access to opportunity

Specific: Quotas are a form of positive discrimination to create equal access to opportunity within the specific sector of interest. It can serve to counter act economic, rights based and perceptive based barriers to entry. In this circumstance, the barriers to entry are prescriptive gender roles. Quotas will create more visibility for male teachers and nurses thus beginning to erode the perception that caring professions are only for women

Opposition General: quotas are a form of positive discrimination to create equal access to opportunity

Opposition Specific: Quotas are a form of positive discrimination to create equal access to opportunity within the specific sector of interest. It can serve to counter act economic and rights based barriers to entry. In this circumstance, the barriers to entry are simply perceptive and value based. People view caring professions as less powerful and valuable. There are already men in these professions but they are simply viewed as less successful.

Evaluative motions

Evaluative motions require you to create a criteria around the contentious word and apply that criteria to the debate. It is often easiest to use it as the partition of issues within speeches, so that it is applied in a consistent and integrated fashion. It is important here to understand the distinction between necessary and sufficient criteria; define

A useful way of generating criteria is to use the relevant actors' own metrics for success i.e. what aims do they enshrine and how does the action in question affect them based on their own metric of success.

e.g. This House Regrets the Rise of the extreme left

Criteria 1: Has the existence of the extreme left done more harm than good for the left (use the organisations own aims)?

Criteria 2: Has the existence of the extreme left done more harm than good to broader society?

Note that Would, Supports, Believes that phrasing may give you some indication of the type of motion but it is not definitive. These phrasing can be used for different types of motions so it is always important to actively evaluate what the motion asks of you.

Policies

How to tell when you need a policy

You need a policy if the debate or principle that you are advocating for is significantly affected by the how you would implement this change. A policy seeks to answer the practical questions of the debate; who, how, what and when.

What should you include in the policy

Keep policies as simple as possible; only include details if they meaningfully affect the debate. Don't be overly exact with figures and details.

e.g. This House Would legalise recreational drugs

Who: state monopoly on the sale of the drugs or private businesses

A state monopoly maintains control and all of the revenue goes directly to the government, but may also create the perception of active support for the use of recreational drugs. A regulated market allows individual businesses to profit from the sale of recreational drugs with some revenue going to the government in the form of tax.

How: For private businesses, government would sell licences to businesses to create a regulated market

This policy is relatively simple; the main policy choice is the actor that would be allowed to sell recreational drugs

e.g. This House Would invade Syria

This is a policy heavy debate, because how you implement this change is extremely important to the content of the debate.

Who: unilateral or multilateral? International intervention or regional intervention (Kenya's invasion of Somalia to re-establish control over territories taken over by Al Shabaab)?

Whether it is unilateral or multilateral calls into question the legitimacy and efficacy of the decision. International actors are more likely to have resources but not regional understanding and the converse is true of regional actors

How: boots on the ground or establishing no fly zones?

No fly zones are most effective when the oppressive actor has a large advantage in the form of a strong air force and the resistance does not have anti-aircraft weaponry (Libya). Boots on the ground are most effective when conflicts are being fought predominantly in towns (Syria)

When: initial invasion with peace keeping troops remaining until democratic elections have taken place (Afghanistan) or immediate withdrawal from the situation (Libya)

The longer occupying forces are in a country the more likely the populous is to turn against them due to the nature of protracted conflict. If occupying forces leave directly/ shortly after the intervention there is a risk of resurgent conflict and an inability to ensure post conflict political stability.

This policy is more complex because the details of each level of the policy affect the arguments within the debate.

Lastly, if there is a practical opposition to this proposal that seems overwhelmingly strong you can include a provision to mitigate the harm. Note that the more you mitigate the practical harms the more you are likely to compromise the principled consistency of the case.

e.g. This House Would not require fathers who request an abortion to pay child support

A provision that could be made within the policy is that if fathers would like to become involved in the child's life at a later point they must back pay the child support that would have been due over the course of the father's absence. This mitigates the harm that you force fathers to make a permanent decision locking them out of ever being involved with their child.

Hard and soft lines

The terms 'hard' and 'soft' in reference to a definition or model are an indication of how profound the change is that is being proposed. A very small modification to the status quo is *soft*, while a big change

is *hard*. The status quo might be in terms of legal principle or in terms of people's attitudes. Once you have determined the 'strength' of your line, it should be relatively easy to create your model.

Generally speaking these terms do not imply how difficult it is to argue for that level of change – since often it is easier to argue a 'hard line' rather than a 'soft line' – but we'll get to that later.

Example: For the topic "That this house supports euthanasia", below are different definitions you might choose.

Soft line ---------- Moderate line ----------Hard line

Restricted to incredibly sick people, who are *very* close to death, and who have no hope of cure or a decent standard of living. Patients need the consent of multiple doctors and psychologists. Passive euthanasia only – deny	Allowed to the terminally ill, who have very low standard of living and little-to-no hope of a cure. Doctor & psychologist consent. Doctor assisted euthanasia allowed	Available to anyone diagnosed with a terminal or debilitating or degenerative illness, whether physical or mental. Need a medical consent

A smart team will stay somewhere between the moderate and the hard line in *every* debate, because it's both the fairest thing to do, and is the tactically sound choice too.

Characterizations

It is important to characterise the actors and events in the debate in a way that is conducive to your side of the debate. Often teams assume that the starting point to their arguments is the same as their opponents, but this is rarely the case. Treating characterizations as premises that need not be argumentatively proven often means that speakers miss analysis that is important to winning the debate.

e.g. This House Prefers aspirational depictions of female characters in children's books over realistic depictions

Characterizing children as being incapable of perceiving reality accurately due to the developmental stage that they are at means that it is harder for your opponents to prioritise reality over aspiration.

Bear in mind that groups often consist of different subgroups that do not share the same background or motivations. In this case, rather than only speaking about the subgroup that benefits your case, it is more compelling to create a spectrum and subsequent arguments. If some subgroups have arguments that seem to most benefit your opponents, seek to actively prove that they are in the minority and therefore should not be considered with the same degree of importance as the majority of the spectrum

e.g. This House Would allow parents to monitor their children's social media accounts

Very controlling

Will censor, criticize and punish

Their children for what they post

Unlikely to allow social media

in the first place, minority

Genuinely just have the best

Interests of their children at heart

Will only check in to ensure child

isn't being harassed or victim to

predatory behaviour

Context

Trends

A trend indicates whether things are either getting better or getting worse. Some trends can be very broad, such as the trend in the early 90s amongst Western governments to pursue increasingly neo-liberal economic policies (privatisation, reductions in trade barriers, deregulation of industry). Trends need to be true for the majority of cases but not universal; there can be exceptions. Other trends are clearly developed in response to a specific catalyst. Following the terrorist attacks of 9-11 there has been a clear trend developing of governments passing increasingly restrictive 'anti-terrorism' laws (detention of suspects, intrusive investigation powers, increased penalties) in the name of public safety.

The aim of trends is to attempt to predict what will happen to the status quo without intervention. One can use the development of a trend as the impetus for a policy. So you might say as part of your set up "there is a clear trend developing over the last decade for the United States to act militarily without the consent of the United Nations (Bosnia, Iraq, etc) and we think it is critical that we make reforms to the international system so as to encourage the US to act more multilaterally, and to strengthen the relevancy of the UN. We would do this by reforming the UN in the following way…" You can also suggest that your proposal is simply the logical extension to the current trend, in which case you may say something like "Over the last 10 years we have a clear trend emerging whereby parents are increasingly being given access to reproductive technologies as a means to better plan their families and ensure healthy babies (IVF, pre-natal genetic screening, etc) and so we think that it is the simply the next logic step to give potential parents access to the next generation of reproductive technology - which involves genetic manipulation of the foetus. Therefore we support a parent's right to genetically modify their unborn child". If you can demonstrate that the relevant trends are pointing in the direction of your team's logic, then the task is that much harder for the opposition.

Tipping points

A tipping point is basically what happens when a 'trend' gains momentum to the point where a major change is considered. Tipping points are important because they add a sense of urgency and credibility to the problem. They occur when a situation has reached a critical juncture – where policy makers are either forced to make a fundamental choice (should we abolish voluntary student unionism, or should be become a Republic) and there is really no 'half-way' point. Or maybe a series of events have quickly moved a situation forward, making previously remote options seem more plausible.

e.g. This House Would invade North Korea

The testing of nuclear weapons that have the ability to pose an existential threat to Washington is an important tipping point in the discussion about whether military action is necessary

Historical parallels

Those who don't learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Historical parallels give a sense of weight to a predicted outcome because if it's happened before it is easier to believe that it will happen again. It is important to show that the context of the problem today is the analogous to the context of the past that led to the outcomes you want to convince us of.

e.g. This House Believes that the military should safe guard democracy

In order to bolster the argument that military coups can successfully reinstate democracy one could use the historical parallel of Ghana. In 1966 the Ghanaian military staged a coup which subsequently facilitated democratic elections

Lines in the sand/filters

While it is important to be principally consistent, it can lead to defending extreme scenarios. Therefore, one can establish a line in the sand. On one side of the line is the scenarios you will defend in order to be principally consistent and on the other are the scenarios that you are unwilling to defend. Rather than looking at each scenario one by one, simply try to create a distinction that is used as a test for what you will and won't defend.

e.g. This House Would legalise consensual cannibalism

Opposition could say that governments allow people to smoke, drink and get tattoos but do not allow people to opt out of wearing seatbelts. The line in the sand is that at the point at which there is no value or good justification to a choice and disproportionate harms the government values protection over individual autonomy and expression. The question of the debate then becomes is there sufficient value within this decision for government to allow this form of bodily autonomy.

Speaker Roles

Speaker roles are created based on fairness and what is likely to be most persuasive within a debate at any given time. For example, the first speaker should define the motion because there isn't yet a common understanding about what parts of a broad issue the debate is really about. It is therefore more persuasive for the first speaker to offer a definition and a policy if necessary. When looking at fairness, this pertains to restrictions on new content from later speakers; reply speakers can't add new content because no one can respond to it adequately in the given time.

PROPOSITION 1

- Intro
- Definition of any unclear words
- Hinge point of the debate

<u>Type of motion affects what arguments you should present</u>

1) Change motion

- Policy (if needed) : keep simple but if necessary who, what, where, when, how
- Case split (tell us what the arguments your team is going to present are)
- Problem = establish necessity
- Solution = match up clearly to problem
    - Legitimate
    - Effective

2) Belief motion:

- Case split (tell us what the arguments your team is going to present are)
- Belief or value structure
- Application to the specific scenario and actors

3) Evaluative motion

- Case split (tell us what the arguments your team is going to present are)

- Criteria to evaluate the debate by
- Active application of criteria

- Conclusion to speech

OPPOSITION 1

- Intro
- Accept or reject definition of any unclear words (default = accept)
- Core clash of the debate outlined
- Rebuttal
    - Attack content from P1
- Present opposition's arguments.

<u>Type of motion affects what arguments you present within the debate</u>

1) Change motion

- Deny the problem exists/the necessity of such a policy
- Accept the problem but suggest that Prop's policy makes it worse
    - Solution doesn't match up to the problem
    - Illegitimate policy
    - Ineffective policy
- Accept the problem and propose a Counter policy
    - Problem = establish necessity
    - Solution = match up clearly to problem
        - Legitimate
        - Effective

2) Belief/Normative motion:

- Contrasting belief or value structure
- Application to the specific scenario and actors

3) Evaluative motion

- Accept criteria or create own
  If creating own
    - Show why Prop's criteria doesn't work
    - Compare and contrast to own
- Active application of criteria

- Conclusion to speech

PROPOSITION 2

- Intro
- Defensive rebuttal : defend your case
- Offensive rebuttal: attack their case

Group your rebuttal according to issues or themes rather than going speaker by speaker

- Present more positive argument for Proposition

OPPOSITION 2

- Intro
- Defensive rebuttal : defend your case
- Offensive rebuttal: attack their case

Group your rebuttal according to issues or themes rather than going speaker by speaker

- Present more positive argument for Opposition

PROPOSITION 3

- Intro
- Issue based content (+/- 3) headings or questions
- Evaluation of issue as follows
  Issue/Question 1: Track what's already happened; bring back and defend important case content within the debate but also add completely new levels of damage to this issue

Proposition's content	Opposition's content
Emphasize strategic importance of Prop's content thus far	Opp's rebuttal to this content = ATTACK
Show the damage that's already done to their case	
SHOW HOW PROP IS ALREADY WINNING THIS ISSUE = FLAG DAMAGE TO OPP'S CASE	
Completely new levels or responses to the issue	
Strategic importance of this point	

- Compare and contrast overall case
- Conclude speech

OPPOSITION 3

- Intro
- Issue based content (+/- 3) headings or questions
- Evaluation of issue as follows
  Issue/Question 1: Track what's already happened; bring back and defend important case content within the debate but also add completely new levels of damage to this issue

Opposition's content	Proposition's content
Emphasize strategic importance of Opp's content thus far	Prop's rebuttal to this content = ATTACK
Show the damage that's already done to their case	
SHOW HOW OPP IS ALREADY WINNING THIS ISSUE = FLAG DAMAGE TO PROP'S CASE	
Completely new levels or responses to the issue	
Strategic importance of this point	

- Compare and contrast overall case
- Conclude speech

OPPOSITION REPLY = ORAL ADJUDICATION

- Intro
- Outline hinge point of debate
- Issue based content (+/- 3) headings or questions
- Issue/Question 1: Compare and contrast cases based on issues

Opposition's content	Proposition's content
Emphasize strengths and strategic importance of Prop's content	Prop's rebuttal to this content = WHERE THEY FELL SHORT :(
ACTIVELY COMPARE ENGAGEMENT ON THIS ISSUE	
SHOW HOW PROP HAS WON THIS ISSUE = FLAG DAMAGE TO OPP'S CASE	
Strategic importance of this point to the broader debate	

- Compare and contrast overall case
- Conclude speech

PROPOSITION REPLY = ORAL ADJUDICATION

- Intro
- Outline hinge point of debate
- Issue based content (+/- 3) headings or questions
- Evaluation of issue as follows
- Issue/Question 1: Compare and contrast cases based on issues

Proposition's content	Opposition's content
Emphasize strengths and strategic importance of Prop's content	Opp's rebuttal to this content = WHERE THEY FELL SHORT :(
ACTIVELY COMPARE ENGAGEMENT ON THIS ISSUE	
SHOW HOW PROP HAS WON THIS ISSUE = FLAG DAMAGE TO OPP'S CASE	
Strategic importance of this point to the broader debate	

- Compare and contrast overall case
- Conclude speech

ARGUMENTATION

How to generate arguments

NAI table

This table is created to generate content that is likely to be central to the debate. While not all the levels will be used, it can generate important discussions around the key elements of the debate. The aim of the table is as follows

1. To understand **how** something happens and be able to create a picture of the world in which the debate occurs (Nature of)
2. To understand who is affected by this policy, to what degree and what their likely response will be (Actors affected, their motivations and responses)
3. Lastly, there is often nuance contained in the intersection between different key words. This step aims to extract a good picture of what the specifics of the debate entail.
4. The hinge point is created from this table of key words and aims to describe the basis upon which the debate is won and lost

	Key word 1	Key word 2	Key word 3
Nature of			
Actors affected + motivations			
Interaction			
HINGE POINTS			

Riddler

The Riddler is a simple exercise that outlines the broader questions posed by the debate, without answering it for any one side. This creates an outline of what questions need to be answered by your side to win the debate overall and can create the basis for foundational analysis within the debate.

e.g. This House Would force all government officials to use public healthcare

Do government officials have any specific obligations that are distinct from the general public?

What would government officials using public healthcare seek to achieve?

Would it be likely to effective at achieving those aims?

Wishlisting

Wish listing is an exercise where you list the things you wish that you could prove within the debate. Often time's debates happen around the core issues because teams are wary or unsure of how to deal with what will likely be the most contentious issues. Writing a wish list forces you to confront what the most contentious issues are and actively think about whether you can prove them or not. In the circumstance where you can, you generate argumentation that is core to the debate. In the circumstance where you think something on this wish list is genuinely impossible to prove, you have to think about how important it is to the debate. If it isn't important cut it from the case. If it is important go to the premises or assumptions you are using when trying to form an argument from the wish. Typically you have assumed something is unchallengeable because you are used to things being a certain way. Once you challenge those assumptions you may find the argument surprisingly easy to form

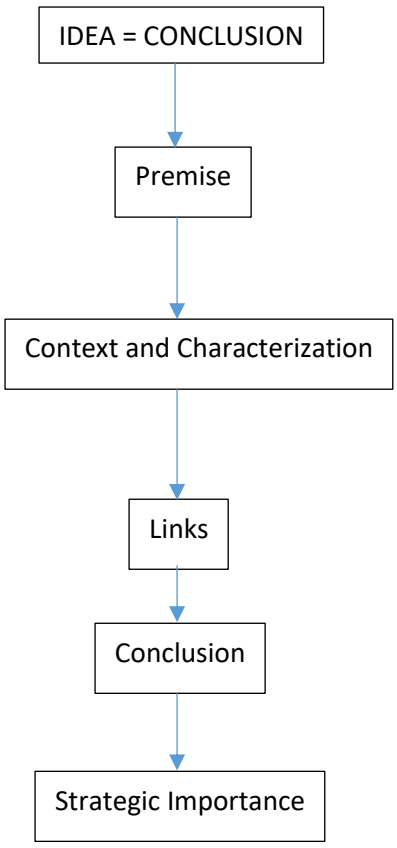
e.g. This House Would legalise child labour in developing countries

I wish that I could prove that child labour is morally acceptable

I wish that I could prove that child labour is beneficial to the child

I wish that I could prove that child labour is beneficial to the society in which it would be legalised

The structure of an argument



The broad **IDEA** is what you aim to prove. It is important to lead with conclusions when presenting an argument, so that judges can easily connect up each step to the IDEA.

The **premise** of an argument is something that both sides can accept is generally true/acceptable. It is the assumption upon which your argument rests

The **context and characterization** aims to ground an argument in the real world and claim that your position is the truest representation of the real world.
Characterization = how you view things within the debate
Context = how things happen in the real world

The links within the argument aim to connect up what is generally assumed to be true (the premise) to the thing you are trying to prove (the conclusion).

The conclusion you draw from the argument is what you were required to prove

Explicitly outlining why this argument is important gives judges a clear picture of what you value within the debate. It shows them how the argument interacts with the debate as a whole and is in and of itself something that is contentious

An argument can be thought of like a house; the IDEA is the building plan, the premise is the foundation and the context and characterisations the wall frames. These elements are vital and if they are shaky anything built around them will fall. The links are the walls themselves, the conclusion the roof and the strategic importance the windows. Ultimately it isn't a house if it doesn't have walls or a roof; these elements are the distinction between disconnected content and an argument that links back directly to the motion. Finally, windows are created to let people see the light; guiding judges through the debate influences their perspective of the debate.

How to respond to an argument

Strategic critique of the case as a whole

Problem solution gap

The problem solution gap occurs when teams propose a solution that doesn't match up well with the outlined problem. This usually occurs in two scenarios; when teams have presented an overly broad problem or when teams have presented a very real and important problem but offered a soft model solution.

In the scenario where teams present an overly broad problem, you should show that this solution may deepen the broader problem. Importantly it is insufficient to flag that the problem is broad, because it is very easy to say that if the solution improves the problem in any small way that is still justification for implementing the model. You must actively exploit the broad nature of the problem to your advantage.

e.g. This House Would create special economic zones in which only women can provide good and services

If your opponents simply say that women are unequal in today's society, you can show how special economic zones a) are unlikely to work and b) how their existence is likely to harm the position of women in highly patriarchal societies.

In the scenario where teams present a soft model to a real and important problem, the mismatch of scale causes moral inconsistency. It is unconscionable to be actively aware of an important problem and do very little about it.

e.g. This House Would legalise abortion

If the Proposition proposes only legalising abortion in the scenario in which the women's life is at risk or the women has been raped this does very little to provide women with meaningful access to abortion rights.

In both scenarios you should attack the solution as being unable to effectively make on the problem they themselves frame as important to tackle. In the case of the soft line Problem-Solution gap, simply counter-prop something that would be even marginally more effective at tackling the problem. The tactical advantage of this is that it totally neutralises the moral argument and in fact steals it for the opposition.

Assumption of mutual exclusivity

This logical error involves assuming that two positions cannot coexist. They premise their benefits or harms on this assumption without proving that mutual exclusivity exists.

Logical flaws within an argument

1) *Assertion:* the argument is in fact not an argument at all, it's simply an assertion, and as such there is no logical reason given to believe that is it true. Simply point out why there has not been any/enough analysis to demonstrate the validity of the assertion and then provide a reason why the assertion is not obviously or intuitively true.

2) *Contradiction:* The argument may be valid, but it is in contradiction with a previous argument. To be a real – or 'full blown' contradiction, it must be that the case that it is *impossible* for the two arguments in question to both be true simultaneously. So it cannot logically be both *cheaper* and *more expensive* at the same time to do a given thing. Don't go calling every argument you hear a contradiction or you will look foolish. If it is in fact a contradiction then that can cause massive damage to an opponent's case, but if it isn't, then the false accusation can cause massive damage to your credibility!

But spotting – and pointing out – a contradiction is only the beginning, if you want to fully exploit it you have to explain to the adjudicator exactly how this compromises the credibility of their case.

So don't just say "first they said their plan would be really cheap, and now they say it would be really expensive, but is worth the money – that's a pretty blatant contradiction", follow it up with some analysis, like; "so which is it then? One of them clearly doesn't really understand the nature of this situation – if a cheap program can be effective, then why is this she trying to tell us we'll need to spend lots of money to resolve the problem, but if she's right and it would take a lot of money to make a dint of this problem, then everything the first guy said is rubbish. Hopefully their next speaker will tell us which of his team mates knows what they are talking about, and which one was just making stuff up".

You need to make it as uncomfortable for them as possible, and try and force them to not just retract the statement, but concede that a number of their arguments are irrelevant (they usually won't say that out loud, they'll just stop mentioning all the arguments on one side of the contradiction – that's when you know they're in trouble and you should listen closely to how they defend themselves – if they stop mentioning certain arguments then attack them for abandoning a chuck of their case).

NOTE: The most important thing is that you can clearly and simply explain the contradiction – it's absolutely critical that the adjudicator understands and believes you – so explain it slowly and carefully, and keep your eye on the adjudicator to see if they're following you.

As you can see, a contradiction is such a serious flaw in a case, so if an opponent accuses your team of running a contradiction it is very important that your side respond as soon as possible and attempt to demonstrate how the two arguments in question are not contradictory.

3) *Casual Causation:* Essentially this is a lack of analysis. It occurs when someone tries to draw a link between two events, without showing how the former event actually caused the latter event to happen.

A classic is when people argue that the introduction of the death penalty for murders causes a reduction in the number of murders. Never mind the fact that there are instances in which introducing the death penalty has preceded a *rise* in the murder rate, this is simply not reason to believe – *prima facie* – that the death penalty is a deterrence. There may have been a reduction in murders the following year for any number of reasons (it depends entirely on why people commit murder in the first place). Between 1996 and 1997 there was dramatic drop in the number of murders in Australia – but the death penalty was abolished here in the 1970s. So what happened? Well in 1996 there was the "Port Arthur massacre", when Martin Bryant killed 35 people in Tasmania. Immediately after that incident the Federal Government instituted strict, uniform gun laws, which saw thousands of guns handed in as the result of "gun buy-back" scheme and it became much harder to legally buy a gun and keep it in your home. Without wanting to say too much about gun control, the point of this example is that there can be many reasons why the crime rate – especially the murder rate – goes up and down. So be careful not to be too quick to assume that one factor is more important to the outcome than another, unless you have the analysis to show why that is the case.

4) *False Dichotomy:* This a particular type of mischaracterization of a debate or problem. It occurs when someone says that there is a choice to be made, where the only options are 'A' or 'B', when in fact they are not the only choices available.

This can occur because a speakers is trying to assert a self-serving dichotomy (in effect they are saying, "this debate/argument is a choice between doing something positive to address this problem, or simply letting things get worse" – in a decent debate this won't be true, it's almost always a choice between two options designed to improve a situation. Or a speaker can offer a false dichotomy because they are stupid/lazy and don't understand the debate/your argument properly.

Either way it's important to recognise when someone is attempting to falsely divide the debate into two positions, one of which is either not what you are arguing, or not what *anyone* would argue. Be very clear at all times about what your team is trying to prove and you should be able to deal with this situation easily enough.

5) *Straw Man:* This is another type of misrepresentation or mischaracterization of an argument. Basically the straw man is when a team set up an argument (which you have not made, and don't intend too) and then proceed to rebut it.

Sometimes this happens when a speaker takes an extreme example of your proposal, sometimes it happens when they misrepresent something you said, sometimes it happens when they were hoping you would argue a certain thing, and you actually proposed something slightly different. It doesn't really matter why, it's important to point out when a team is not engaging with your case, because if you let a straw man argument be beaten to death without pointing out that it's not your argument in the first place, a weak adjudicator can assume that it was part of your case. Also it's important to point out when your opponents are not engaging because that's a critical part of having a good debate.

Direct responses

Direct responses attempt to take down an argument from its foundations up. If the premise that has been used within the debate has been assumed to be fact but is actually incorrect it is extremely damaging to the argument

e.g. This House Would increase farming subsidies

If the argument is that farming subsidies are necessary to reduce world hunger and the premise is that world hunger is due to a net shortage of food your opponents are in trouble. World hunger is due to an extremely unequal distribution of food not a net shortage of food. If your policy only increases the amount of food in developed areas you do nothing to fix the problem.

Working up from there, your opponents may characterise the actors of the debate incorrectly or provide a false context for the debate

The links used in an argument are often a large chunk of what is presented and therefore important to attack directly.

Speakers may draw incorrect conclusions from an argument but bear in mind that attacking this doesn't change any of the underlying analysis. An important step to this critique is to show what the actual conclusion to this analysis is and how it works to your advantage.

Haggling over examples and attacking the strategic importance does very little damage to the individual argument. Attacking the strategic importance of the argument does meaningfully impact the debate though in terms of whether the argument will actually win your opponent the debate.

Core Principle Clashes

Given the fact that Debates often engage with how certain problems should be addressed, almost every Debate involves a weigh-up between competing Principles and values which ought to be upheld in Society. Often the competing principles are directly split between the Proposition and the Opposition with each team defending why their Principle or value ought to Trump that of their opposing side. In doing such, the Clash of a Debate develops. The Competing Principles are formulated by the action proposed against the effect which Opposition would want to prevent. For instance in the motion of the sale of body organs the competing principles and subsequent clash would be as follows:

Competing Principles: Individuals "choice to do what they want with their bodies vs. The Duty of the Government to protect people from harm.

Proposition's Principle: Individuals "choice to do what they want with their bodies Opposition's Principle: The Duty of the Government to protect people from harm

Clash: Whether it is acceptable for the Government to Allow or Prevent Individuals from making choices about their bodies which may be harmful?

Another simple example on the motion, This House would abolish the Death Penalty is:

Competing Principles: Individuals" right to life vs. Society's perception of crime prevention and "justice"

Proposition Principle: Individuals" right to life

Opposition Principle: Society's perception of crime prevention and justice"

Clash: Whether or not it is acceptable for the State to kill those guilty of violent crimes.

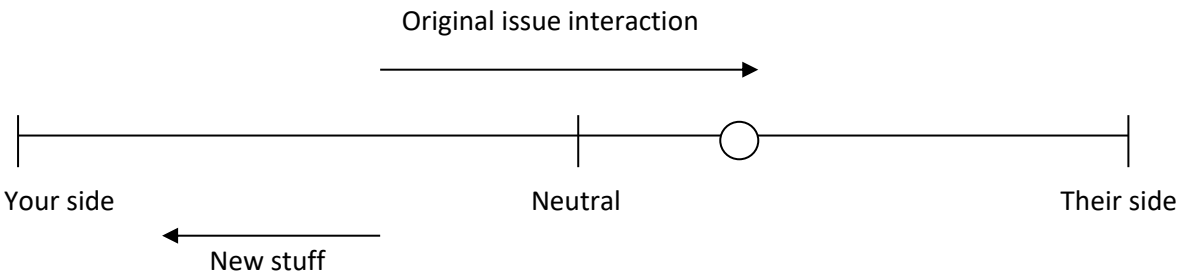
These Principles deal with the core of the Debate as they engage with the values which justify Proposition or Opposition's case. It is thus essential to understand what they are as soon as a motion is released. Consider other examples. What would the competing principles be in the motion "This house supports abortion" for instance?

Knowing how to progress the debate

Defensive rebuttal

Defensive rebuttal defends your case so that it still stands in the debate. If they have engaged a great deal you need to spend time on defensive rebuttal and build up your case. Imagine a tug of war; if they've spent time pulling this issue across you have to pull back before you can actually make progress on that issue

If they've just pulled your content over to their side through engagement, you need to defend it to make it work for your side. The degree to which you are reliant on the original argument is dependent on the strength of the argument (see progression).



We first pull the content back across to our side then we add new stuff. if the initial content was bad, try to connect it to something much better, rather than abandon it completely or leave it as is.

Attacking rebuttal

Attacking rebuttal tries to break their case down. If they haven't sufficiently engaged you focus on explicitly stating why that's hurt them in the debate/ why your case was important = bring back important issues don't leave them as standalone issues. Brief and clean defensive rebuttal but priority is on forwarding the debate, building up that argument. You then spend more time attacking their case to bring it down.

Controlling the flow of a debate

When choosing what rebuttal to where and what to give priority to maintain strategic awareness of a couple of things

1) What is the issue that is going to win the debate

You mustn't engage on all issues with equal priority; the debate winning issues go first and they get TAKEN OUT before you move on to other issues. Time spent on an issue corresponds to the value you place on it in the debate.

2) Where has the majority of the engagement happened

The majority of the engagement doesn't always happen at the point that you view as most important within the debate. In that case, you show how they haven't really dealt with your best content and you need to point that out.

"Side Opposition today hasn't engaged with our principles regarding X,Y, Z which is fundamental to who's winning today's debate because A,B,C. Now let's look at the issues they were willing to talk about"

However, if lots of engagement has happened on the core issue of the debate (a typically high level debate) you need to win that argument. There is little point in spending lots of time on other issues unless you can make those issues debate winning, so focus on winning the issue that the debate hinges on.

Where to progress content

In a **central argument** within a debate you need to add layers and argumentative work throughout the debate i.e. your hinge point needs to remain relevant within the debate. We're going to discuss two issues here; what to do if you think **different things are important** within the debate and if teams agree on what's important, **how reliant you are on the original argument**?

1) If different teams value different things in the debate

Framing is something you actively need to contest; what you value in the debate is, at the very least, where your first speakers content will be focussed. If you don't then defend why it is important

within the debate then that first speech becomes irrelevant. However, you do need to engage with their cases, otherwise it becomes a parallel debate. Ideally you want to push your "lens" by which to view the debate and take out their case; that way people will view your content as better but also that you took out any less important contestations your opponents have.

If you realise that their case is very good, you need to adapt your case so that it engages with theirs

2) The margin by which the debate is being won or lost creates obligations on progression

- If your team is losing the debate, the larger the margin by which you are losing the more the argument has to change
- If your team is winning the debate, the larger the margin by which you are winning shifts the obligation from progression to explicitly showing damage done. Ideally you still want to build up the content but cementing that difference to capitalise on a clear win in the early stages of the debate is very important

How to shut down something that could be good but isn't yet

Respond to it at its strongest point. Importantly don't actually make the argument for them, but respond to it in such a way that if that argument takes on stronger consequences or implications the response would still stand.

How to come up with new levels/content and progress an argument

- Flesh out premises
- Add depth to the most important link in an argument
- Take the people they care about most and show how you actually best protect or benefit them (strength and steal)
- Add a spin off benefit or a different group that gets positively affected (if the case is mostly South African based is there an international level and vice versa)

STYLE

Non verbal

It is important to note that a large amount of what we communicate is actually through non-verbal means.

Eye contact: Regular eye contact translates trustworthiness. Consistent eye contact indicates intensity; if eye contact is maintained with one person only (the adjudicator) they are likely to feel under scrutiny or pressure. One should look at everyone in the room in as natural a way as possible and try to emulate the eye contact one would use in a simple conversation

Posture: A closed posture (crossing your arms across your chest, rounding your shoulders) indicates shyness or defensiveness. Hands in pockets and slouching shows an air of casualness. Speakers should aim to keep an open and relatively relaxed posture

Movements: movements can assist in emphasizing argumentation but must be used purposefully. The general rule is “keep your hands and feet inside the box”

This means that while you can move around, it should not be to the point of distraction. Pacing up and down constantly conveys anxiety and a frantic air, as does very large winded rapid hand movements. Imagine the hand gestures when telling a story about the fish you caught, the wider apart your hands are the more exaggerated the story seems. These movements need to be deliberate rather than stylistic ticks. A useful tool is to record a video of yourself and play it back in fast forward. This will indicate what gestures you do repeatedly and how regularly.

Positioning: standing at the speaker podium is neutral. When you move into the opposition's space it is an aggressive controlling of their space and when you move back into your space it is defensive. Similarly moving forward is confident and assertive and moving back is defensive

Verbal

Word choice: use words to be as deliberate as possible, especially within introductions and conclusions. Word choices convey intention and impact so it is important to actively think about the decisions you are making in terms of how you stylistically portray an argument. Think about an argumentative essay; an essay with generic headings and descriptions is not going to keep your attention. Choose your words well and then use the other mechanisms of style to bring those words to life

Tone: Your tone needs to match the argument you are trying to deliver; if you are delivering an argument about the disenfranchised you should be morally outraged or upset. If you are presenting an argument about efficiency it seems mismatched to be overly emotive. Remember that debating is about telling a story

Pace: If you speak slowly it creates emphasis and clarity on specific sentences or conclusions. If you speak faster it creates intensity and aggression. Debaters typically speak far too fast throughout their speeches. While you don't need to speak slowly throughout your speech, you do need to bear in mind that selectors are humans and they are taking notes. If they can't keep up with what you saying they are not going to be able to judge it within the debate as effectively.

Volume: You wish to be audible but not shouting. The louder you are the more aggressive you seem and the softer you are the more timid you seem. You want to create a confident conversation with your judges to engender trust.

Resources

Debating videos

http://debate.uvm.edu/

http://debatevideoblog.blogspot.co.za/

Motion database

http://www.debate-motions.info/

http://hellomotions.com/

Debating argument database

https://idebate.org/debatabase

Information about the World Schools Debating Championships

https://schoolsdebate.com/

Debating discussions

http://trolleyproblem.blogspot.co.za/