

# THE DDA DEBATE MINI-HANDBOOK

## **Welcome!**

Hello and welcome to DDA's official debate handbook! In this book you'll find everything you need to know about competitive debating – from how to structure an argument to how to make it sound beautiful.

If debating (and this handbook) seems a little overwhelming at first, don't worry! You will pick up these skills gradually as you continue practicing, one step at a time. We have *all* been beginners – none of us were perfect, or even good, in our first debates, and many of us were scared and confused. Debating is just like everything else: it takes time to learn. The fact that you picked up this handbook means that you're probably already on the right path!

Give yourself time to understand and implement all of the aspects of debating we describe in this guide. You can easily read one chapter at a time rather than reading it all at once. We suggest beginning with chapters 1, 4 and 5.

And remember: even though debate is challenging in the beginning, that's exactly why you get so much out of it in the end – you gain invaluable skills that you can use for the rest of your life! And besides, it's great fun.

Happy reading!

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## Rules

This section describes the rules of a full round of debating in the format called the “World Schools Style”. This format is used at most international tournaments, including the world championship (World Schools Debating Championships, or WSDC), as well as some national ones. Don’t worry if it seems too advanced at first – it should be the end goal, not the starting point! Use a simplified format when introducing debate and gradually work towards this one (find concrete suggestions in our Exercise Handbook).

We have outlined the format down below. If you’d like to watch a 2 minute introduction, search for “World Schools Overview” on youtube, or click here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eF6gwV0MuU>

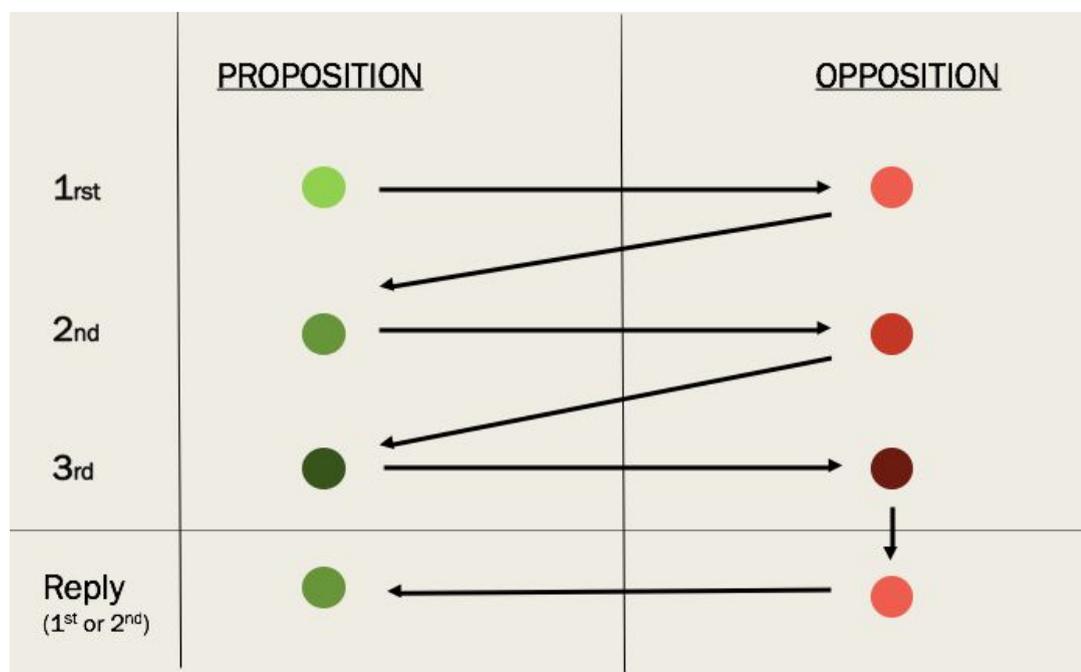
### The World Schools Format

Each debate has a set **motion**, which is the topic of the debate. Since world schools is inspired by the British parliament’s way of debating, each proposal starts with “This house (TH) – e.g. “TH Would Ban Smoking”. Hence, TH simply means, we believe we should ban smoking.

In each debate, two teams compete. The **proposition** (prop) argues *in favour* of the motion, while the **opposition** (opp) argues *against* the motion. The sides are allocated randomly, not based on the actual opinion of the debaters – so you will often end up arguing for something you don’t believe at all. Typically this allocation is done by a coin toss or random algorithm.

### The course of the debate

Each team has three members, and each member has one main speech, all of which are the same length (8 minutes in a full round). These are called **constructive speeches**. The debate alternates between the two sides, so there is first a speech from the proposition, then a speech from the opposition.



After the 6 main speeches, each team has a **reply speech** delivered by the 1st or 2nd speaker. The reply speech is *half the length* of the main speeches (4 minutes) and is supposed to summarize the debate for their side without giving new content. The reply speeches are delivered in opposite order, so the opposition goes first, followed by the proposition. This means that the opposition has two speeches in a row, while the proposition has both the first and the last word. Replies may not add new analysis or information, but are as a last opportunity to explain to the judge why you've clearly won.

After all 8 speeches, a judging panel determines the winner of the debate. The panel typically consists of 3 judges, who each vote independently and give scores to each individual speaker. Judges should be objective and base their vote on who argued the best – they won't necessarily vote for the team they agree with the most, and it is hence very important that they put away their personal bias. Judging is based on 3 criteria: style (40%), content (40%) and strategy (20%). That means that a team can't just win because they "spoke prettier English" or "had more arguments". A judge must weigh how the speakers did on all three criteria.

### **Points of information**

During the constructive speeches, the other team can offer **points of information** (POIs). A point of information is a question or a brief comment addressed to the current speaker. It is offered by standing up and saying "Point of information", or something similar. The speaker doesn't have to take all POIs, but can

1. Decline or wave down the POI
2. Finish the sentence and then accept the point
3. Accept the point immediately.

It is expected that each speaker takes 1-2 POIs during their speech, provided that enough are offered by the opposing team. There are no POIs during the first and last minute of each speech, and no POIs during reply speeches.

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## Speaker roles

View examples at the bottom of this section.

### 1<sup>st</sup> proposition

*Introduces the context of the debate, then presents their team's most important arguments.*

#### Typical structure

1. Introduction
2. Set-up
3. Signposting
4. Arguments

The speaker should begin with a rhetorical introduction about the main issue in the debate. Then the speaker presents a set-up, containing definitions (i.e. clarifying terms in the motion), potentially a model (i.e. describing where and how the motion is implemented) and potentially burdens (i.e. outlining what the team must do to win the debate). The set-up shouldn't be a long list of obvious or irrelevant details, and it can't contain arbitrary restrictions (e.g. that the motion applies only in France). The purpose is to avoid confusion and misunderstanding, not to cover your back completely. After the set-up, the speaker signposts the team case (i.e. lists their team's arguments) and then presents the first arguments, usually two.

*Typical time split in a 3-minute speech: 30 second intro, 30 second set-up, 1 minute per argument.*

*Typical time split in an 8-minute speech: 30 second intro, 1.5 minute set-up, 3 minutes per argument.*

### 1<sup>st</sup> opposition

*Introduces the opposition case, rebuts proposition's argument, and present their team's first and most important arguments.*

#### Typical structure

1. Introduction
2. Set-up
3. Signposting
4. Rebuttal
5. Arguments

Like 1<sup>st</sup> proposition, the speaker should have an introduction – this should illustrate the main issue from the opposition's point of view. This speaker can also have a set-up, e.g. to clarify what their team stand for or what alternative they propose. If opposition disagrees with the proposition set-up, only 1<sup>st</sup> opposition can address this – but it should *only* be done if they are clearly unreasonable! However, the speaker can always do *model picks*, which criticise the model without challenging it (e.g. by saying that it will be ineffective or that it defeats some of proposition's own arguments).

The speaker then rebuts (responds to) the proposition arguments. Finally, the speaker signposts the team case and presents the first arguments, usually two.

*Typical time split in a 3-minute speech: 20 second intro, 40 second set-up AND rebuttal, 1 minute per argument.*

*Typical time split in an 8-minute speech: 2.5 minutes intro AND set-up AND rebuttal, 2-3 minutes per argument.*

## **2<sup>nd</sup> prop/opp**

*Rebuts the other team's arguments and further develops the case for their side.*

### Typical structure

1. Introduction
2. Signposting
3. Rebuttal
4. Arguments

2nd speakers should preferably have a responsive intro, in which they address a key issue with the other side's case – or, alternatively, an intro relating to their own material. *If necessary*, they can begin their speech by clarifying definitions, misunderstandings or mischaracterization within the debate, or analyzing burdens. The 2<sup>nd</sup> speaker then does rebuttal, which should address all of the other team's arguments and explain why they are invalid. The speaker must prioritise their time by answering the most central claims of the other side, rather than focus on less relevant details, examples, or specific phrasing. The speaker can then rebuild (i.e. develop their first speaker's arguments by addressing the responses made by the other team). Finally, the speaker presents their team's last argument(s), usually one.

*Typical time split in a 3-minute speech: 15 second intro, 1 minute rebuttal, 45 seconds rebuild, 1 minute argument.*

*Typical time split in an 8-minute speech: 15-60 second intro (depending on need for clarifications/burden analysis), 3-4 minutes rebuttal and rebuild, 3-4 minute argument.*

## **3<sup>rd</sup> prop/opp**

*Sums up the debate and argues why their team has won the debate.*

### Typical structure

1. Introduction
2. Themes

3rd speeches should begin with a holistic (overall) intro, emphasizing the key reason you think your team has won, or a central impact, rebuttal point or misunderstanding in the debate. Like 2nd speakers, 3rds can *as necessary* do clarifications and burden analysis in the beginning of their speech.

The bulk of a 3<sup>rd</sup> speech should be structured around 2-3 overarching “themes”, that is, central disagreements in the debate (these can also be called clashes or questions). Within each theme, the speaker contrasts the arguments made by the two sides and explains why their own team’s points were better, more important, or more convincing. The third speaker is *not* allowed to have new arguments, but can add examples, responses and pieces of analysis to those made by their teammates. For novice speakers, rather than structuring the speech according to clashes, it is acceptable to simply go through the arguments made by both sides and sum up the debate at the end.

*Typical time split in a 3-minute speech: 0-30 second intro, 1-1.5 minute per clash.*

*Typical time split in an 8-minute speech: 15-60 second intro (depending on need for clarifications/burden analysis), 2-4 minutes per clash.*

### **Example speeches**

Plenty of example debates can be found on youtube by searching for “WSDC debate”. Here is one example that is well suited for training speaker roles specifically, as all 6 speakers adhere to their respective role and structure very well. We recommend watching especially the 1st prop speech.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxulGy0mOPO&t=3412s>.

\* \* \*

## Chapter 1: Structure

One of the most important things to master early on is speech structure. That means the order in which you say things, as well as the transitions and phrases that guide the listener through your speech. This makes it much easier for the judges to follow your speech and focus their attention on what you're saying. Here's 4 tips on improving your structure:

1. **Be explicit.** Literally say you structure out loud throughout your speech – e.g “Firstly, I’ll explain our model”, “Three things in this speech: rebuttal, reconstruction and our final argument about x”, and “Moving into my first argument”.
2. **Number things.** If you have 4 components in your model, say that, and call them numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 out loud. The same can be done with rebuttal, subpoints in an argument or reasons within a subpoint.
3. **Say the conclusion first.** Have a “thesis” at the beginning of each argument or point, explaining briefly what the overall conclusion will be.
4. **Voice command.** Use your voice to underline your structure. For example, you can have a brief pause after finishing each section of your speech, or each point in a list.

Here is an example debate specifically filmed to showcase good structure:

[https://www.facebook.com/dodebate/videos/1674895976110158/?fb\\_dtsg\\_ag=AdyZbfAr7f2BhZZcsXhbqSZ\\_cZtWuPFWiZIA7WX5hEIO-A%3AAadzwohWv62RVulzk5iFhyfvyrjkHcOkOfiuhJdhl4yfoA](https://www.facebook.com/dodebate/videos/1674895976110158/?fb_dtsg_ag=AdyZbfAr7f2BhZZcsXhbqSZ_cZtWuPFWiZIA7WX5hEIO-A%3AAadzwohWv62RVulzk5iFhyfvyrjkHcOkOfiuhJdhl4yfoA)

For an example from a tournament, watch the 1st prop speech referred to in the section on “Speaker Roles”.

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## Chapter 2: Set-up

When entering a debate, it's important to have a clear idea of where the debate takes place, what is included and omitted, and what exactly your side stands for. That is what the set-up is for. It includes definitions, model and stance. Only the 1st prop speaker can do the set-up. If opp wants to criticise or challenge it, this must be done in 1st opp.

### Definitions

Prop should define how their team interprets the motion. That doesn't mean giving a dictionary definition, but rather clarifying how you interpret vague terms.

**Ex.** Motion: "THBT the West should replace Saudi Arabia with Iran as its primary partner in the Middle East".

Definitions:

1. *Primary partner*: diplomacy, military and trade
2. *Replace*: gradually involve Iran through cooperation within a variety of fields such as diplomacy and trade.
3. *West*: the US and the EU

In most cases, you need to define "TH". This determines *who* implements the motion (and hence *where* the debate occurs). In the above example, TH is clearly "the West". In many cases, TH will be "the whole world", though in some cases it may be limited, for example if the motion is only applicable in democracies, welfare states or the like.

### Model

A model is only necessary in "policy motions". These are about doing an action (e.g. "THW require children to wear school uniforms"), rather than discussing a general idea (e.g. "THBT school uniforms are good for children"). The model specifies how you will implement the motion. Ask WH-questions like when, where, how, which, who, etc. Consider whether there are exceptions to the motion, or additional safeguard measures you want to put in place.

**Ex:** Motion: "THW allow prisoners to act as test subjects for new drugs in exchange for shorter sentences".

Model:

1. Prisoners are only eligible if they have committed non-violent crimes.
2. The maximum reduction is one year.
3. The drugs must already have been tested on animals and meet criteria set by a health specialist so as not to unnecessarily harm prisoners.
4. Prisoners must be fully informed of the risks before choosing to join.
5. Prisoner must be psychologically evaluated before entering the program.

### Stance

A stance is a clarification on your side's opinion on the motion and surrounding issues. This is usually only relevant for opp, who might need to clarify what they stand for *in place of the motion* – e.g. what they believe in, or what alternative solution they propose.

## Chapter 3: Burdens and criteria

A *burden of proof* is a statement of what your side needs to do in the debate. They should be presented by the 1st speaker. Burdens answer the question: “What do I need to prove in order to win?”. Burdens help both you and the judges determine what is relevant and what isn’t – if an argument doesn’t prove any of your burdens, it won’t help you win the debate.

**Ex.** Motion: “THW create a 100% inheritance tax”.

Burden 1: The government is justified in taking your wealth after you die.

Burden 2: This will make society more equal.

These are examples of the most standard forms of burdens: the principle burden (“this is principally justified”) and the practical burden (“this benefits society/makes the world a better place”). Notice, however, how they’re adapted to the specific motion, not just stated in their most generic form. Try to do this when you make burdens. With a little practice, you can learn to make them even more narrow, targeting them towards *exactly* what you need to prove with *this specific motion*, for example:

Burden 1: The right to property does not extend beyond your lifetime.

Burden 2: This money will create more utility when spent by the government rather than being in the hands of individual citizens.

### Criteria

Some motions require criteria rather than burdens. For example motions choosing between two alternatives (e.g. “TH prefers Bernie Sanders to Hillary Clinton as a Democratic presidential candidate”) or weighing positive and negative impacts (e.g. “THBT facebook does more harm than good”). The motion tells you explicitly what you have to prove – that x is better than y, or that x is more good than bad – so burdens aren’t helpful.

Instead, look closer at vague terms, such as “good”, “prefers” and “important”. Create criteria that you can use to evaluate them. “Good” for whom? In what ways? How do we determine whether we “prefer” one thing or the other – what’s the goal? etc. If we look at the first motion, for example, set up criteria for what your side wants in a democratic presidential candidate – for example, being likely to be elected, being likely to help poor Americans, etc.

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## Chapter 4: Arguments

Arguments are the substance of the debate. In short, an argument is a **logical string of reasoning** meant to **convince a given audience** about an **idea**. This is important to note: an argument is *always* made to convince the judges that they should vote for or against a given motion. Now, how do you go about that?

### Structure

A well-structured argument is built through the following structure:

1. Title
2. Thesis
3. Analysis, consisting of two components:
  - a. Why is my thesis true?
  - b. Given I have proven my thesis is true, why is the thesis important?
  - c. Advanced: Given I have proven my argument is important, why is it *more* important than the opposing argument?
4. Conclusion

Here's an argument for abolishing the British monarchy (begins at 1:30):

[https://www.facebook.com/dodebate/videos/1674895976110158/?fb\\_dtsg\\_ag=AdyZbfAr7f2BhZ7csXhbqSZ\\_cZtWuPEWwZiA7WX5hEIO-A%3AAAdzzw0hWv62RVulzk5iFhyfyryjkHcOkQfiuhJdhl4yfoA](https://www.facebook.com/dodebate/videos/1674895976110158/?fb_dtsg_ag=AdyZbfAr7f2BhZ7csXhbqSZ_cZtWuPEWwZiA7WX5hEIO-A%3AAAdzzw0hWv62RVulzk5iFhyfyryjkHcOkQfiuhJdhl4yfoA)

In your analysis it is important that you ask yourself “why is this true?” and respond as many times as you can. The deeper the analysis, the more convincing, and hard to refute, your argument becomes. Remember that evidence (e.g. examples and statistics) *never* substitutes analysis. Evidence is meant to *support* your logical reasoning and give it more credibility. *But* without the analysis there is no argument.

Once you've learned the basic structure, here's 3 ways to make your arguments even better:

1. ***Specificity***: Always try to make your arguments as *specific to the motion* as possible. If the debate is about online data protection, rather than arguing for the “right to privacy” (a principle argument) in itself, try to specify why specifically *online data* is so important to people's privacy and why we can't violate privacy *in this case*. Or rather than arguing for “more lives saved” (a practical argument) in itself, explain how online data is *especially* crucial to national security.
2. ***Nuance***: There are different types of people. It's unlikely that *everyone in the world* will act in *one* way. When you give a more nuanced view of the world, you will seem more convincing.
3. ***Contextualisation***: When you make an argument it can be difficult to understand what the *real* impact is. That is why when you ask “why is this important?” that you include an example or scenario of where this could be relevant.

## Types of arguments

There are broadly two types of arguments: principle and practical arguments. *Principle arguments* argue why an actor does (not) have the *right* to do something. In theory, they don't have to consider the practical consequences of the motion. E.g. "The monarchy is undemocratic". *Practical arguments* argue about outcomes. They aim to prove why people are helped or harmed by the motion. E.g. "The monarchy is expensive".

## How to come up with arguments

1. Actor analysis (see Chapter 9)
2. Scenario analysis: Picture yourself as an actor and what he/she/it is going through. While doing this, keep these questions in mind:
  - a. How am I impacted?
  - b. How will I react?
  - c. Which other actors are being impacted as a result? How?
3. Context analysis: Consider: Why has this motion been put in place? (e.g. recent events, problem in status quo)
4. PERMMES: This is an abbreviation for 7 areas of arguments:
  - P**: Political
  - E**: Economic
  - R**: Religious
  - M**: Military
  - M**: Moral
  - E**: Environmental
  - S**: Social or society

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## Chapter 5: Rebuttal

A key characteristic of formal debate is *engagement*. That means that we always want to directly address the other side's arguments – especially their very best ones! This can be daunting at first, but once you get the hang of it, you'll gain an edge in any debate.

Rebuttal (also called "refutation" or "response") is the **answers** you give to the other sides arguments in order to **disprove** them. Restating your own point does not constitute rebuttal:

**Ex:** Motion: "THW make higher education free for all"

Prop says: "Free higher education will create equality by allowing the poorest in society access to higher education and hence job opportunities."

Opp says: "This point falls because we cannot afford higher education for all."

Opp's response doesn't actually question prop's point. Even if we can never afford higher education for all, that doesn't *disprove* that it *would* increase equality, so prop's point stands.

### How to do rebuttal

One way to come up with responses to an argument is to ask yourself three questions:

1. **Is** there a problem?
2. Does the other side **fix** the problem?
3. Are there **other issues** that are more important than fixing this problem?

So in the above example, opp could rebut by saying:

1. Inequality in higher education is **not a problem** – e.g. "not everyone needs to have higher education, so universal access is not something the state should care about".
2. Free higher education **does not fix inequality** – e.g. "there are other barriers of entry for poor students, because their parents are less likely to have time to help them, meaning they're unlikely to get high enough grades to get in, even if it's free".
3. Higher education is **not what is needed the most** – e.g. "there will now be less funds and political will towards improving primary schools and health care, which are more crucial to combatting inequality" (what opp tried to do in the first example).

### How to structure rebuttal

A good mnemonic for structuring your rebuttal is FER.

**Flag:** Say which argument you are responding to

**Explain:** Briefly explain what the argument was about. This helps remind the judges what the argument was about and shows your understanding of it. However, it should *only* be a short sentence, as you don't gain any ground by repeating their analysis. You

shouldn't misrepresent what the point was about (called "straw manning"), but you can mock it slightly.

**Respond:** Say your response(s) to the argument. If you have more, it's a good idea to number them for clarity.

**Ex:** Motion: "THW make higher education free for all"

F: "On to their first argument about inequality."

E: "This argument was about how students with next to no resources would now magically be able to go to Harvard"

R: "We have three responses to this point. Firstly..."

You can also use it for reconstruction, only then you'll be "explaining" the other side's response to your argument, rather than the argument in itself.

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## Chapter 6: Style

Style is the *way in which* you deliver your content. Style is about all levels of communication: the words and rhetorical devices you use, how you use your voice, and your body language. Essentially, style is about how convincing and compelling you sound. Two things to note:

1. Style is not about accents and minor language mistakes. Just look at the WSDC finals of 2018 between India and China, and you'll see two ESL (non-native) teams who are both extremely strong stylistically (watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2G1j8ScplM&t=1441s>).
2. There are many different ways to have good style – there's not a "right" style. A good example of this is the WSDC finals of 2017, in which England's speakers are calm, collected and humorous, whereas Singapore's speakers use indignation, passion and mockery (watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HUJFM3lZaLQ&t=1960s>). Try different things to find a style that works for you.

### General advice

Though style is personal, here are 3 basic tips that applies to all types of style:

1. Appear **confident** and in control of your speech. Speak audibly and clearly. Look at the judges and even make eye contact with them – you can try to pretend that you're speaking directly to each judge individually. Use body language to emphasize your words, but avoid over-gesticulating in a way that seems distracting or hectic.
2. It's excellent to have personality, but you also want to strike a **balance** between the most extreme ends. Try to seem engaged and passionate, but still intellectual. Appear neither shy nor overly aggressive. By all means use humour and everyday examples, as long as your speech doesn't become too informal or silly.
3. **Vary** your pace and intensity throughout your speech. For example, an intro should be slow and heavily emphasized, whereas a model should be more matter-of-fact.

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## Chapter 7: 3rds speeches

The task of the 3rd speaker is to *definitively* show why your team has won. You usually begin with an introduction (20-30 seconds) and then spend the majority of your speech on the themes you have divided the debate into (7-8 minutes). Themes are the 2-3 broad areas of disagreement in the debate. For example, in a debate on mass surveillance, the main themes tend to be 1) the right to privacy and 2) national security.

In your themes you must do 3 things:

1. **Responding** to everything that has not been responded to by your team partners. Further, try to add new layers of response if your partners have already touched upon something. *Always* come up with the best responses you can, even if you think your partner has done a good job - don't be satisfied with their response.
2. Pushing the ball forward in terms of **your own argumentation**. Respond to their refutation to your team's arguments. Add extra analysis, examples and depth.
3. **Weighing** (see Chapter 8)

### Prioritisation

The most important thing for a third speaker is to hit the key issues. You don't end up winning on the small things in 95% of debates. So don't worry if you don't have time to deal with everything - that is probably for the best! Winning a debate from the third is just about winning the important issues. Divide your time between harping on things you're already winning on, and trying to win the things that you're losing.

### Notes

In order to keep track of the debate, have a clear note-taking strategy. Write down all of the ideas that come up during the round - both your own and the other side's - and leave plenty of space underneath for the development throughout the debate and, most importantly, what *you* intend to say about that point, e.g. extra responses or layers.

You can structure and edit your speech during the debate, for example by colour-coding different themes in different colours, writing out a game plan for your speech, crossing out or making title pages for each theme. Just make sure you have a *clear* overview.

## Chapter 8. Actor and sensitivity analysis

All debates are about stakeholders; different groups and individuals that are affected by a motion. These are often called *actors*. They can be as specific as “Donald Trump” and as abstract as “society at large”. What’s important is that each actor is impacted in a *distinct* way. Actor analysis can help you understand the debate better, come up with more arguments and nuance your points and responses.

In prep, do a brainstorm of all the different actors relevant to the debate. Try to think not only of the most obvious ones, but also different socioeconomic classes, minorities, societal norms, actors indirectly impacted by the motion etc. Ask yourself:

1. Who will be impacted by this motion?
2. How will they be impacted?

Then try to determine which actors most strongly fall to your side, which are most important and how they can be grouped together into arguments.

**Ex.** Motion: “TH supports gender quotas on corporate boards in major businesses”.

Relevant actors:

1. *Women working in major businesses*
  2. *Men working in major businesses*
  3. *Major businesses*
  4. *Young girls and boys*
  5. *Other women*
  6. *Society*
- etc.

### Sensitivity analysis

Usually, everyone does not act or think in the same way, not even within a specific group such as “women working in major businesses”. Always consider if there are relevant subgroups that might respond differently, e.g. women who are hired through the quota system, women who were already employed and women not yet employed.

The same goes for scenarios. Think of how the motion will apply in various contexts, e.g. different countries, different industries and rural vs. urban areas. You want to win in *multiple* scenarios, not just one or the other. As with actors, avoid generalizing large groups too much. For example, the “developing world” could encompass from Argentina to Somalia to India – which are all at different stages of development and each face distinct challenges.

## Chapter 9: POIs

Points of information force engagement between the two teams. They allow you to confront the opponent – and show that you can be confronted – with the best points in the debate. The best POIs are simple, concise and sharply phrased (they should be *max.* 15 second and preferably less), and their meaning and intention should be immediately understandable to everyone in the room. It's a good idea to write them down word-for-word. A way to test the strength of your POI is to ask yourself how you would respond – if you can immediately come up with an obvious answer, it's probably not the most effective POI you could ask.

### Types of POI

1. Rebuttal POI: Raises an objection to the points made by the speaker. E.g. in “THBT NATO should increase its military presence in Eastern Europe”, prop argues that Russia needs to be deterred from invading the Baltic states. A good opp POI could be: “If Russia has such a great interest in attacking its neighbors, and there is currently insufficient NATO presence to deter them, why haven't they attacked yet?”.
2. Own material POI: Reiterates a strong aspect of your own case. E.g. in “THW require sports teams to be owned by their local communities rather than individuals”, prop has an argument about how democratic debate in sports clubs will lead to better decisions. Prop can POI: “Dan Snyder, the owner of Washington Redskins, humiliated a coach into resigning so he wouldn't have to pay for firing him. How can we hold him accountable on your side?”
3. Stance POI/trap POI: A yes-or-no question where both answers advantage you. For example, you ask whether they support something that is analogous to the motion – e.g. “Do you support meat eating?” in a debate about animal testing. This forces the other side to either defend a more extreme stance *or* make a distinction between the issue in the motion and the issue in the POI.
4. Contradiction POI: If you spot a contradiction in the other side's case, you can ask them in a POI to clear it up, forcing them to deal with it on the spot.

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## Chapter 10: Prep time

In order to use your 60 minutes of prep time effectively, settle on a clear structure *before* you enter the prep room. While it will be different for each team, here's a suggestion.

1. **Silent Prep (5 minutes):** Each team member preps *individually*. Write down first impressions of the motion, ideas and analysis for arguments, key aspects of model and burdens, examples, potentially a case outline.
2. **Group Prep (15-25 minutes):** During this time, you agree on model/stance, burdens, case and the subpoints of arguments. One way to structure this could be:
  - a. **Conceptualisation:** Brief team discussion of what the debate is about. Prevalent strategy issues should be discussed here, e.g. your stance on opp.
  - b. **Idea brainstorm:** *Every* team member shares their ideas, arguments and points from silent prep. Only say ideas that haven't been said before.
  - c. **Case:** Everyone agrees on the 3 arguments, their subpoints and the order. Use the list of ideas: combine similar ones, scrap less relevant ones.
  - d. **Model, stance, burdens:** Everyone agrees on the set-up and burdens.
3. **Speech prep (30-40 minutes):** Break up into smaller groups or individuals and start creating the content for the debate. 1st speakers write notes for their whole speech: fleshing out their arguments, writing an intro etc. 2nd speakers write notes for their argument and think about rebuttal. 3rd speakers think about rebuttal, weighing, themes etc. and can help other speakers. Continue to communicate so that everyone is on the same page – if you need help with an argument, spar your team. Clarify *now*, not right before the debate.

It can be beneficial to assign some roles in prep, to make sure that specific tasks are being done. For example:

- **Scribe:** Writes down everything nicely for the speakers in the round to use.
- **Guide:** In charge of time management and keeping prep structured and focused.
- **Nuancer:** Asks questions like: "Are there actors we haven't thought of? How does this motion apply to other parts of the world? How does it apply to minorities?".
- **Almanac:** Makes a sheet of as many examples as possible.

## Chapter 11: Weighing

Weighing means explaining *why your arguments are more important* than those of the other side. Debates are always about trade-offs – if there weren't good arguments on both sides, the motion wouldn't be a motion! Ideally, the judges shouldn't have to make those trade-offs on their own – *you* should tell them how they should prioritise. Combine rebuttal and weighing. Basically what you're saying is, "We don't think their argument stands because of A, B and C. However, *even if it does*, our argument is still *more important*, and *here's why*".

### Principle weighing

Here are some different approaches to principle weighing. We'll use the motion "THS armed revolution against abusive governments" as an example.

1. Hierarchy of principles: Argue why one principle is more important to uphold than the other. E.g. opp can argue that individuals care more about their right to life than their right to justice – and prop can argue the reverse.
2. Correlation between principles: Argue why one principle leads to the other and is therefore more important. For example, prop could argue that in order to have the right to justice, free speech, democracy etc., you must first have the right to live.

### Practical weighing

Here are some different approaches to practical weighing. We'll use the motion "THS the use of torture" as an example.

1. Quantity: Argue why your argument impacts more actors. E.g., prop can say that the suffering of one individual is worth saving the lives of many more.
2. Quality: Argue why your argument affects people *more* or *in a worse way*. E.g. opp can say that it's clearly horrendous to be tortured, whereas one piece of information will have a small impact on law enforcement in most cases.
3. Moral duty: Argue why we owe a greater moral duty to one actor than to another. E.g. prop can say that the government has a duty to protect law-abiding citizens which overrides its duty to protect criminals from torture.
4. Short term vs. long term: Argue why your impacts will show in the long term. E.g. opp can argue that even if you get information now, people will eventually become angry with the state and find ways to circumvent information sharing (e.g. lying, suicide).
5. Certain vs. uncertain: Argue why your impacts are more likely to happen than theirs. E.g. opp can argue that we *know* we're harming someone by torturing them, but there's only a *possibility* that it will actually save other people's lives.