



# Debate I Syllabus ELA 1961 A & B 2011-2012 School Year

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

(add your contact information here)

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Policy debate teaches students a number of important academic skills, including logic, argumentation, research, writing and public speaking, all within a social sciences context. Drawing from the fields of government, economics, philosophy, sociology, anthropology and psychology, students will develop evidence-based cases they will advocate at this school year's tournaments. This year, national high school policy debate will focus on the following resolution:

Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its exploration and/or development of space beyond the Earth's mesosphere.

## **COURSE PROCEDURES**

Policy debate is an interactive and team-oriented activity. As such, students are required to attend at least two tournaments per semester in order to receive a passing grade for the Debate 1A and Debate 1B classes. Any student unable to meet this criterion must meet with their instructor to explain the situation and ask for an exemption. Exemptions will be given *only* in the case of extenuating personal circumstances. It is the sole responsibility of the student to request this exemption and it will be considered on a case by case basis.

This school year's tournaments will be divided into two divisions: Novice, open to beginning debaters and students who feel they need a refresher in debate basics, and Varsity, open to all argumentation and any affirmative case. Novice will be limited to two affirmative cases during the fall semester and four in the spring. These cases can be found on the HUDL Wikispace under the Case Disclosure tab (see Textbook section below). Varsity debaters must post any affirmative case (plan text only) they will run on the HUDL Wikispace no later than the Friday prior to the tournament.

(add other procedures and rules here)

## **ASSESSMENTS**

A majority of the grade for this course comes from weekly research, writing and speaking assignments but will be supplemented by quizzes and test grades.

(add percentage breakdown here)

## **TEXTBOOKS**

A majority of this year's evidence and curriculum will be posted on the new HUDL Wikispace at the following web address:

<http://houstonurbandebateleague.wikispaces.com>

The primary text for this course will be the Houston Urban Debate League's *Introduction to Policy Debate*. This book will be available free as an electronic copy on the HUDL Wikispace under the curriculum tab.

## **OVERVIEW**

Debate 1 is divided into two 16 week semesters. The first semester will teach the basics of argument, logic, research, writing and speaking. The second semester will expand on these skills and give the students more freedom to write their own cases and argument extensions. Over the course of the year, students will have the opportunity to attend six HUDL seminars and six HUDL tournaments, with an opportunity for more based on student success and interest. At the end of the debate season, the first and second place teams in Houston will travel free of charge to the Chase Urban Debate National Championships in New York City, New York (see tournament schedule). Below is the breakdown of the Debate 1 curriculum.

### **Semester 1**

**Week 1:** What is debate?/What is a resolution?—Public Speaking Skills Poster

**Week 2:** Aff and Neg Burdens/Presumption/Topic and Potential Case Areas

#### **Seminar #1:**

Junior Varsity: On-case/Stock Issues

Varsity: Defensive v. Offensive Arguments/Case turns/T; Lab: Argumentation (Toulmin model)/Syllogisms/Proof (Evidence)

**Week 3:** On-case-Stock Issues/Case Turns/Finding and labeling evidence; Prepare for First Tournament

### **Tournament #1**

**Week 4:** Building a case/Direct Clash/Defensive Arguments/Argue a mini-round

**Week 5:** The Topicality Debate—Listening and Flowing

**Week 6:** Sample debates

### **Seminar #2:**

Junior Varsity: Case Building Workshop/Cutting Aff and Neg On-case evidence

Varsity: Case Workshop/Cutting Aff and Neg On-Case Evidence

ALL: Flow a mock debate

**Week 7:** Disadvantages/Clash/Timeframe, Scope, Magnitude, Probability

**Week 8:** Disadvantages/Link Turns, Impact Turns, Straight Turns and Double Turns

**Week 9:** Prepare for Second Tournament

### **Tournament #2**

**Week 10:** Counterplans; CP/DA in combination

**Week 11:** Troubleshoot Second Tournament Problems/DA/CP Construction

### **Seminar #3:**

DAs/Introduce Counterplans

**Week 12:** DA/CP/Kritik Introduction

**Week 13:** Prepare for Third Tournament

### **Tournament #3**

**Week 14:** Strategic Argumentation

**Week 15:** Prepare for Fourth Tournament

### **Tournament #4**

**Week 16:** Dead Week/Semester Exam Prep

**Week 17:** Semester Exams

## **Semester 2**

Focus on research writing and expanding on skills learned in the first semester. Seminar 4 as well as tournaments 5 and the city, state and national championships are also this semester.



**Lesson Plan: Introduction to Debate**

**Time Breakdown:**

- **Student and Teacher Introductions - 30 minutes**
- **Syllabus Review - 30 minutes**
- **Tournament and Seminar Review - 30 minutes**

**Objective:**

The students will review the Debate I syllabus and discuss classroom and lesson procedures as well as the HUDL tournament and seminar schedule with the instructor.

**Materials:**

- ❖ Debate I Syllabus
- ❖ HUDL Events Calendar

**Key Terms:**

**Preparation:**

1. Prior to the execution of the lesson, the instructor should become familiar with all elements of the lesson; the content of the Debate I syllabus, the schedule of HUDL events including all HUDL tournaments and seminars, and make note of the number of tournaments and seminars students must attend per semester in order to receive full credit for the course.
2. The instructor should make an appropriate number of copies of the Syllabus and HUDL Tournament Schedule for students in the class. The instructor should also create either a data collection point or be prepared to hand out the syllabus as students enter the classroom.
3. [Guide to Starting a Debate Team](#)
4. [Guide to Running a Team](#)

**Student and Teacher Introductions (30 minutes):**

As students enter the classroom, they should receive a copy of the Debate 1 Syllabus and HUDL Tournament Schedule. After students are seated, the class should participate in an introduction exercise that will allow the class to introduce themselves and the instructor to take roll. A general but good idea for an introduction could be to have students answer the question; "Why did you join debate?"

**Syllabus Review (30 minutes):**

After completing the introduction, the instructor should lead the class in a review of the course syllabus, giving students the time to ask questions or discuss issues as necessary.

**Tournament and Seminar Review (30 minutes):**

When the instructor is certain that students are comfortable with the requirements, the instructor should begin with a short introduction of policy debate. This discussion should start with describing debate as a public speaking (communications) activity that requires all students to participate in debate competitions.

The instructor should introduce students to the tournament and seminar schedule for the year. The instructor should reinforce that students are required to attend at least one (1) seminar and one (1) tournament per semester in order to receive full credit for the course. Studies have shown that participation is the most effective way for students to learn the core concepts of debate and gain the maximum educational advantages.

First, the instructor should engage students in a discussion about the policy debate tournament structure. HUDL tournaments generally take place on Friday and Saturdays. The events have four preliminary rounds (other non-HUDL tournaments may have more or less). In these rounds, students will compete on a two-person team representing their school against another two person team from another school. Students will never debate their own school in preliminary rounds. There are two sets of rounds; preliminary rounds and elimination rounds. The best 16 teams (based on total wins and quality of speeches from each competitor) will advance to single elimination rounds. HUDL tournaments consist of three divisions; novice, junior varsity, and varsity. Each division will advance 16 teams to elimination rounds.

Second, the instructor should engage students in a discussion about seminars. HUDL seminars generally take place over a couple of hours on Saturdays. These events are lecture oriented and are geared to help students hone their debate skills, theories and topic specific knowledge.

**HUDL Tournament and Seminar Schedule (30 minutes):**

The instructor should reference pages 3-4 of the NAUDL handbook ([HUDL wikispace](#)). It is also important for the instructor to reinforce that debate and debate events are largely fun activities based around competition. The main goal is to create a positive and fun environment for students to learn.



## **Lesson Plan: What is Debate?**

### **Time Breakdown:**

- **Warm Up - 10 minutes**
- **Group Discussion - 60 minutes**
- **Exercise I - 35 minutes**
- **Closure - 10 minutes**

### **Objective:**

The students will learn the basic outline and terminology of a debate round.

### **Materials:**

- ❖ Lesson Plan - Introduction to Policy Debate - What is Debate-Exercise I: Matching terms with definitions.
- ❖ Lesson Plan - Introduction to Policy Debate - What is Debate-Exercise II: The Outline of a Debate Round
- ❖ Notes on this Lesson can be found here.

### **Key Terms:**

**Resolution:** Also known as the topic; It is an expression of opinion that includes the word “should” and always includes the United States federal government as the actor.

**Affirmative Team:** The side in a debate round that supports or “affirms” the resolution.

**Negative Team:** The side in a debate round that opposes or “negates” the resolution.

**Constructive Speech:** The first set of speeches in which both sides “construct” their arguments and positions; constructive speeches are 8 minutes, and have a cross-examination period directly after the completion of the speech; each competitor will give a constructive speech.

**Rebuttal Speech:** The second set of speeches in which both sides focus on comparing and contrasting arguments already presented in the debate round; rebuttals are five minutes; the rebuttal speeches allow teams to analyze the key arguments of the round using logic to explain why one side’s arguments are superior to the others’; there should be no new arguments during the rebuttal period; each competitor will give a rebuttal speech.

Cross Examination: The period in a debate when one person from one team asks questions of one person from the other team for clarification purposes and to expose weaknesses in argumentation; like Jeopardy, statements should be presented as questions as cross examination is largely a questioning time-period.

Prep Time: Preparation time, also called “prep” or “prep time” is eight minutes of time given to each team at the start of each debate round; this time can be used over the course of a debate round to prepare for speeches.

### **Preparation:**

1. Print copies of Lesson Plan - Introduction to Policy Debate - What is Debate-Exercise I for every student in the class.

### **Warm up (10 minutes):**

As students enter the classroom, they should find the following question on the board: “What is the difference between a **discussion** and a **debate**?” Students should be afforded five to ten minutes after the start of the class period to write, think, or discuss with team members about the differences between a discussion and a debate. After the five to ten minutes has expired, the instructor should call on some of the students to share their answers with the class. As the students present their answers, the instructor should write some key distinctions on the board.

### **Group Discussion (60 minutes):**

Following the warm up discussion, the instructor should continue the discussion from the last class about the intricacies of policy debate tournaments and debate rounds. Every debate round focuses on a resolution. Put simply, the **resolution** is an expression of opinion. It is also referred to as the topic. Every resolution includes the word “should” and always includes the United States federal government as the actor (in every topic since 1980). The resolution will remain the same for the entire school year so students can get comfortable debating the topic area over time.

The team in favor of the resolution is known as the **affirmative** because they affirm, or attempt to prove the resolution true. The team opposed to the resolution is called the **negative** because they negate, or attempt to prove the resolution false.

The resolution should be described as an expression of opinion. Opinions independently are not backed by supportive arguments. It is therefore the job of the participants to provide support arguments (when affirmative) for and (when negative) against the resolution. The ultimate objective for both teams is to either prove the opinion (the resolution) true or false. The affirmative team attempts to prove the resolution true by creating a specific **plan**. The plan is the means by which the affirmative advocates changing the status quo. More specifically, it is the affirmative’s attempt to resolve a problem or take an action that would result in a positive outcome.

The **status quo** is a fancy Latin term meaning the way things currently are. The status quo is a very common term in debate, so students should get used to its meaning. This is a good

opportunity for the instructor to explain status quo in detail. A few good examples to explain the concept to students would be:

- (1) When you want to finish playing a video game, but your parents want you to do your homework.
- (2) When your alarm goes off in the morning but you want to stay in bed.

In all of those instances, you are attempting to maintain the status quo. Presumably everyone loves the status quo. There has to be a good reason to stop playing the video game or get out of bed in the morning. This means that people are content with what they are doing until it is proven to them that they need to change.

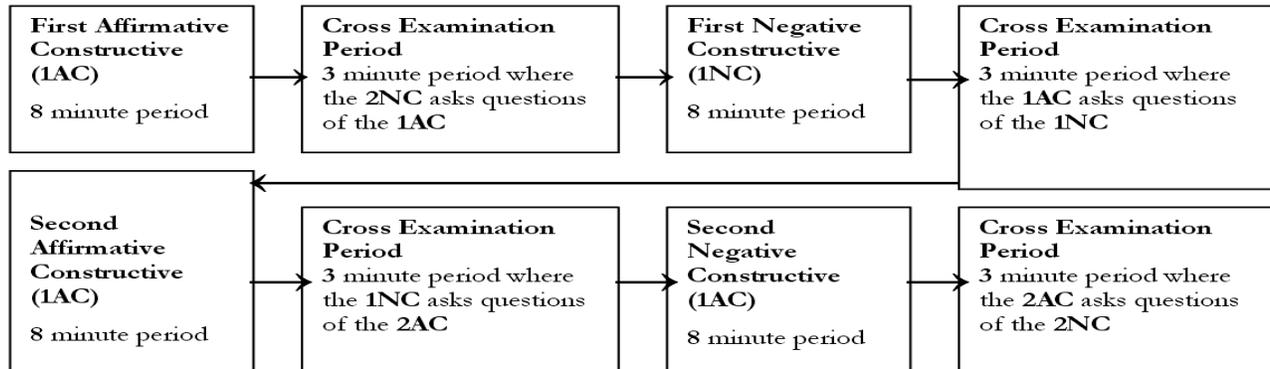
Taking this reality into account, debate puts the burden to overcome this presumption that the status quo is working on the affirmative team. That is to say, the status quo should not be changed unless there is a viable reason articulated by the affirmative team as to exactly why it should be changed. The affirmative team must also prove that there are advantages to changing the status quo. Likewise, the negative must defend the status quo and prove that the affirmative's proposed action would produce negative outcomes in the status quo.

Debate rounds are structured argumentation. Part of this structure means that there are always eight speeches, and the times for these speeches will never change. Each debater in the round will give two speeches; a constructive and a rebuttal. The first speech every debater will give is called the **constructive**. Each constructive speech is eight minutes long. The constructive speeches are where arguments are created or constructed. Each constructive is followed by a **cross-examination** period. The cross examination period allows one member from one team to ask questions of one member from the opposing team. The person who will ask questions will always be the member of the opposing team who is not going to speak next in the round. Take a look at the **Example 1** that shows the order of the constructive speeches. Notice the person reading the first affirmative constructive will be cross examined by the second negative speaker. The person who will give the next speech, the first negative constructive, will not be involved in the cross examination. The reason the second negative constructive speaker will cross examine the first affirmative constructive is because the first negative speaker needs time to prepare for their speech (in debate parlance this is called "free prep time" for the 1nc).

The constructive speeches are for constructing arguments (presenting new arguments). These eight minute speeches are where the affirmative constructs its affirmative case, and where the negative constructs its defense against the affirmative case. The constructive speeches should be seen as the expansion of the debate round. It is where arguments are introduced and the round gets larger (i.e. there is an increase in the total number of arguments).

## Example 1:

### Constructive Speeches:



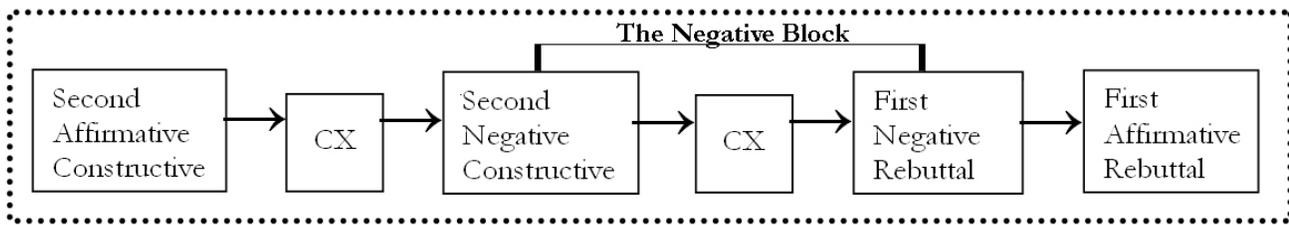
## The Rebuttals

After every debater has given one speech, the constructive period is over. The second round of speeches is called the rebuttals. Each of the **rebuttal speeches** are five minutes long. The order of speakers on each team will remain the same. For example, the person who gave the first affirmative constructive will give the first affirmative rebuttal. Each debater will give one rebuttal speech. The rebuttal speeches are for clarification and explanation. Whereas, the constructive speeches were for creating new argumentation, the rebuttals are geared to clarifying arguments already in the round. This is where the round narrows. Arguments should be explained and clarified.

The debate round begins to change in other ways during the rebuttals as well. For example, there is no cross examination period after any rebuttal speech. The debate changes in one other substantial way. Until this point in the round each team gave a speech followed by an opponent's opportunity to speak. This is about to change.

Notice, in **Example 2**, that the second negative constructive is followed by the first negative rebuttal. This is not a mistake. The negative has two back-to-back speeches (there is a cross examination period in between them, but no actual speeches). This benefit for the negative team is largely to offset the affirmative advantage of speaking first and last in the round. The negative team should use these speeches to advance as much argumentation as they can to get ahead in the debate round.

## Example 2



## New Arguments in Rebuttals

Most everyone agrees that only arguments that have been made in the constructive speeches are allowed to be addressed in the rebuttal speeches. The reason for this is that allowing new arguments would always favor the affirmative team. They could win almost every round because they will always have the last speech. The affirmative could make new arguments in that speech and the negative would have no opportunity to refute.

The goal of the rebuttal speeches is to expand the logic behind the arguments made earlier in the round. This is the opportunity for the debaters to connect the dots, fill in the gaps, and create a holistic narrative of their arguments.

## Prep Time

Each team in a debate round is afforded eight minutes of non-speaking time over the course of the entire debate round to prepare their speeches. **Prep time** is generally used by the team that is about to give the upcoming speech. For example, after the 2AC is finished and the cross examination period is done, the negative team might take a few minutes of “prep time” to get ready for the 2NC. Prep time can be used prior to the cross examination period, but it should be reserved for preparing speeches not preparing for cross examination. In addition, the eight minutes of prep time is not per speech, it can not be saved and used in another round, and when all prep time has expired the speaker must start speaking.

### NAMES OF SPEECHES:

The names of speeches in debate rounds are generally abbreviated. The abbreviation for each speech is determined based on speaker being the first or second speaker for the team, the team side and if the speech is a constructive or rebuttal. For example, the first affirmative constructive is called the 1AC. The **1** is derived from the speech being from the first person to give a speech for the affirmative team. The **A** represents the affirmative team, and the **C** represents the speech being a constructive. Therefore, the speech can be referred to as the 1AC.

## Exercise I (35 minutes):

After the instructor has gone over most (if not all) of this material, the students should be given Exercise I (found on the wikispace). The matching exercise contains basic terminology from this lesson that is essential knowledge for students.

**Exercise II (15 minutes):**

This is an additional tool for the instructor. Students have to know the outline of a debate round before they go to the first tournament. Knowing, or simply being able to anticipate, who is supposed to speak next relieves a tremendous amount of stress from the student. This simple exercise is a good way for students to learn the outline of the round.

**Closure (10 minutes):**

The instructor should pick up Exercise I as students are finishing. If all of the students finish, the instructor can go over the answers with the class. The instructor should address any questions that students have about the terms or definitions.

**Assessment:**

Lesson Plan - Introduction to Policy Debate - What is Debate-Exercise I: The instructor should assess student understanding by utilizing the Matching Terms and Definitions exercise.

Lesson Plan - Introduction to Policy Debate - What is Debate-Exercise II: The instructor should assess student understanding of a debate round by examining their responses to this exercise.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Matching Debate Terms with Definitions

Instructions: Each term on the left has one corresponding definition on the right. Place the letter that represents the definition next to the term it best describes.

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Resolution _____          | A. This is the period in a debate round when one person from one team asks questions of one person from the opposing team for the purposes of clarification and to expose weaknesses in argumentation; it is important to refrain from advancing an argument during this period—it is for questioning only. |
| Affirmative Team _____    | B. This is the speech in the second half of the debate round that is 5 minutes long. This speech allows a team to analyze key arguments of the round using logic to explain why one side's arguments are superior to the others'; there should be no new arguments during this period.                      |
| Negative Team _____       | C. This is also known as the topic; It is an expression of opinion, including the word "should," and always includes the United States federal government as the actor.   |
| Constructive Speech _____ | D. This is the side in a debate round that supports the resolution.   |
| Rebuttal Speech _____     | E. This period of time is eight minutes that is given to each team to be used over the course of a debate round to prepare for upcoming speeches.   |
| Cross Examination _____   | F. This is the side in a debate round that opposes the resolution.  |
| Prep Time _____           | G. This is the first set of speeches that are 8 minutes, and have a cross-examination period directly after the completion of the speech.   |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Outline of a Debate Round

Instructions: Put each speech in the order it would be given during a debate round.

First Affirmative  
Constructive

1<sup>st</sup> Speech: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Affirmative  
Rebuttal

2<sup>nd</sup> Speech: \_\_\_\_\_

First Affirmative  
Rebuttal

3<sup>rd</sup> Speech: \_\_\_\_\_

4<sup>th</sup> Speech: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Negative  
Rebuttal

5<sup>th</sup> Speech: \_\_\_\_\_

6<sup>th</sup> Speech: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Negative  
Constructive

7<sup>th</sup> Speech: \_\_\_\_\_

8<sup>th</sup> Speech: \_\_\_\_\_

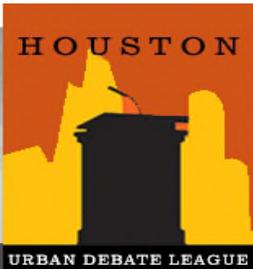
First Negative  
Constructive

Bonus Question #1: How much prep time does each team get during the debate round?

Second Affirmative  
Constructive

Bonus Question #2: What is the total amount of cross-examination time spent by both teams during the debate round?

First Negative  
Rebuttal



### **Lesson Plan: Classroom Debate Exercise**

#### **Time Breakdown:**

- **Warm Up - 5 minutes**
- **Group Activity - 45 minutes**
- **Closure and Homework - 10 minutes**

#### **Objective:**

The student will be involved in a sample debate. The student will learn how to develop affirmative and negative positions.

#### **Materials:**

- ❖ [none required]

#### **Key Terms:**

Resolution: An expression of opinion (for this exercise the resolution should include the word “should” but should not necessarily have the federal government as the actor).

Affirmative Team: The side in a debate that supports or attempts to prove the resolution true.

Negative Team: The side in a debate that opposes or attempts to disprove the resolution.

#### **Preparation:**

1. The instructor should choose a topic for the class debate. There are some example topics that the class could debate below:

[Homeschooling](#)

2. Example outline of the classroom debate:
  - First Affirmative Speech – 5 minutes
  - Cross Examination – 3 minutes
  - Negative Prep Time – 3 minutes
  - First Negative Speech – 5 minutes
  - Cross Examination – 3 minutes
  - Affirmative Prep Time – 3 minutes
  - Second Affirmative Speech – 5 minutes

Negative Prep Time – 3 minutes  
Second Negative Speech – 5 minutes  
Affirmative Prep Time – 3 minutes

- Note: This activity can be altered in a number of different ways. The outline of the debate, for example could be changed. The length of speech times, the number of speeches, the number of cross examination periods, and the number of speakers could all be altered to make the activity more suitable for your specific classroom.

### **Warm Up (5 minutes):**

As students enter the classroom, the question **“What is your opinion on** [the topic chosen by the instructor]?” should be written on the board. The instructor should afford students a few minutes to think of and write down their pros or cons about the topic. After students are finished, the instructor should divide the class into two groups of an even number of students.

### **Group activity (30 minutes):**

After students have been separated into an affirmative team and a negative team, the instructor should write the following resolution on the board;

**“Resolved:** [the topic chosen by the instructor].”

The affirmative team (pro resolution) should come up with several reasons that support their position. The negative team (anti resolution) should come up with several reasons why that support their position. Both groups should assign two people the role of spokesperson to deliver the teams arguments to the class.

### **The first affirmative speaker**

After a few minutes, the first spokesperson from the affirmative team should give a speech defending why the resolution is good. The spokesperson should be allotted five minutes to speak. While this person is speaking, the other team should be quite.

### **The cross examination and preparation time**

After the spokesperson for the affirmative team finishes their speech, the instructor should have the negative team ask questions of that spokesperson. The negative team should be allotted 3 minutes to ask questions. After this time has expired, the negative team should have 3 minutes to prepare the negative spokesperson for their speech.

### **The first negative speaker**

At the end of the 3 minutes of preparation time, the negative spokesperson should give a short speech defending why school uniforms should not be implemented in high schools. Part of their speech should directly answer why the affirmative teams arguments about why school uniforms are good. The spokesperson should be allotted five minutes to speak. While this person is speaking, the other team should be quite, but preparing for their next speech. The affirmative spokesperson should be thinking about how to respond to this speech.

### **The cross examination and preparation time**

After the spokesperson for the negative team finishes their speech, the instructor should have the affirmative team ask questions of that spokesperson. The affirmative team should be allotted 3 minutes to ask questions. After this time has expired, the affirmative team should have 3 minutes to prepare the affirmative spokesperson for their speech.

### **The second affirmative speech**

After 3 minutes, the spokesperson from the affirmative team should give the final affirmative speech defending the topic. This speech should be a direct response to the negative team's speech. The spokesperson should be allotted five minutes to speak. While this person is speaking, the other team should be quiet. After the spokesperson has finished, the negative team should have 3 minutes to prepare the spokesperson for their speech. There should be no cross examination time to question the affirmative team.

### **The second negative speech**

After 3 minutes, the spokesperson from the negative team should give the final negative speech arguing against the topic. This speech should be a direct response to the affirmative's last speech. The spokesperson should be allotted five minutes to speak. While this person is speaking, the other team should be quiet.

### **The end of the round**

As the round comes to an end, the instructor should use the round as an opportunity to involve students in a short question and answer period about debate rounds, speeches, cross examination, etc. Debate is largely a teachable-moment activity, and after students participate in a debate round is a great opportunity to help students gain understanding.

### **Closure and Homework (10 minutes):**

Now that students are familiar with the term "resolution" and affirmative and negative positions, the instructor should read this year's policy debate resolution to the class (found [here](#)). The instructor should clarify any terms students are unfamiliar with using Socratic or divergent questions. For homework, students should find at least one example of the resolution currently in the news (due the first class of the following week).

### **Assessment:**

The instructor can assess group participation and award additional points for volunteering to serve as a group's spokesperson.



## **Lesson Plan: Presumption**

### **Time Breakdown:**

- **Warm Up Discussion - 20 minutes**
- **Group Discussion - 40 minutes**
- **Closure - 10 minutes**

### **Objective:**

The student will understand the basic theories (i.e. presumption, burden of proof, burden of rejoinder, and clash) that make up a debate round.

### **Materials:**

- ❖ Lesson Plan - Presumption-Warm Up Discussion.doc
- ❖ Lesson Plan - Presumption-Warm Up Discussion-Answers.doc

### **Key Terms:**

Status Quo: The current state of affairs; the way things are now.

Presumption: The status quo is believed to be working until the affirmative proves that is not.

Burden of Proof: The affirmative's obligation to prove that their plan is preferable to the status quo and that it is a reason to change the current system.

Burden of Rejoinder: The negative's burden to prove that the logic used by the affirmative is faulty or incorrect.

Clash: The argumentation resulting from differing points of view; the clash between the burden of proof and the burden of rejoinder.

### **Preparation:**

1. Print the [**Lesson Plan - Presumption-Warm Up Discussion.doc**] for students, and print the [**Lesson Plan - Presumption-Warm Up Discussion-Answers.doc**] for the instructor.

### **Warm Up Discussion (20 Minutes):**

The instructor should present the following question to the class:

Imagine two teams show up for a debate round. Both teams enter the room and sit down. The round starts. The first affirmative speaker stands up, the time starts on the clock, but the speaker says nothing for the entire speech. Cross examination comes and goes and neither team says a single word. The first negative speech comes and goes and no words are spoken. After the round, where no debater said a single word, the judge signs the ballot, and walks out of the round. Who did they vote for? And why?

The instructor should have students write out their answer to the question in essay form. After a short while, the instructor should have some students read their answers aloud to the class. Students often say that the affirmative team would win. The instructor should quickly answer the question; the negative team would win this round based on presumption. The instructor should use the answer as a transition to the group discussion about presumption, the burden of proof and the burden of rejoinder.

### **Group Discussion (40 Minutes):**

Think about the example above in another context. Imagine that you were charged with a crime, and had to appear in court. Now, imagine that both prosecutor and defense attorney did not say anything during the entire trial. If no arguments were made for or against you, ultimately, you would be considered not guilty and released because in a court of law you are innocent until proven guilty. That means that you are presumed innocent until the other lawyer overcomes this burden (i.e. presumption is with you).

Think about this in your daily life. When you wake up in the morning, you generally want a few more minutes of sleep. In the evening, when it is time for bed, you almost always want to stay up just a little bit longer (maybe to finish a movie or a video game). This means that you are satisfied with the way things currently. This means that presumably you will largely resist change (i.e. you will continue sleeping) unless there is an excellent reason to change. The term **status quo**, Latin for “the state in which,” is the term used to describe the way things currently are.

The status quo is often used in the world of policy debate. In debate one may assume that the status quo is acceptable and capable of solving any problem until proven otherwise. This concept is known as **presumption**. Presumption, one of the single most important terms in debate, means that the status quo is believed to be working until the affirmative proves that is not. Take the criminal justice example above. You are presumed innocent until proven guilty. This means that there must be demonstrated evidence that proves you have committed a crime before you can be considered guilty in a court of law. In a debate round the judge presumes that the status quo is working (that it is not guilty). It is the affirmative’s obligation to prove that the status quo should be changed (that it is guilty of some defect). This concept is known as the **burden of proof**. It is the affirmative’s burden to prove that there is something wrong with the status quo. If the affirmative fails to overcome the burden of proof the negative will win the round.

Therefore, to answer the warm-up question above, the negative team would win because the affirmative team failed to overcome the burden of proof. The default position that the negative defends is the status quo. The default of the judge is that the status quo is fine. Therefore, the negative starts every round essentially winning the round. It is the burden of the affirmative to prove the status quo is failing.

The negative is not entirely in the clear; they have the **burden of rejoinder**. This is the burden of the negative team to defend the status quo by proving that the affirmative's logic is faulty. The conflict between the affirmative burden of proof and the negative burden of rejoinder is called clash. **Clash** is the heart of argumentation in a debate round. Argumentation results from the differing points of view of each team's burden. The goal of each team in a debate round is to prove their burden true.

### **Closure (10 Minutes):**

The group discussion should essentially be a long explanation to the warm up question. After describing how presumption means that the status quo is believed to be working until the affirmative proves that is not. The burden of proof is the affirmative obligation to prove that the status quo is not working. The burden of rejoinder is the negatives burden to negate the affirmative's attempt to prove the status quo is failing.

In the warm up question, the affirmative failed to prove that the status quo was not working, so the judge would vote negative. Presumption is one of the most important concepts that novice debaters need to understand. The foundation of debate rests on the understanding that there are two competing burdens; the burden of proof and the burden of rejoinder. The intersection of these two burdens produces clash.

### **Assessment:**

The instructor can evaluate students on the warm up discussion exercise.

The instructor can also use **Lesson Plan - Presumption-Warm Up Discussion.doc** to determine if students understand the concepts discussed in class.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Warm Up Discussion Question**

Instructions: Write a short response to the following question.

### **Question:**

Imagine two teams show up for a debate round. Both teams enter the room, sit down, and wait for the round to start. The judge says "let's get this round started," and the first affirmative speaker stands up. The time starts on the 1AC, but the speaker says nothing for the entire speech. Cross examination comes and goes and neither team says a word. The first negative speech comes and goes and no words are spoken. After the round, where no debater said a single word, the judge signs the ballot, and walks out of the round. Who did they vote for? Why?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Warm Up Discussion Question

Instructions: Write a short response to the following question.

### Question:

Imagine two teams show up for a debate round. Both teams enter the room, sit down, and wait for the round to start. The judge says "let's get this round started," and the first affirmative speaker stands up. The time starts on the 1AC, but the speaker says nothing for the entire speech. Cross examination comes and goes and neither team says a word. The first negative speech comes and goes and no words are spoken. After the round, where no debater said a single word, the judge signs the ballot, and walks out of the round. Who did they vote for? Why?

### Answer:

In this scenario, the judge would vote negative. The negative team would win the round because they start off the round winning. Presumption means the judge presumes that the status quo is working until proven otherwise. Two things happen in this fictional round. First, the affirmative fails to prove the status quo needs a change by not presenting an affirmative case. Second, the negative team, even without saying a word, is still the defender of the status quo. Therefore, the negative would win because the status quo maintained its position as the best option. Since the affirmative failed to defend changing the status quo and the negative represents the status quo, the negative wins.

**Matching:**

- (1) Resolution \_\_\_\_\_ The current state of affairs; in debate, the policy currently in place. This phrase in Latin translates as “the state in which,” or “the present.”
- (2) Affirmative \_\_\_\_\_ The affirmative responsibility to prove that their plan is preferable, or better, than the status quo.
- (3) Negative \_\_\_\_\_ The period in a debate when one team asks questions of the other.
- (4) Burden of Proof \_\_\_\_\_ Evidence that demonstrates how a problem is not being solved now.
- (5) Burden of Rejoinder \_\_\_\_\_ A way of taking notes during a debate so that arguments line up side by side.
- (6) Status Quo \_\_\_\_\_ The side in a debate that supports the resolution.
- (7) Stock Issues \_\_\_\_\_ The negative responsibility to show that the affirmative logic is faulty or information is incorrect
- (8) The Plan \_\_\_\_\_ How the affirmative meets the burden of proof; together, the stock issues are topicality inherency, harms and solvency.
- (9) Inherency \_\_\_\_\_ Speeches in which teams analyze the key arguments of the round using logic to explain why one side’s arguments are superior to the other’s; there should be no new arguments.
- (10) Harms \_\_\_\_\_ The period in a debate round when teams prepare their upcoming speeches
- (11) Solvency \_\_\_\_\_ The side in a debate that opposes the resolution
- (12) Flowing \_\_\_\_\_ How the affirmative changes the status quo; often consisting of several parts, known as planks.
- (13) Cross Examination \_\_\_\_\_ Evidence that shows how the affirmative plan solves for the stated harms
- (14) Prep Time \_\_\_\_\_ An expression of opinion, usually including the word “should.”
- (15) Constructive \_\_\_\_\_ Speeches in which teams “build” their cases using evidence to address key arguments.
- (16) Rebuttal \_\_\_\_\_ Evidence that shows what problems are occurring in the status quo

**True / False:**

- (17) Clash is the resulting argumentation from differing points of view. In debate, this is created when the affirmative team fulfills their burden of proof and the negative team fulfills the burden of rejoinder.
- a. True            b. False
- (18) Cross-examination is the period in a debate when one team aims to advance arguments against the other team.
- a. True            b. False
- (19) A type of debate argument where the negative claims the affirmative plan causes unforeseen consequences is a disadvantage.
- a. True            b. False
- (20) Topicality is an argument where the negative team debates the meaning of the resolution in an attempt to prove that the affirmative is not debating the topic.
- a. True            b. False
- (21) The best sentence within a piece of evidence that is read directly after the evidence is called the tagline.
- a. True            b. False
- (22) Arguments can only be made using evidence.
- a. True            b. False
- (23) The consequence of a disadvantage caused by the affirmative plan is called the impact.
- a. True            b. False
- (24) The change caused by the affirmative plan that leads to the negative disadvantage is often referred to as the uniqueness.
- a. True            b. False
- (25) A double-turn is a turn that is twice as good.
- a. True            b. False
- (26) The affirmative gets to pick the resolution for each debate round.
- a. True            b. False

**Multiple Choice:**

- (27) All of the following are **off-case** arguments EXCEPT:
- a. Topicality
  - b. Counter-plans
  - c. Disadvantages
  - d. Harms
- (28) All of the following are **stock issues** EXCEPT:
- a. Inherency
  - b. Topicality
  - c. Harms
  - d. Disadvantage
- (29) The sequence of events in which the affirmative plan leads to negative consequences is called:
- a. Uniqueness
  - b. Link Scenario
  - c. Outline
  - d. Disadvantage
- (30) All of the following are methods of calculating the consequence to a disadvantage EXCEPT:
- a. Timescale
  - b. Scope
  - c. Magnitude
  - d. Probability
- (31) All of the following are parts to a **1nc disadvantage shell** EXCEPT:
- a. Link
  - b. Impact
  - c. Link Turn
  - d. Uniqueness

- (32) Affirmative prewritten answers to a negative disadvantage would be an example of a:
- a. Shell
  - b. Frontline
  - c. Eskimo
  - d. Disadvantage
- (33) The shortest of these speeches in a policy debate round is the:
- a. 1AC
  - b. 2AC
  - c. 2NR
  - d. 2NC
- (34) The affirmative responsibility to prove that their plan is preferable, or better, than the status quo is called:
- a. Burden of Proof
  - b. Burden of Rejoinder
  - c. Burden of Uncle Sam
  - d. Inherency
- (35) It is okay to use the cross-examination period for all of following EXCEPT to:
- a. Ask a question
  - b. Make an argument
  - c. Clarify what arguments were made in the speech
  - d. Give your partner extra prep-time
- (36) A type of argument that does not rely on evidence but instead defeats an opponent's argument through reason and analysis is called:
- a. Analytical
  - b. Advocacy
  - c. Weird
  - d. Atypical

Short Answer: Outlining a Disadvantage

Pick any disadvantage from this year's topic (Hegemony/Primacy DA, Civil-Military Relations DA, Politics DA (START scenario, etc.) and describe each part of the disadvantage:

(37) Uniqueness:

(38) Link:

(39) Impact:

Short Answer:

(40) Compare and contrast the similarities and differences between a constructive and a rebuttal.

(41) What is a claim? What is a warrant? Why are they both necessary in making an argument?

(42) Why should an argument be made in a speech and not in cross examination? What should the cross examination period be used for?

(43) Name all of the Stock Issues and briefly explain what they mean.

(44) Name all of the part to a topicality shell and briefly describe them.

(45) Describe the difference between offensive and defensive arguments.

- BONUS -

Essay: (200 word minimum)

What is something that you struggled with coming into debate? How has the activity of debate helped you overcome that struggle?



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## DEBATE REVIEW

### Debate Terminology Review

1. **Resolution:** An expression of opinion, usually including the word “should.” This year’s policy debate resolution is, “Resolved: the United States federal government should substantially increase social services to persons living in poverty in the United States.”
2. **Affirmative:** The side in a debate round that supports or “affirms” the resolution.
3. **Plan:** The means by which the affirmative changes the status quo or attempts to resolve a problem; often, plans consist of several parts, known as planks.
4. **Burden of proof:** The affirmative’s obligation to sufficiently prove that their plan is preferable in comparison to the status quo and is justifies a reason for changing the current system.
5. **Negative:** The side in a debate round that opposes or “negates” the resolution.
6. **Burden of rejoinder:** The negative responsibility to prove that the affirmative’s logic is faulty or information is incorrect.
7. **Status quo:** The current state of affairs; in debate, the policy currently in place (often abbreviated “SQ” or “S-quo”). This phrase is Latin and means, “the state in which,” as in, “the state in which things presently operate,” or “the present.”
8. **Presumption:** A fact that can be claimed without aid of proof. In a debate round, the judge will presume that the status quo is working until the affirmative proves that is not. This is known as negative presumption because the judge presumes the negative wins until the affirmative meets the burden of proof that a change (i.e. the affirmative plan) should occur.
9. **Constructive speech:** In a debate, the first set of speeches in which both sides “construct” their arguments and positions; constructive speeches are 8 minutes, and have a cross-examination period directly after the completion of the speech.
10. **Cross-examination:** The period in a debate when one team asks questions of the other for clarification purposes and to expose weaknesses in argumentation; it is important to refrain from advancing an argument during this period—it is for questioning only.
11. **Rebuttal speech:** The second half of the debate round is comprised of 5 minutes long rebuttals. These speeches allow teams to analyze the key arguments of the round using logic to explain why one side’s arguments are superior to the others’; there should be no new arguments during the rebuttal period.
12. **Negative Block:** The two negative speeches making up the middle of a debate round, consisting of the second negative constructive (2NC) and the first negative rebuttal (1NR). Ideally, the 2NC and 1NR should run different elements of the negative case so they do not repeat each others’ arguments and give the judge more negative arguments on which to vote.

13. Prep time: The period in a debate round when teams prepare their upcoming speeches. Prep time can be used between speeches for teams to look for evidence or discuss strategy; each team is given 8 minutes of prep time for the entire debate round. It does not come out of, deduct or trade-off with speech time.
14. Advocacy: A stance or position that is defended by a team for the entirety of a debate through the use of argumentation.
15. Clash: The argumentation resulting from differing points of view. In debate, this is created when the affirmative team fulfills their burden of proof and the negative team fulfills their burden of rejoinder.
16. Flow: A way of taking notes during a debate so that arguments line up side-by-side. Generally, a flow sheet has seven columns; one for each speech.

## **Evidence**

1. Tub: Any storage device used for holding debate evidence and materials.
2. Card: In debate, the term “card” is slang for evidence read in a debate round; each card is preceded by a tag and cite.
3. Tag line: Often called a “tag;” a summary of evidence that precedes the card.
4. Citation: Often called “cite” is the means of showing authorship to a quoted source; A citation is generally a combination of the author’s name, the author’s qualifications, a book, journal or newspaper, the date of publication, and the page number of the evidence
5. Cutting: shortening evidence to include only the most essential parts of the argument being made. Most often, students use highlighters to accomplish this task.
6. Analytic: A type of argument that does not rely on evidence but instead defeats an opponent’s argument using reason and analysis.
7. Extensions: Evidence or additional analysis that further supports a team’s claims in a debate; usually an argument made to support or clarify a point from an earlier portion of the debate round.
8. Frontline: Prewritten answers to an argument or group of arguments; a frontline usually integrates analytical and evidence based arguments.
9. Overview: A summary of a team’s position before reading evidence; almost like a thesis of the argumentation on a position.
10. Underview: Giving a summary of an argument after reading evidence; explaining the warrant and/or claim of an argument after reading the data.

## **Argumentation**

1. Rhetoric: The study of the effective use of language; the art of making persuasive speeches.

2. A priori (pronounced “ah-pree-OR-ee”): A philosophical term that refers to knowledge that is gained through reason rather than experience. In debate, topicality is an *a priori* argument because before one can argue against the specifics of a case, one must determine using reason if the case is addressing the topic.
3. A posteriori (pronounced “ah-pos-tier-ee-OR-ee”): a philosophical term that refers to knowledge that is gained through experience rather than pure reason. In debate, harms, inherency and solvency are *a posteriori* arguments because in order to determine whether they are true, one must use experiential knowledge.
4. The Basic Toulmin Model of Argumentation:
  - a. Claim: The first part of creating proof. A claim is a statement of what is attempting to be proved; the argument itself.
  - b. Data: The evidence, usually experiential, that supports the claim.
  - c. Warrant: the reasoning behind what is attempting to be proved.
5. Defensive argument: A defensive argument is for the purpose of protecting arguments or positions and an offensive argument is the advancement of arguments and positions. As in sports, defense is good but does not win games.
6. Mitigate: a defensive argument; to decrease in value but not completely eliminate. For example, if the affirmative argues that the harms of poverty are illness, the negative might mitigate this claim by proving that poverty is not the *primary* cause of illness.
7. Offensive argument: The advancement of argumentation rather than the protection and guarding of arguments that already exist in a debate round. Turns are offensive arguments.
8. Turn: Any argument that reverses the direction of an argument. For example, if the affirmative argues that housing alleviates poverty, the negative might argue that it actually ignores the root causes of poverty and thereby *makes poverty worse*.
9. Three-point answers: Debate terminology for an answer to an opponent’s argument that consists of three numbered responses (e.g. “My first response is... My second response is... My third response is...”). This method helps answer any concerns a judge might have about a particular claim and makes it more difficult for an opponent to respond.

## Stock Issues

1. Stock Issues: In debate, stock issues are how the affirmative meets the burden of proof; together, the stock issues are topicality, inherency, significance of harms, and solvency.
2. On-case: Arguments dealing directly with the affirmative case; for example, arguments such as inherency (I), harms (H) and solvency (S).
3. Off-case: Arguments not dealing with affirmative case issues. These arguments consist of topicality (T), counterplans (CP), disadvantages (DA) and kritiks (K).
4. Shell - The pages of off-case arguments read in the 1NC; topicality, counterplan, disadvantage or kritik.

5. Topicality (abbreviated “T”): an argument where teams debate the meaning of certain words in the resolution in an attempt to prove that the affirmative either is or is not debating the topic.
6. Standards: the means by which a judge can determine if the affirmative interpretation of the resolution is fair.
7. Inherency (abbreviated “I”): Evidence that demonstrates the status quo’s inability to resolve an issue or problem. Inherency also creates a “need” to do the affirmative plan; for example, an affirmative would need to prove an inseparable condition in the status quo that is causing harms and requires a new policy action to solve.
8. Harms, Significance of (abbreviated “H”): The advantage of the affirmative’s case; usually evidence that demonstrates problems that are occurring in the status quo.
9. Solvency (abbreviated “S”): Evidence that shows how the affirmative plan solves for the stated harms.
10. Case Turn: In debate, a negative on-case argument that defeats the affirmative case by proving that a particular affirmative claim is reversed; for example, if the affirmative claims an increase in social services would solve poverty, a negative case turn would be that social services increase dependency and worsen poverty.

## **Disadvantages (DAs)**

1. Disadvantage (abbreviated “DA” or “Disad”): A type of debate argument where the negative claims the affirmative plan causes unforeseen consequences.
2. Parts of a Disadvantage:
  - a. Uniqueness: Why the impact doesn’t exist in the status quo; the negative must show with this argument that the impact would not likely occur if the affirmative plan did not pass.
  - b. Link (also known as “External Link”): An evidence-based portion of a disadvantage that connects an action of the affirmative plan to the impact of the disadvantage.
  - c. Internal Link: Argument that links an impact to the terminal and intuitive impact; for example, if a disadvantage claims a conflict. The terminal impact would argue that specific conflict would result in something intuitively bad; genocide, nuclear war, or extinction.
  - d. Impact: Something that is good or bad; for example, a disadvantage demonstrates consequences caused by the affirmative plan in the form of a terminal impact.
3. Link Scenario: The sequence of events in which the affirmative plan leads to the impact of a disadvantage; oftentimes disadvantages are complex and require multiple steps to connect, articulate, or draw relationships that cause a large impact.
4. Impact Calculus: The method of calculating the consequence or impact of a disadvantage; generally comprising of scope, magnitude, timeframe, and probability.
5. How to evaluate impact calculus (i.e. “weigh the round”):

- a. Scope: The breadth or extent of an impact to a disadvantage.
  - b. Magnitude: The intensity or size of the impact of a disadvantage.
  - c. Timeframe: the period in the future when the impact occurs
  - d. Probability: the likelihood of opportunity for the impact to a disadvantage to occur.
6. Turning the disadvantage (turning the negative disadvantage into an affirmative advantage):
- a. Link Turn: An affirmative argument that reverses the direction of the link presented by the Negative disadvantage; for example, if the disadvantage claims that the plan hurts the economy. A link turn would be that the plan helps promote economic stability.
  - b. Impact Turn: An argument that converts the impact or consequence of an argument into an advantage for the opposing team; for example, if the negative reads a disadvantage that claims nuclear proliferation is bad, an affirmative impact turn would argue that nuclear proliferation is good for stabilizing volatile nuclear regions.
  - c. Double Turn (DO NOT run a link turn AND impact turn together): Conflicting offensive turn arguments; for example, a link turn and an impact turn reverse the intended position and serve to help the opposition.

**Lesson Plan: Topicality****Objective:**

The student will understand surface level and substantive levels of topicality and the theory behind topicality.

**Topicality Lecture****Overview/Introduction:**a. The Resolution:

- i. The Resolution is a statement of opinion – Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reduce its military and/or police presence in one or more of the following: South Korea, Japan, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Iraq, Turkey.
- ii. The objective of the affirmative team is to prove the resolution is a true statement:
  - a. The affirmative team must prove a single instance where the resolution is true (i.e. the plan) thereby proving that the resolution is true. For example, if the affirmative proves that reducing military presence in Japan is a good idea, they are simultaneously proving that the resolution is a true statement. If it is good idea in one instance, then the resolution is true.
  - b. The resolution does **NOT** say “Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reduce **every instance** of military and/or police presence in the following: South Korea, Japan, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Iraq, Turkey.” The affirmative does NOT have to prove every instance is good/true to prove the resolution true. The affirmative team is only responsible for proving their one example is true.
  - c. If the affirmative fails to prove that the plan is a good solution, or that the plan is an example of the resolution, they should lose the debate round because they have not fulfilled their burden of proving the resolution true.
- iii. The job of the negative is to prove that the resolution is a false statement:
  - a. If the negative proves the affirmative is not topical, they are ultimately proving that the affirmative team has not provided an instance that demonstrates how the resolution is true.
  - b. The negative can not prove the resolution false by reading disadvantages against other affirmatives. So long as the affirmative stands, it is the only instance the affirmative team needs to prove the resolution true.

b. The purpose of topicality:

i. Topicality is a procedural issue:

- a. Topicality defines the “parameters” of the debate round – Topicality defines the size and scope of the resolution. Therefore, topicality is used as a means of defining what is accepted in the round. Because the topicality position determines what is accepted in the round, it should be decided prior to deciding whether the plan is a good idea.
- b. A basketball analogy – The game of basketball is governed by an out-of-bounds marker. The players must stay within the bounds of the court to be considered eligible to play the game. If a player were to take the ball into the bleachers, shoot, and score, it would not count as a point because they made the basket improperly. This is true in debate as well. It would not be fair for an affirmative team to run an affirmative that colonize the moon because it would be out of the bounds of the resolution.

ii. Topicality is an a priori argument:

- a. A priori can literally be translated to mean “prior to.” This, in conjunction with the procedural argument above, demonstrates that topicality should be evaluated first in a debate round.
- b. The rules of the game should be decided prior to the plays of the game – Remember the basketball analogy. Even if the player who scored from the bleachers made an incredible shot, the points should not count. The integrity of the game is more important than impressive shots. If impressive shots determined how the game was played, the game would probably be played much differently. This is true in debate as well. No matter how amazing an affirmative case sounds, if it is outside the parameters of the resolution it should not be evaluated. If it was evaluated it would change the way the debate game was played. (see standards: changing the way the game is played results in a bad game.)
- c. Remember, the purpose of the affirmative is to prove the resolution true. If the affirmative is not an instance of the resolution, then they have failed to meet their burden.

iii. The plan NOT the advantages must be topical:

- a. Topicality is a prima facie argument. This means that the affirmative must be “on face value” or “at first glance” topical.
- b. The plan is the only fair determinate of being prima facie topical. The advantages are debatable. That is to say, the advantages may or may not happen. They may also happen to a degree. The plan, on the other hand, will happen exactly as it is stated if the judge votes affirmative. This means that the affirmative team is locked into defending that they will decrease military presence.

**The Topicality Shell**a. The Definition (a.k.a. The Interpretation):

- i. The definition describes the negative's interpretation of the word or words in the resolution that the affirmative is does not meet. That is to say, if the affirmative plan is to remove a single military person from Iraq, the negative could read an interpretation of that describes the term "substantial" as a significant number of people.
- ii. The definition gives meaning and context to the disputed words in the resolution. For example, military presence can be defined to exclude tactical nuclear weapons. This interpretation gives meaning to the terms military presence.
- iii. There are several definitions that exist for every word in the resolution. The negative and the affirmative have the right to use any interpretation as a defense so long as they can prove that it is good.
- iv. Standards for determining the better source for the definition:
  - a. Validity of source – Definitions can come from any credible source. These include dictionary, books, journals, and should NOT come from unknown sources like blogs, silly websites, etc.
  - b. Contextuality – Comparison between the sources used to define the word in the resolution; for example, military presence might be better defined by the Department of Defense as opposed to Black's Law Dictionary, because there is more context provided by the government's definition of what is and is not military presence.
- v. The affirmative should present "counter-definitions" that are suitable for how the see the resolution. Along with a counter-interpretation, the affirmative should provide reasons to prefer their counter-interpretation.

b. The Violation:

- i. The violation is the negative team's statement, based on the definition above, that outlines specifically how the affirmative team is not topical.
- ii. Violations should be clear and descript. They should be short and to the point, but contain enough information about the negative team's objection.
- iii. The affirmative should provide "we meet" arguments that describe how they meet the negative team's violation.

c. The Standards (a.k.a. Reasons to Prefer):

- i. We discussed above how a non-topical affirmative would change how the

debate game was played. The standards are the reasons why the game, as it is played now, is good (and any changes would be bad). For example, allowing an affirmative to decrease military presence in Germany would result in a bad debate. The standards need to explain how that debate would be bad.

- ii. Standards, while oftentimes provided in shells, should be very specific. The more specific the standards, the easier it will be to debate exactly why the plan results in bad debate.
- iii. Standards also provide a metric for determining which definition would result in a fair and contextualized debate revolving around the resolution. Each word in the resolution has several definitions, and standards should explain why any one of those definitions would be better for debate.
- iv. There are two types of standards that can fall into one of two categories; potential abuse or in-round abuse.
  - a. Potential Abuse – This type of abuse argument will describe the consequences in terms of what could happen or result for what happened in one round. For example, potential abuse would argue that if the affirmative team gets away with being not topical, other teams will start running this non-topical affirmatives, which will result in bad debates. These types of arguments have to be outlined clearly to be effective.
  - b. In-Round Abuse – Comparatively, in-round abuse is oftentimes more power. For example, the negative could argue that the affirmative not being topical has skewed the negative's ground. The negative has already felt the abuse in the round and therefore the affirmative team should lose.
- v. The Ground
  - a. The term “ground” is used to describe the potential number of arguments that could be made by both teams in a debate round.
  - b. Taking into consideration the size and scope of the debate round, each team should have a fair division of ground. That is to say, each team should have a roughly equal number of potential arguments.
  - c. Quality arguments and quality ground – A lot of debaters understand the concept of ground. However, what is oftentimes overlooked is the quality of the ground. Standards should focus on describing the type of ground, the exactness of the ground, and why that ground results in good debate.
  - d. Ground is the best calculus for deciding if the topic has been divided equally.
- vi. Almost every standard for a better definition revolves around ground Other standards and how they revolve around ground.

- a. Limits – Usually the term “limits” is used to refer to the size of the resolution. So may argue that a limited topic is good, while others may argue that an under-limited topic is good. The debate nevertheless revolves around the amount of ground that the topic encompasses. Therefore, the foundation of the limits argument is ground.
  - b. Education – Usually the term “education” refers to the amount of education that can take place in a debate round. Debate is a rigorous activity that requires learning specific details about a specific topic. This year the topic is military presence. If an affirmative team ran a case that colonized the moon, the negative team would not be prepared, likely have no evidence, and would receive no education discussing a topic they were not prepared to debate. The foundation of education is clash. Clash is the ability for each team to argue directly against the other team’s arguments. Clash derives from a fair division of ground. If the affirmative has more ground than the affirmative, then there is a reduced ability for the negative to clash in the debate round.
  - c. Bright Line – Usually the term “bright line” refers to an ability to easily determine what is and is not considered topical. For example, if the definition of substantial is defined as “a lot” it could be difficult to determine what is and what is not considered a lot. However, if the definition of substantial is defined as “more than 50%” it is clearly easier to determine what is and what is not topical.
  - d. Framers’ Intent – Usually the term “framer’s intent” describes what the people who wrote the resolution intended debate rounds to be about. This is clearly very difficult to discern as neither team in the debate round knows what the framers intended.
  - e. Common Person – The common person standard is similar to the bright line standard above because it argues that the common person should be able to determine the purpose of the topic. For example, if an affirmative case was to pull a single person out of Afghanistan as a reduction of military presence even a common person would agree that would not be a substantial reduction of military presence.
- d. The Voting Issue (a.k.a. The Voter):
- i. Topicality is generally accepted as a reason to reject the affirmative team if the negative team can prove that the affirmative plan falls outside the parameters of the resolution. This, while generally accepted, is harder to prove than it might initially seem. Everything in debate is debatable. Everything in topicality (i.e. definitions, standards, etc.) is open for discussion. The negative team needs to do everything it can to prove why topicality should be considered a voting issue.
  - ii. Topicality can be thought of like a disadvantage – Oftentimes, it is easier to break down the individual parts of topicality and explain them like a disadvantage. The definition would be similar to uniqueness because they both attempt to describe the way things are now. The violation would be the

link because they both tie the plan to the description of the status quo presented in the interpretation. The standards and voter are the impacts because they describe why the plan will result in bad thing happening.

- iii. Approach Topicality Holistically – The individual properties of topicality (i.e. the definition, violation, standards, and voter) should not be explained solely as individual parts. The negative should combine all the arguments to tell a complete story about why the affirmative is not topical and what that means.
- iv. “Topicality is a voter for fairness and education” is not a reason to vote. Reasons to vote need to be explained.

**Exercises:**

(1) Students should write a short essay about or discuss as a group the following question:

“Imagine a debate round where the affirmative team reads the Okinawa affirmative case. The negative team reads a disadvantage against pulling troops out of Afghanistan. The affirmative team only makes one argument; the disadvantage does not link to the affirmative. The negative makes the argument that because the resolution contains Afghanistan, their proof that Afghanistan military presence should not be decreased is a reason that the resolution is false. What would the affirmative have to say to win this debate?”

**Lesson Plan: The Counterplan****Objective:**

The student will understand surface level and substantive levels of the counterplan and counterplan theory.

**Counterplan Lecture****Overview/Introduction:**a. The Importance of Definitions:

- i. You have to know what a term means in order to know what it does not mean. For example, you have to know what a counterplan is before you can argue what a counterplan is not. Likewise, you have to know what a counterplan should be before arguing why a counterplan may be illegitimate.
- ii. Definitions are foundations, and foundations are important in becoming proficient advanced-level debaters. There is a difference between “knowing” what a term means, and knowing how to functionally use a term.
- iii. Use definitions and terminology to generate discussions – The best way to learn about counterplan theory is to have general discussions about specific terminology. These discussions will produce explanations, with detailed warrants, that will make each debater’s theoretical objections in a debate round that much stronger.

b. Levels of Understanding:

- i. Superficial Level – A superficial level of understanding means understanding the arguments at the surface level. This is an important first step in understanding advanced levels of debate. Most debaters start out taking other people’s theory blocks. This is not an entirely bad idea. However, it should be understood that that is only a starting point. Students should read some basic theory blocks [provided for free at [planet debate](#)] to get a basic understanding of what arguments are generally made. Instead of simply using these theory files, students should read them, ask questions as to why the types of arguments are being made, and make their own theory blocks. The point of developing a theoretical understanding is NOT to simply know that when you hear a theory argument, you should get out you pre-fabricated theory objections.
- ii. Substantive Level – The substantive level of understanding is the ultimate goal. It means that debaters should focus on having an in-depth level of understanding about theoretical objections. Students should be able to go into detail about why plan-inclusive-counterplans are bad for education, what specific type of education is lost, and why that particular type of education should be valued in a debate round. The detail of these warrants can

oftentimes mean the difference between a judge evaluating theory arguments as important and simply viewing them as a waste of time.

### **The Definition of a Counterplan**

- a. A counterplan can be defined as “a competitive negative policy option.”
  - i. There are a lot of possible definitions – Simple, but relevant, is best. There are no unnecessary terms in this definition. This definition is a basic interpretation of what a counterplan should be.
  - ii. “Competitive” is the operative word – Competition is (or should be) the epicenter of most counterplan debates. We will talk about competition in a later section. However, it is important to introduce it in the definition because it is the single most relevant part of the counterplan.
- b. Counterplans create several possible worlds in a debate round. These worlds include:
  - i. The Affirmative Case [affirmative world] v. The Status Quo [negative world],
  - ii. The Affirmative Case [affirmative world] v. The Counterplan [negative world], or
  - iii. The Affirmative Case [affirmative world] v. The Counterplan [negative world] and/or The Status Quo [negative world]
- c. Counterplans challenge the traditional Best Policy Option model – The counterplan challenges the idea that comparing the plan against the status quo will result in the best possible solution to a problem. Whereas the plan might be a better option than the status quo that does not mean that it is the best possible option to solve a problem. For example, if I am hungry, McDonalds might solve my hunger, but that does not mean that it is the best possible solution to my hunger. Subway could easily solve my hunger, and be a healthier choice than McDonalds.
- d. Negative Presumption – Remember, presumption starts out with the negative as a justification of status quo; the status quo presumably solves any and all ills. A counterplan changes the nature of presumption. Presumption now applies to the policy sustaining the least amount of harms or consequence. The status quo default for presumption is gone (unless the counterplan is conditional or dispositional, in which case, presumption will apply if the negative kicks the counterplan).

**II. The Shell of a Counterplan** – explanations of each part will be more comprehensive below. It is important to describe the structure of the counterplan prior to delving into the specific nature of each argument. This will provide a global perspective of what a counterplan shell looks like.

- a. The text of the counterplan – **ALL** texts should **ALWAYS** be written out (this includes the plan, the counterplan, and all permutations)
  - i. A counterplan text is NOT “consult NATO about the plan.” A counterplan text

must be descriptive of the exact action the counterplan intends to take. If the counterplan is vague (i.e. the example above) the affirmative should use this opportunity to attack the counterplan. For example, the above text, taken literally, does not have an actor (i.e. the federal government), and the text does not say what this ominous “they” will consult NATO about (other than “the plan” which in the real-world NATO would have no idea what that means).

- ii. A counterplan text should be written out to be specific, exact in terms of steps of action, and geared against the specific plan you are about to debate.
  - iii. A permutation is not “do the plan and the CP” – that is a definition of a permutation. This is a critical distinction. Debaters need to understand that a definition of an argument is not an argument. We will get to permutations and what they mean in a minute, but it is important for students to understand that this is not an argument.
  - iv. Take the time necessary to write out texts, and be specific. This is an advantage that teams oftentimes do not take advantage of. The counterplan can be a huge advantage for the negative. It allows the negative team to challenge the affirmative plan with its own plan that is incredibly offensive.
  - v. Prewritten texts found in counterplan files online are not the best possible text for every round that is debated. Unlike the affirmative, the negative has an opportunity in each round to be more strategic and make a strategy more cohesive because of a counterplan text.
- b. Topicality – If the counterplan is NOT topical, this is the place to mention it. If the counterplan is topical don’t worry about mentioning it here; you’re just drawing attention to something that does not need attention.
  - c. Competition/Mutual Exclusivity – This is where an explanation of how the counterplan is mutually exclusive with the affirmative. This means that the two ideas (the plan and the counterplan) can not coexist at the same time [explained below].
  - d. Net Benefits – This is where the advantage of the counterplan should be expressed. There should be specific evidence that supports the advantage. The net benefit should function just like an affirmative advantage.
  - e. Solvency – Just like the affirmative case, the counterplan should have solvency evidence. The more specific the better. Specific evidence goes along way to answer theoretical objections against the counterplan.

### **III. Competition**

- a. Competition can be determined in two ways: (1) through **mutual exclusivity** or (2) through **net benefits**.
- b. Mutually Exclusive:

- i. Means that two different or opposing ideas are unable to coexist at the same time. For example, removing troops from Afghanistan and increasing troops in Afghanistan.
  - ii. It is actually very difficult to prove that one action is perfectly mutually exclusive. Even the example above is not necessarily mutually exclusive because the example above does not include the word “all.”
- c. Net benefits:
- i. This means that the advantages of the counterplan should be compared to the advantages of the plan.
  - ii. Take, for example, the States counterplan and federalism. The states counterplan is not necessary mutually exclusive because the states and the federal government could easily do a plan together, it would be redundant, but it could feasibly be done at the same time. On the other hand, the states counterplan could be competitive through net benefits because if there are huge advantages to having the states do the plan, and huge disadvantages to doing the plan, it would only make sense to only do the counterplan.
- d. The better standard (Mutual Exclusivity or Net Benefits):
- i. Obviously this is debatable – Your answer probably depends on what type of counterplan you are trying to justify.
  - ii. The net benefit standard is better – It is more consistent with the rest of policy debate; impacts, impacts, impacts. Comparing the benefits of one option versus the benefits of another option should, in theory, provide the best explanation of what policy should be chosen.
  - iii. Mutual exclusivity is better – It limits the possible number of counterplans. It makes the debate centered around the plan, and not around some small component of the plan.

#### **IV. Permutations and Competition**

- a. A permutation is the affirmative’s ability to **test** the competition of the plan v. counterplan. Again, a permutation is a test. It is not an advocacy.
- b. Definition – Permutations should be;
 

[**all** of the affirmative plan] & [**part** or **all** of the counterplan]
- c. Test v. Advocacy – A permutation is a test of competition NOT a shift in advocacy. If the affirmative can prove that the counterplan is not competitive (i.e. the permutation is true) the counterplan should go away. Likewise, the permutation would go away too. The focus of the round then shifts back to the plan v. status quo. Since the permutation is not an advocacy of the affirmative team, they can not advocate the permutation as a policy option. The negative should read disadvantages to permutations. The

permutation is, by far, the most offensive answer an affirmative can make against a counterplan. Therefore, the negative should protect itself against the permutation at all costs.

d. The tests competition – 3 types

- i. Net benefits – Testing competition through this model is comparative. That is; the advantage/disadvantage of the plan should be compared against the advantage/disadvantage of the counterplan. The most beneficial action should be the action that the judge votes for. The permutation should be evaluated similarly. The judge should NOT advocate the permutation but in determining if the perm tests competition, the judge should weigh the impact calculus.

For example, if the permutation is possible but would have some huge negative consequence, it essentially should mean that the permutation is not possible so the counterplan would then competitive.

- ii. Textual Competition – This is an argument that states competition can be established by comparing the text of the plan against the text of the counterplan. For example, if the plan was: the U.S. federal government should remove troops from Iraq and the counterplan was to consult NATO. A permutation that would check textual competition would be “perm: the U.S. federal government should [consult NATO] and remove troops from Iraq. Textually those plans are not competitive. Generally, textual competition is used by the affirmative to answer functional competition by the negative.
- iii. Functional Competition – This is an argument that the plan should not be evaluated as a series of words (i.e. the text of plans), but the plan should be viewed as those actions which ultimately become the function of the plan (i.e. how the plan would actually work).

**V. Types of Permutations** – Focus on the exact definition of a permutation to determine the exact type of permutation. A permutation is “all of the plan and part or all of the counterplan.”

- a. Severance Permutations – A permutation that results in the affirmative abandoning part of their original advocacy (the plan). This permutation would be “part of the plan and part or all of the counterplan.”

Severance permutations are often considered illegitimate by judges. The theories suggesting that severance permutations are illegitimate rest on the foundation that the affirmative’s advocacy must be static. Abandoning the plan would be called a “moving target.” The negative could never win a debate round if the affirmative would be allowed to change its advocacy (primarily because the affirmative has the 2ar).

- b. Intrinsic Permutations – This permutation would be “all of the plan and part or all of the counterplan and something else.” This would mean that the permutation includes actions that are not part of the counterplan or part of the plan. This type of permutation is also suspect at best. If you run remove tactical nukes from Turkey and the negative

runs the consult NATO counterplan, an intrinsic perm would be to do the plan but consult with NATO on terrorism or Russia. The point of the intrinsic perm is to prove that the benefits of the counterplan are not tied specifically to the plan. If we weren't going to consult NATO about Russia, who cares if we don't consult them on tactical nukes in Turkey.

- c. Timeframe Permutations – A permutation that would either (1) delay the plan until after the action of the counterplan, or (2) delay the counterplan until after the plan has been passed. If the net benefit of the counterplan is a mid-term politics disadvantage, this perm could solve the net benefit easily. A timeframe permutation is an excellent example of a permutation that could be considered a violation of multiple types of theory. For example, you could consider this type of permutation a “timeframe perm”, an “intrinsic perm”, and a “severance perm.”
- d. Mechanical Permutations – This would be a permutation that does all of the counterplan but does not include the plan. The best example of this is type of permutation would be against the Anarchy CP. Perm – ban the government in all instances with the exception of the plan. This forces the negative to debate the specificity of how the plan applies to the counterplan. This type of permutation is highly effective against sweeping counterplans like the Anarchy CP.
- e. Permutations are not singularly describable – An affirmative could easily make a permutation that is a severance, intrinsic, and delay permutation. The negative team can argue that each type of violation is bad. If the negative wins that only one is bad, they still win that the permutation is illegitimate.

## **VI. Debating Permutations**

- a. Write out the text of the permutation – The text may come into question later in the debate. For example, if the negative claims that the permutation is a severance permutation. This argument stems from the exact wording of the text of the permutation. If there is no text the debate will become terribly muddled.
- b. Theory debates should be slowed down – Consider everyone's ability to flow (including the judge). Theory debates are technical, and each piece is very relevant. Make sure that parts do not get overlooked because you were reading fast.
- c. The negative should buckle down on the permutation – The perm is the most offensive argument an affirmative can make against the Counterplan. The negative should generate offense against the perm whenever possible. Likewise, the affirmative needs to realize that the permutation is very important to their success in the round.
- d. The negative should read disadvantages against the perm – For example, if an affirmative makes a permutation against the consult counterplan the negative should read the genuine consultation is good. This argument would say that faking consultation would hurt relations with whoever the negative is consulting. This would be a disadvantage to the counterplan.
- e. Multiple Perms are oaky and good – Perms are tests not advocacies. You can have as many tests as you want. Since they are so offensive, read multiple to apply pressure on

the negative.

### **VII. Net Benefits**

- a. Definition – A net benefit is a unique advantage tied to the action of the counterplan. The counterplan shifts the negative's advocacy away from the status quo and refocuses it on the negative policy option. This option must have unique advantage, just like the affirmative. Net benefits often establish competition so make sure you protect yours.
- b. The weight of the round – Remember, the introduction of a counterplan means that presumption applies to the policy that sustains the least amount of harm or consequence. [see status of counterplan below]
- c. Once this option is in play, disadvantages are weighed in the context of the counterplan not in relation to the status quo. This becomes complicated by the conditional/dispositional status of the counterplan. [see status of counterplan below]

### **VIII. Topicality**

- a. The affirmative plan **MUST** be topical, in that, the plan must be a defense of the “should” in the resolution.
- b. There are two types of counterplans in relation to topicality; topical counterplans and non-topical counterplans
  - i. NON-Topical Counterplans – These counterplans are generally considered the more accepted form. For example, the States counterplan is a non-topical counterplan because the resolution calls for the federal government to act and not the states.
  - ii. Topical Counterplans – Generally less accepted than their non-topical counterparts for a couple of reasons. (1) The goal of the affirmative is to prove the resolution true. If the negative runs a topical counterplan and the judge wants to vote for the counterplan they should still sign the ballot affirmative because the counterplan justifies the resolution. (2) Steals affirmative ground. The negative generally has more ground.
  - iii. Convention over acceptability – The non-topical counterplan is generally more accepted. This is true for a couple of reasons:
    - (1) Antiquated convention from years past – Topics used to be much smaller; there was basically one affirmative. This is no longer true. Topics these days are massive. Massive topics change the nature of ground in a debate round. The more ground the affirmative has the more legitimate topical counterplans should become.
    - (2) Bidirectional topics – Affirmatives used to be responsible for the entire resolution. These days this is often no longer possible. For example, some resolutions say “substantially change...” which makes it virtually impossible for an affirmative to substantiate the entire topic.

## **IX. Fiat and Negative Fiat**

### a. Affirmative Fiat –

- i. Should v. Could – The affirmative derives its power of fiat from the word should in the resolution. This is because it is better to debate **should** the plan happen **not could** the plan happen.
- ii. The resolution – The affirmative, based on the resolution, has the ability to assume that the plan could happen and the debate takes place about “should” the plan happen. This is why the affirmative is largely focused on advantages and harms, and the negative is largely focused on disadvantages.

### b. The Negative Resolution? – The negative team does not have a negative resolution. Worse still, there is “should not” in the resolution that does exist. How then does the negative have the power to create a negative policy option?

#### i. Negative Fiat Good / Should Exist –

(1) The best policy option model – The best policy option can only be determined when compared to competing policy options. Because a counterplan can check affirmative ground that means they are good for debate and should exist.

(2) Reciprocity – If the affirmative team has the ability to enact legislation. It would only be fair to extend such a power to the negative.

This is a consistent theme in policy debate. For example, the issues of fairness and ground are routinely debated in the context of topicality. If these issues are of genuine concern it would seem that they extend across the gamut of policy debate.

#### ii. Negative Fiat Bad / Should NOT exist –

(1) Counterplans produce bad debates – Counterplans alters debate rounds – For example, people used to specify their agent as the president propose, Congress would pass it, and the President would sign the bill into law. However, a counterplan had the president veto the bill and Congress override the veto with a politics net benefit. That resulted in very vague plan texts.

- iii. Community consensus – Judges generally accept the argument that the negative has fiat. However, people don’t know how to debate theory anymore. If you have a judge who is flowing, and willing to listen to arguments you can certainly get so leverage out of this argument.

### c. International Fiat – Fiating international organizations (i.e. the WHO, UN, NATO, etc). This topic makes it very difficult to use international fiat because the objective of the

resolution is to reduce US military presence. The United Nations is not the best actor to do that.

- d. Object Fiat – Object fiat attempts to fiat an object of the plan. For example, the tactical nuke affirmative claims that nukes cause Iranian proliferation. An object fiat counterplan would fiat that Iran shut down its nuclear weapons program.

This type of fiat is widely considered highly abusive.

- e. 50 State or Multi-State Fiat – 50 state is specific to domestic topics, and is certainly a theoretical objection that an affirmative should make. It results in an unfair division of ground. The affirmative can only fiat the central government, the negative is fiating 50 individual state governments.

Multi-State fiat – This argument could apply to international counterplans like Consult NATO.

A negative argument back would be infinite regression – Even the federal government consists of individual parts. The division of ground is literally the same, and literature checks abuse.

## **X. Status of Counterplans**

Unlike the affirmative that must defend their entire plan (advocacy) for the entire round, the negative is not necessarily tied down to such advocacy. The negative, in some circumstances, can kick out of the counterplan and resort back to a defense of the status quo. There are three traditionally accepted terms for the negative's status of the counterplan; conditional, unconditional, and dispositional. These are terms, not justifications:

- a. Conditional Counterplans – When the status of the counterplan is conditional the negative believes that they have the right to abandon the counterplan advocacy whenever they so choose. Their advocacy is therefore provisional; they could support it, and they could not support it.
- b. Unconditional Counterplans – Unconditional is the exact opposite of conditionality. Unconditional means that the negative team will advocate the counterplan for the entire round.
- c. Dispositional Counterplans – This is the trickiest form of conditionality. It means that the negative believes it can kick the counterplan if and only if the affirmative makes a certain set of arguments.
- i. Permutations – Traditionally, dispositional means that the negative will go for the counterplan unless it is proven not competitive. For example, the counterplan can become conditional if the affirmative makes a permutation. The negative would argue they should not have to defend something an argument if it is proven to not compete.
  - ii. Theoretically illegitimate – If the counterplan is proven illegitimate (i.e. no negative fiat) the negative can kick it by conceding the theory. This is also

possibly true with unconditional counterplans but it is certainly more suspect.

- iii. Straight turned – More recently dispositional counterplans took on the straight turned means you can kick it stance. Certainly more abusive than the theory or competition argument. This is a very good reason to get a specific interpretation of dispositional from the negative.
  - iv. The benefit of being dispositional – The benefit of running a dispositional counterplan is that the affirmative is ostensibly in control of the advocacy. The affirmative has the ability to stick the negative with their counterplan. This status undermines a lot of the theoretical objections to conditional counterplans.
- d. “What’s the status of your counterplan?” – Debaters should **ALWAYS** ask this question, and the follow up question should **ALWAYS** be “what does that mean to you?” The reason for this is that not everyone agrees on terminology. If the negative says that the counterplan is dispositional, clarify for everyone, including your judge, what that means. Not everyone has the same understanding of terminology. It can only serve to benefit you to ask for a definition/clarification.
  - e. Status and Acceptability – While these terms have become accepted labels of advocacy, it does not necessarily mean that each status will be unanimously accepted and valid in every round by every judge. Conditional counterplans are generally considered fairly abusive as they strongly benefit the negative at the expense of the affirmative. Unconditional counterplans are considered the most fair. Dispositional counterplans can still be abusive but are balanced. The affirmative can stick the negative with the counterplan or can allow them to kick it by simply holding them to their interpretation of the resolution. Dispositional counterplans are probably the most accepted form of counterplan status.

## **XI. Types of Counterplans**

There are several types of counterplans. It is rare for a counterplan to be only a single type. For example, a counterplan can be a delayed-agent-PIC-counterplan.

- a. The PIC – Plan inclusive counterplans are exactly what they sound like; they advocate doing some portion, but not all, of the affirmative plan. The net benefit is generally attached to the portion of the plan that is not captured by the counterplan.
- b. Floating PICS – Similar to a plan-inclusive-counterplan because they advocate doing part, but not all, of the affirmative plan. It is called a floating PIC because they are made to function as alternatives to the kritik. It “floats” because it is never clearly identified as the alternative. Generally considered suspect at best.
- c. The PEC – Plan exclusive counterplans are the exact opposite of the PIC. The PEC excludes the plan but is still competitive. For example, the anarchy counterplan would be a PEC, it competes because the affirmative uses the federal government and the counterplan abolishes the government.
- d. Agent Counterplans – This counterplan changes the agent of the plan (i.e. the congress

to the Supreme Court, the United States government to the Canadian government). These counterplans struggle with legitimacy because, particularly on international topics, the negative could fiat a relevant country and prevent a specific action. For example, if the affirmative pulls out troops from South Korea to prevent Chinese aggression, the negative could fiat China and solve all of the case.

- e. Consultation Counterplans – Consultation counterplans base the passage of the plan upon the outcome of a consultation process of a third party (i.e. NATO, EU, etc). The negative can defend the outcome of that consultation, but it is not entirely necessary.
  - i. Consultation is inherently a conditional counterplan – The plan may or may not be done base on the outcome of consultation. This means that the negative is defending two worlds at the same time making it difficult for the affirmative to debate in the round.
  - ii. The double bind – consultation is normal means – The affirmative should make the argument that consultation either (1) always happens and that makes it normal means, or (2) it never happens which means it doesn't matter if the plan consults in this instance or not.
  - iii. The Yes/No Debate – The question of will the plan be passed is important. If the plan is not passed it is a disad to the counterplan. If the plan is passed, fake consultation is a pretty easy story for the affirmative.
- f. Delay/Timeframe Counterplans – A counterplan that delays the implementation of the plan. For example, if a plan is publicly unpopular it would be bad to pass it prior to the mid-term elections. A delay counterplan would wait until after the elections to pass the plan and clam a politics disad as a net benefit.

## **XII. Debating Theory – Thinking Outside the Box**

- a. Number and Label Your Arguments – Like most good speeches, theory debates require detailed labeling of argumentation.
- b. Slow down, slow down, slow down – Theory is difficult for judges to get down on paper. It is even more difficult to get when a debater is flying through it like its going out of style.
- c. Evidence dictates theory not the other way around – If you have solid evidence that supports consultation it is a powerful argument to support your theory.
- d. Justification of Abusive Theory – Intrinsic/severance arguments are considered illegitimate, but if you are debating a consultation counterplan, you can make the argument that because the negative is running an abusive counterplan that intrinsic/severance arguments are justified.

Make the comparison that its kind of like something that is considered good, or if you are trying to de-justify an argument, make it seem like something that everyone hates.

- e. Counterplans are critical tools for limiting the size of the topic – especially early in the

year. Topicality is easy limiter; topicality gets confusing, not willing to vote, competing interpretations, etc.

- f. And... Watch Your Judge – the best person to indicate how your judge feels about a theory debate is your judge. Look up. Look up often.
- g. Realize the Reality of Theory – a lot of the advanced argumentation will get lost in translation to an inexperienced judge. Realize who your critic is and if they are likely to pull the trigger on some in-depth theory argument. This is NOT to say do not make theory arguments. Time is important and most opponents will dedicate some serious time to most of these theory questions.
- h. Talk the Talk – If you sound like you know the theory you will likely get more leverage out of it. Teams will be more afraid.
- i. Steal others work – Start with other people's theory blocks, but it is important that ultimately it is your theory. Even if it is a worse theory block it will be better for you in rebuttals
- j. Think about what 2ar wants to go for – The counterplan knocks the affirmative off of their turf. They want to talk about the awesomeness of their plan and their advantages. They do not want to give a 2AR about consultation compared to

**Exercises:**

- (1) Students should be divided into teams (i.e. debate partners). Each team should pick a theoretical argument (i.e. plan inclusive counterplan) to discuss. Each member of the team should pick a side (for or against) their chosen argument and write several arguments in favor and against it. After they have completed this assignment, the students should discuss why they believe their position to be correct. It is important for the instructor to inform the students that they do not have to "believe" that they are defending the "correct" position, but they must defend it as though they do. This exercise will help students get a substantive level of understanding.
- (2) Students should find a free theory file online. Each student should be responsible for rewriting a section of the file. For example, a student should take the plan inclusive counterplans are bad section and rewrite it in their own word. This will help them understand how to make these arguments, what each argument really means, and allow them to make these arguments effectively in a round.

**Lesson Plan: Fiat****Objective:**

The student will understand the theory of Fiat.

**Fiat Lecture****Introduction:**

- a. Why do we do what we do? – Debaters present affirmative plans. These plans make demands on the federal government to take action. Yet, debaters are not the federal government. They do not have the authority to pass legislation. Yet, debaters still make these specific demands for action. Why do debaters claim that if the judge votes for the affirmative case the legislation will pass and good things will happen? The answer is that debate revolves around the notion of fiat. Fiat is an essential aspect of debate. It should be understood in great detail, even if it seems only abstractly important at first.

**Fiat and the Resolution:**

- a. Definition of Fiat:
  - i. Definition – Fiat means “let it be done” in Latin. The power to “let it be done” derives from three aspects of the resolution.
- b. The Resolution:
  - i. Fiat derives from the resolution. The resolution is - - **“Resolved:** The United States federal government **should** substantially reduce its military and/or police presence in one or more of the following: South Korea, Japan, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Iraq, Turkey.”
  - ii. Fiat derives from three aspects of the resolution; the term *Resolved*, the term *should* and the colon (:).
  - iii. It is probably more important for students to start understanding Fiat by simply addressing the “Should Question.”

**The Should Question:**

- a. Primarily, fiat derives from the word “should” in the resolution. The term “should” is used to create a distinction between the term “should” and the possible use of the terms “would” or “could.”
- b. The term “would” – If the resolution used the term “would,” it would focus the debate on whether or not it would be possible to pass the plan. Likewise, the term “could” would focus the debate on whether or not the plan could be passed. Debating whether or not a plan could or would pass would be very difficult. The affirmative team would be hard-

pressed to make an argument that would prove a piece of legislation would definitively be passed. This is true because if the legislation would be so easily passed, it probably would already have been passed.

- c. Inherency – Think about how the question of “would” relates to inherency. The affirmative team would never be able to defend inherency, because it would take out the possibility of the plan passing. If there is indeed an inherent barrier, the affirmative would never answer the “would” question.
- d. Using the term “should” is intended to make the argument that debates should focus on whether or not the plan is a good idea. It is much easier to answer the question “should” something be done, instead of answering “could” this plan be done.
- e. Harms and advantages – Harms and advantages exist largely to answer the “should” question. For example, debaters often say that the plan should be done because of the advantage solve something great. This means the plan should be done.

(For those that are interested)

Resolved:

- a. Fiat also derives from the word “Resolved” in the resolution. Resolved means to reach a firm decision or make a final determination: to *resolve on a course of action*.
- b. Resolved means that to be topical the affirmative must make a determination about a specific course of action.

The (: ) Colon:

- a. Fiat also derives from the colon (:) in the resolution. The use of the colon depicts the syntactical-deductive and introduces the logical consequence, or effect, of the intention stated before by the resolved.

**The Limitations of Fiat:**

- a. You can not fiat workability – This means that you can not fiat that the world will be a better place. That is to say, while you can fiat that the government will pass a piece of legislation, you can not fiat peace.
- b. You can not fiat other actors – Fiat is limited to the object of the resolution. The object to the resolution is always (every topic since at least 1980) the federal government. The affirmative is arguably allowed to fiat all of the individual branches of the federal government; executive, judicial, and legislative.

**Normal Means:**

- a. Definition of Normal Means – The normal procedures that would take place to pass a piece of legislation.

- b. Normal means allows the affirmative to focus on the outcome of the legislation not the passage of legislation.

**Specification:**

- a. Funding – Part of the normal means afforded by fiat is funding. The affirmative plan is guaranteed that the plan will be funded and that funding will be protected with the passage of plan. This funding must come from the normal avenues.
- b. Enforcement – Enforcement means that the plan will be enforced in the world post the plan. Take, for example, an affirmative plan that mandated that police arrest anyone suspected of graffiti. Enforcement means the police could not say no. They would have to enforce the mandates of the plan.

**Exercises:**

- (1) Students should write a short essay defending or negating the right of the affirmative team to use fiat to pass the plan.
- (2) Students should discuss ways in which fiat could be used as an argument in the round. For example, if a negative team ran a consult NATO counterplan, the affirmative could argue that consulting NATO is part of normal means and that the plan can fiat past it.

These are tricks that great debaters use before, during and after every round and tournament to get the absolute most education, success and reward from debating at tournaments. There are five examples of things that debaters should do before the start of each round and before the start of the tournament. There are six examples of things debaters should do during rounds at the tournament. Finally, there are five examples of things that students can do after the round ends and after the tournament to improve their success. Here they are:

### **The Start of the Tournament and Before the Round:**

- (1) Do as much pre-tournament work as possible – Reading evidence to help understand arguments is a great advantage for debate tournaments. Highlight or underline relevant portions of cards. Even if you think you will never read this evidence in a round, it can only help if you do. Make sure you have all of your evidence and it is filed properly. If you are the 1ac or the 1nc make sure your affirmative case or negative shells are all there and ready to be read. The more you do before you get to the tournament the better you will do while you are at the tournament.
- (2) Do NOT try to learn everything the night before a tournament – Concentrate on the information that you need to know; the affirmative case, or specific negative arguments. Do not overwhelm yourself by trying to understand every file in your box. Trust yourself.
- (3) All-nighters are all-bad – Do NOT try and stay up the night before a tournament getting ready. Fatigue can be devastating. Again, trust yourself. Being too tired to compete will cause you to be sluggish, exhausted and lethargic. Debate is a physically and mentally draining activity that can not be done without sleep.
- (4) Do practice speaking-drills the morning of the tournament – Even if you have practiced many times before, the day of the tournament is different. You do NOT want to go into your first round having not spoken at all that day. You will sound better if you spend 10-15 minutes before the tournament gets started each day practicing. If you are the 1ac read it. If you are the 1nc read your favorite disadvantage shell. Anything you read will help you sound better in the rounds.
- (5) Have a pre-round discussion with your partner and coach – The best thing you can do to get your mind focused on debate is talk debate. Talk about the affirmative, negative or any strategies you might be running.

## During the Round:

- (1) Flow everything – The more information you have on your flow paper, the more you will remember after the round. You may think you will remember everything from the first round, but after four rounds things begin to get fuzzy. Flows help you ask specific questions and allow you to remember the details of each round now and in the distant future.
- (2) Save your flows - Flows contain a lot of useful information. Advanced debaters will use their flows from previous rounds to not only write answers to arguments they have had trouble with, but every argument they have heard. If you spend time after the tournament answering difficult arguments at the next tournament you will be able to answer them so much easier. If you have pre-written answers to every argument your speeches will improve drastically, much like your reading of the 1ac will improve after each time you read it.
- (3) Listen – This can not be understated. The best debaters listen to everything. They listen to the other team's speech. They listen to the other team's evidence. Remember, evidence does NOT always say what the tag says it does. If you think the evidence you are hearing does not make sense, odds are, it doesn't. In addition, solvency evidence oftentimes says too much. For example, the evidence may say you have to take four steps to solve and the affirmative may only take two. This means they can not solve. So pay attention, and listen closely.
- (4) Evidence is NOT flawless – Evidence is not perfect. There is generally something wrong with every piece of evidence read in the round. Think about it debate evidence is not written for debaters, it is written for the general public. The best debaters will find these holes and exploit them.
- (5) Look and feel positive – Even if you *think* you are losing the round, look like you are winning. Even if you *are* losing the round, look like you are winning. If you present yourself as a respectful, successful and confident debater others will see you as such, and that will never hurt you in a debate round.
- (6) Talk to your partner – One of the most important aspects of debate is communication. You have a partner for a reason. The most skilled debaters work well with their partner. They communicate with their partner during the round. Remember the debate team is only as strong as the individual debaters.

### **After the Round and After the Tournament:**

- (1) Re-file your evidence – The best thing you can do for yourself and your evidence is re-file it as soon as you finish using it. If the judge is taking time to decide the round, take that time to file your evidence properly. If the judge has decided, wait until they are finished making any remarks and then continue re-filing. It will save you so much time in the coming rounds.
- (2) Have productive conversations with the judge –
  - a. First, productive means positive and constructive. The best debaters do not argue with a judge. They do not challenge the judge. The best debaters learn from their judges. Remember it is very likely that you will see them in the back of the room judging you again.
  - b. Second, write down what they say. Keep a book that has judge's names in it, what they have told you, and how you want to debate in front of them in the future. If a judge sees you writing down their comments they will most likely offer you better and more detailed advice. This advice is unique because they may have never seen you debate before. Whereas, your coach may have seen you debate several times, this can be unique advice from a new and different perspective.
- (3) Write down notes about teams and their arguments – The more information you have the better prepared you will be. Keep a notebook that contains information about the school, the team, their affirmative and any negative arguments they make. This is a great debate squad activity. The more members of the school that are collecting information from rounds they debate the more information that everyone will have going in to their next rounds.
- (4) Prepare for the next round – It is never too early to start preparing for the next round.
- (5) Watch elimination rounds – This is your chance to watch and see what other debaters do. Beyond just sitting in the room with the elimination rounds are taking place, flow the round and watch the debaters to see what they may be doing that you might not be doing.

**Lesson Plan: Tricks of the Trade****Objective:**

The students will learn some advanced habits of successful debaters.

**Tricks of the Trade Lecture****Introduction:**

- a. Make every argument count – If you cannot visualize how a particular argument can help in the last rebuttal, don't invest time in it. Time is a commodity, and it should be treated as such. Picking and choosing arguments is critical. The best strategies are seamless. Each argument in the 1NC should have a relationship with every other argument in the 1NC. This is the hardest strategy to answer. Take, for example, the case debate. The case debate is important in developing a solid 1NC strategy. It is very difficult for an affirmative to answer a strategy that invests time in defeating the advantages and solvency mechanism. Most debaters will devote time to the off-case because they have frontlines and disadvantages ready to go. The affirmative team is also very likely to read an entire frontline against disadvantages and misallocate time on the case debate. Remember, a single mistake can determine the outcome of the debate.
- b. Debate the warrants not the claims – Anticipate all of your opponent's warrants, not their claims. Even if your opponent doesn't make the warrant, you should address it and then undermine it. It will make you look like the stronger debater. The debate round should take place at the warrant level not the claim level. This means developing arguments about the reasons behind the claims. Find them, undermine them, and debate the credibility of the warrant before your opponents can develop explanations for them.
- c. Don't ask, argue – Tell the judge what to think, don't ask them if they think something. Debate is a time to develop arguments, not develop questions. This goes hand-in-hand with debating at the warrant-level.
- d. Anticipate where arguments are going not where they have been – The 1AC is about the 2AR. The 1NC is about the 2NR. Likewise, the 2NR is NOT about answering the 1AR it is about answering the 2AR. Think about how the 1AR arguments will flow into paragraphs in the 2AR. Do not answer arguments as they are but as it will be. Figured out where the opposition wants to be in their last rebuttal, and beat them there.
- e. Answer the nexus question – The nexus question is the core of the debate. The nexus question is how all the arguments revolve around the core or central question of the debate round. Knowing where the nexus question is located. Knowing what the nexus question is, and knowing how to use it to your benefit will result in the best rebuttal possible. Rebuttal thinking should begin and end with an anticipation of where the nexus question lies. In the judges mind almost all the calls in the round are close calls. It is a game of argument resolution. The team that best defines the difference on the nexus question in the debate ("the tipping point") wins.

- f. Control the ground of the debate – It's always about the link. The link is the springboard from which virtually every objection of your opponent is to be addressed. If the negative says alternative causality – answer it with a robust defense of your link and solvency arguments. Frame uniqueness arguments in terms of linkage.
- g. Use your evidence aggressively – Do NOT say “our evidence says.” Say: “our evidence proves” and use the exact claims from the evidence. The more specific you can be the more your judge will be able to understand your arguments.
- h. Technique is important but it does not win debates – Form does not substitute for substance. Coverage is about CHOOSING the RIGHT arguments. But keep in mind; style and substance are fundamentally inseparable. This might seem like a contradiction, but the distinction is important. Oftentimes debaters rely on style or presence in the round. This is a mistake. Style and substance go hand-in-hand in creating a perception in the judges mind that you are in control of the round. The three modes of proof = ethos, credibility, logos. Ethos, the character, disposition, or spirit of the argument, is the most important; the credibility of your argument, the way the judge feels about your argument. The underlying sentiment about the arguments being made will shape the judges decision in the end. Judges want to vote for strong, well reasoned, well evidenced arguments; they are not simply machines, they are not information processors. What the judge thinks and feels is important – make the judge want to vote for you.
- i. Judge the debate – Think about why your opponent has won the debate. Devote the first 30 seconds of 2nr and 2ar prep time to this. When the judge resolves the nexus question, which direction are they likely to head. Figure out the strength of your opponent's position on the nexus question.
  - i. Give the other team credit – No, you are NOT ahead on every single argument. Assuming you are in the rebuttals makes you look bad, and confused. The solution to the black, white, grey conundrum is to form arguments two ways; use if-then and even-if arguments. For example, even if we are losing this argument, we still win because we are winning that argument.
  - ii. Think about the 1ac – It is a key that unlocks the secrets that are critical for a solid 2ar. If the 1ac is not addressed in any other speech besides the 1ac, it is a waste of time and space. Use the 1ac to your advantage.
- j. Narrate the debate – Write the ballot for the judge. Tell them exactly why you have won the debate round. It's a substantive process. Narration should weave back and forth between your offensive arguments, your defensive arguments, your opponent's offensive arguments, and your opponent's defensive arguments. Evidence comparison is about plagiarizing. The process of comparison is not a declaration of citations or claims. It is a comparative process that tests the competing credibility of warrants. Keep comparisons centered on the nexus question, and remember that warrants make the story whole.
- k. Teamwork – The squad is important. Each team should function as a team not as individuals. If one person loses a round, both people lose.

- i. Michael Jordan: "The talent wins games, but the teamwork wins championships."
  - ii. Scott Deatherage: "The past is relevant only insofar as it informs the future."
  - iii. Pat Rielly: "The truly great actors go out of their way to ensure that supporting actors are brilliant because they want the play to be great."
  - iv. Jaime Coven: "It is important to respect both your teammates and your opponents. Friendships can make victory last forever."
  - v. Phil Jackson: "We alone can destroy our championship opportunity."
- I. Prepare to win – Winning is about the details. It's about brainstorming, strategizing, researching, practicing, block writing [and re-writing]. Preparing to win at the championship level means taking EVERY REALISTIC THREAT SERIOUSLY; all the other teams, all of their arguments, all of their strategies, all of their possible options. It means babysitting the judges; let them know that you are there and that you care. It means managing preparation effectively. It means in critical situations – while most competitors in the tournament are busy hobnobbing – you are preparing for critical instances. At crunch time, you have to have focus. It means preparing for the next debate effectively – especially on elimination day. Focus on ONE DEBATE AT A TIME. It means discipline, focus, and concentration. Everyone must rise to a level unlike anything you have ever strived for before. "Confidence is only borne out of one thing – demonstrated ability. You can not dream up confidence. You cannot fabricate it. You cannot wish it. You have to earn it." The octofinals is NOT round seven. THERE ARE NO AWARDS FOR FIRST PLACE ON DAY ONE – THEY ARE GIVEN ON THE LAST DAY, NOT THE FIRST DAY.

**Exercises:**

- (1) Class Discussion – The instructor can either go over each topic individually, or they can pick and choose topics to generate discussions in the class.
- (2) Each student should choose one of the above topics. They should write a paper that explains (1) what the topic means, (2) how it relates to them, and (3) why they think it is important.

Based on a speech from Scott Deatherage located at:

<http://compassioninpolitics.wordpress.com/2010/07/15/scott-eatherage-the-speech-at-northwestern-debate-camp/>

<http://globaldebateblog.blogspot.com/2009/12/scott-deatherage-passes-away.html>