Monument Red

The following are articles, affirmative and negative cases, and opposing arguments is for your study of the Lincoln-Douglas resolution that was debated during the 2007-2008 school year in the NCFCA speech and debate league. Applications and citations may be outdated, so give attention to checking all hyperlinks before attempting to run in competition.

**Resolved: That the United States of America ought to more highly value isolationism.**

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Acknowledgements

Research Assistants

**Mackenzi Siebert’s** hard work and exceptional analytical and oratorical skills have earned her over 30 awards during her three years of NCFCA competition including top honors in impromptu and extemporaneous at the regional level as well as 5th place in Lincoln-Douglas debate at both the Regional and National Championships. In addition to being an accomplished speaker and debater, this almost-18-year-old is a leader in her community as she interns at her congressman's local office and volunteers as a student attorney at teen court. Although Mackenzi doesn't really have spare time, she still manages to always have a moment to share encouragement and her friendly smile with everyone she meets and also likes shoe shopping, watching movies, and sipping Starbucks.

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**Joanna Griffith** recently turned 18 and fulfilled her lifelong dream of 'becoming an adult'. In the process of achieving that goal, she accomplished many other things. During the 2006-2007 NCFCA season, Joanna won over 25 awards including top regional honors in Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Extemporaneous, Apologetics, and Individual Events Sweepstakes. She was a regional Ironwoman, Lincoln Douglas debate champion and 1st place LD Speaker at both the Seattle National Open and the Rocky Mountain Classic, and Sweepstakes champion at the Rocky Mountain Classic. This Colorado native was a 2007 National Marathoner, placing 9th in LD (among other glories). When she's not at a tournament, Joanna can be found volunteering at Teen Court, interning at her Congressman's local office, teaching Latin and Journalism, or making oatmeal cookies. After graduating high school next spring, she hopes to study Political Science and eventually to work as a policy research analyst or Constitutional lawyer.

Case Writers

**Jonathan Seppo** is a quiet pillar of strength in his local speech and debate club, and has racked up quite a number of regional-level debate awards. As Credo Communicators’ Archivist, he not only helps his teammates keep track of service hours for the Crest Blazer program, but he has himself been commended by the Community Spirit Award for three years running for his work as a Teen Court Attorney, a Junior Tournament organizer, a Colorado Youth Band mentor and Awanas leader. If you can’t find Jonathan at a speech event, you might find him on stage in local musicals or playing his clarinet. Jonathan aspires to be a sports writer.

Although **Mark Nadal** grew up in the league for the last seven years, he is now entering his fifth year of competition. Despite dabbling in Team Policy, he remains a devotee of and national-level competitor in Lincoln-Douglas. He feels his pursuit of God, truth, and happiness resonates more with the philosophical and logical quests of Lincoln-Douglas debate. Our California writer enjoys art, whether it be drawing, acting, writing, graphic design, 3D modeling or any other creative endeavor that can highlight the beauty in the world. Wherever you find Mark, you won’t be able to resist his bubbly, effervescent character.

**Karyn Louritt** is a National-level LD debater and has earned a boatload of regional level speaking and debate commendations. This seventeen-year-old is a regular assistant for her church’s VBS and Awanas programs. A Shakespearean actress, Karyn has taken a break from summer stock theater to serve as a counselor at a Christian summer camp. Karyn climbs Colorado’s ‘Fourteeners’ (mountain peaks over 14,000 ft. high) for fun. She is a fan of lime green, soccer, and Extemporaneous Speaking.

Jack of All Trades

**Robert Anderson,** nearly 15, is entering his 4th competitive year in NCFCA. He has twice been a National competitor in Humorous Interpretation, and broke to semi-finals this year at Nationals. Originally a Team Policy debater, Robert has switched recently to Lincoln Douglas Debate, and he decided to organize the glossary as an initial research exercise (You’re welcome.). Robert can fix almost anything from sagging stairs to recalcitrant computers. Besides speech and debate, Robert loves to do 3D animation, martial arts, and play his bagpipes. He hopes to inspire his peers to rebel against apathy and low expectations.

Chapter 1

The Value Resolution

Fasten your seatbelts. You are about to engage in an exciting format of academic debate. In values debate, you will be steering your ideas around the roadblocks of others' prejudices and presuppositions. You will be blazing a trail through moral dilemmas and philosophical morasses. Lincoln-Douglas debate isn't your team debate road trip; it's an off-road adventure.

*If you have trekked this way before,* ***pay attention****!* The terrain is very different this year. Our new resolution—released in June 2007 by the NCFCA league—is a whole new world. Even this basics section will have surprising tunnels to places you’ve never been before.

"Lincoln-Douglas" debate refers to the format of this debate style, not its content. Lincoln-Douglas debate is a one-on-one format rather than a team style. And where team debate deals with policy issues, Lincoln-Douglas debate deals with values questions.

There are three imperatives for the debate journey. They are:

1) CHART! Establish definite boundaries for the debate, distinct choices among values and a desirable destination or objective.

CHART: Which way is north? Where are we going? How do we get there? Why do we want to go?

2) CHALLENGE! Expose the perils of your opponent’s proposed trek compared with the perfections of yours; and

CHALLENGE: Aren’t those *dirt* roads? Oops! The compass is crooked! What about the crocs in the swamp? Got gas?

3) CHAMPION! Explain why your judge should safari with your values rather than stumbling around with your opponent’s.

CHAMPION: My road will actually get you there – alive. When you get there, you’re going to like it. My value; don’t leave home without it!

The first four chapters are your map-making manual. In this chapter, you will be shown how to chart a course towards affirming (or negating) the resolution, by not only defining the words in the resolution, but the parameters of the debate as well (called "resolutional analysis"). You will then be shown how to take this understanding to the next level: applying it to real-life situations in ways that focus on the tension (called "clash") among the values. Finally, you will be shown how to pull evidence into the value round that will build your credibility as a value debater.

Setting Your Compass: Resolutional Analysis

The first speech a debater writes is the constructive case. The constructive case provides the map for the whole debate. It is your CHART phase of the debate, whether you are on the affirmative or the negative side. The resolution itself is the first springboard to a great constructive case. Let's begin by dissecting and brainstorming around the resolution.

The **object of evaluation** in a value resolution will usually be a goal or **worthy ideal**. A responsibility, right, action, or privilege in society often conflicts with values we live by. These objects must be tangible enough for us to measure, and we do so with the evaluative terms that will set the standard by which to evaluate the goodness or worth of the object of evaluation.

Thoroughly confused? Look at the wording of the 2007-2008 L-D resolution:

Resolved: That the United States of America ought to more highly value isolationism.

What object is being evaluated? Well, just **“isolationism”**. We are only asked to consider the idea of isolationism without being given any other ideal to measure it against, and to decide whether or not it is properly valued. How will we know if it receives its due or not? Is isolationism overvalued compared to *what or by what standard*?

Determining a Standard of Measure

Perhaps the most critical argumentation under this year’s resolution will center on the criteria that we use to gauge the resolution. In other words, we must establish a standard, a measuring rod or criteria that we will use to judge how much emphasis we should place on isolationism. Should we value isolationism on *pragmatic* grounds; does it bring us peace, prosperity and security? Should we value isolationism on *ethical* grounds; is it virtuous to mind one’s own business or to refrain from imposing one’s own standards of law and behavior on societies in which they have no background or meaning? Or do we already *over*-value isolationism, walling ourselves off from the poor and oppressed, refusing to assist those who need help the most? Maybe we value it too much by *legal* standards: is it unconstitutional? What about *international* standards? How about *historical* standards?

The resolution this year gives debaters a greater scope for research and creative analysis than ever before. But lest we should spin out of control, the resolution provides a **context or limiting term**. Whose opinion of isolationism, out of all times and all places, are we concerned with? Only with that here in the United States of America. Whew!

This doesn’t mean that examples from other countries or other times in history are automatically off limits. It simply means that those applications must provide a comparison or foil to the philosophy embraced currently in United States. Notice, however, that the resolution does not specify a sector of the U.S. It does not limit us to the federal government or any level of government at all. We could equally consider the people as a whole or local governments or recent immigrants. One of the main jobs of the debater under this resolution must be to provide a clear standard of measure or point of contrast between how we value isolationism and how we ought to regard it, and a foreign or historical example may provide the perfect coordinate.

Affirmative & Negative Burdens

Each word and/or phrase in the resolution needs to be clearly defined in the constructive speeches in order to provide a neutral ground for the debate – a true-north compass, if you will. But beyond that, it is necessary to analyze exactly what you, as the Affirmative, must support, or what you, as the Negative, must oppose.

Under this resolution, the Affirmative must argue that the United States should place more value on isolationism. The Affirmative has much more freedom under this resolution than under many others, because the Aff can choose the criteria by which the rating should be evaluated. The Aff gets the first chance to answer the questions: “Compared to what?” “By what standard?” and “How do we know?”

The Negative may still choose a number of positions which would negate the resolution:

1. The United States shouldn’t value isolationism more; it values isolationism properly.
2. The United States shouldn’t value isolationism more; it values isolationism too much already.

Whatever negative strategy you adopt, you will still have to answer: “Compared to what?” By what standard?” and “How do we know?” In order to develop the answers to those questions fully, it will be necessary to choose a value, a goal or a moral imperative to champion. (For a deeper discussion about Affirmative and Negative burdens and presumption, see Chapter 9 Marco Polo Club: Advanced Debate Theory.)

In the next chapter, we will examine the types and uses of values in value debate.

Scouting the Route: Research

(Chapter Homework)

Meanwhile, you should begin to research the topic. The Research Trailhead provides an extensive bibliography, including brief summaries of the most important philosophical treatments of economics and foreign policy. But these are only a start. There is no substitute for one's own research. You have to walk the trail yourself before you can guide your debate round judge along it. Research produces not only new approaches to the topic, but also the evidence to back up your logic.

**Start by reading widely on the topic**. Look for books and articles on the philosophy of international relations, the development of economic thought, and the history of American foreign policy.

Ask:

* What is government supposed to do? Why? Who says?
* Should nations behave like individuals, using the same ethical standards?
* Do nations have the same responsibilities as individuals? How are they the same? How are they different?
* What are the types of interactions that nations have with other nations?
* In what ways can a nation be isolated from other nations?
* What are the alternatives to isolationism?
* What is the difference between political isolationism and economic isolationism?

This stage of research will help you find the general approach you will take toward the resolution, both as the Affirmative and as the Negative. Most especially, it will help you to decide whether to focus more on economics or on foreign policy in general.

Next**, read more specifically**. This is the time to search the internet for narrower examples like Japanese xenophobia before World War II, or GATT and NAFTA. Begin to look for this topic in current events as a regular part of your school day. This research is likely to produce the applications you will present in your constructive cases and the counter-examples you will pull out in your rebuttals.

Ask:

* What countries have pursued isolationist policies, and with what results?
* What countries have pursued imperialist or interventionist policies, and with what results?
* What countries have pursued internationalist or one-world goals, and with what results?
* What are the ethical implications of globalizing the division of labor (i.e. encouraging each nation to develop a specialized economy and to rely upon other nations to fill all its other needs)?
* Should any industry be protected within a nation? Food production? Defense research and manufacturing?
* What has America’s history of foreign policy been?
* What are the tools of economic isolationism or protectionism?
* How does the United States use those tools today?

**Begin to group your research under Affirmative and Negative headings** in a notebook. You might begin to make more specific topic headings such as ‘Internationalism’ or ‘Trade Barriers’. Make sure that you always keep the citation with the article or quote. In chapter 3, you will learn how to turn these articles into sound-bite bullets.

Finally, **choose the theses (plural) you wish to advocate from the negative and the affirmative sides**, along with the applications you feel are your strongest support. Research these applications closely. It will not be enough for you to know about them in general. In order to use them effectively in your speeches, and to withstand cross-ex, you will need to have a thorough understanding of each application. Sloppy research will lead to silly and confusing arguments, like "My criterion is Adam Smith." (A name or even the title of a book is not an argument. You must be able to articulate the *ideas* in that book in sound bites that your judge will be able to follow, even if he is unfamiliar with that author.)

Safari Guide Trail-Marker

1. Lead a discussion of the content in this chapter:
2. What are the three imperatives of the debater?
3. What are the objectives of a value debate case?
4. Why would finding a strong criterion be so important to arguing this resolution?

B. If you have a club with several members doing value debate, divide the research among the students. Assign each student to bring a summary of his findings and copies of all the articles he found for each of the other students in the group. This will give you a good depth of research in only a week or two.

Suggested research divisions:

* History of economic thought
* History of American foreign policy
* Ethics of war
* Current policies on trade barriers
* Current policies on open borders
* Justification for American interventions abroad

1. Take a tour of your local library's reference section. Tell the librarian that you are doing research for a debate topic. Ask him or her to explain the various resources available, especially the Internet databases like the Philosopher’s Index, to which the library subscribes. These are databases that you may not be able to access at home.
2. Have the students begin to load a notebook with notes and evidence from their research. The notebook should be a 3-ring binder with several tab dividers. The first divisions should be Affirmative and Negative. Students will add more dividers as their cases and research become more detailed.

Chapter 2

Choosing a Value

Picture a Destination, Plan a Route, Shoot for the Moon

This year’s resolution demands a very careful examination of the ethics involved in foreign policy. A value will give the judge a lens through which to view the resolution. When a debater affirms that “the United States should value isolationism more highly,” we want to know ‘why?’, ‘how do you know?’, and ‘compared to what?’ The answer to each of these questions either is a value in the round or needs to be closely tied to a value. For example,

* Why should isolationism be more highly valued? Because justice demands that no country should impose laws upon another country.
* How do we know isolationism should be more highly valued? Because our national security is compromised by interventionist policies.
* The United States should value isolationism more highly according to what standard? The Constitution must be the standard by which we measure foreign and economic policies.

In the first example, justice is a clear goal that, it is argued, governments must seek. In the second, national security is a pragmatic means to another end. In the third, the Constitution might be our measuring rod for several underlying values: stability, integrity, law, etc.

In Value Debate, the value you champion might function in a number of ways in your case: 1) portray your destination (a “terminal value” or “intrinsic value”) or 2) predetermine your route (an “instrumental value” or “pragmatic value”) or 3) provide standard coordinates by which to navigate (a value standard).

In the first case, your value is the good that you hope to achieve. The first statement above is an example of a terminal value. It is, if you will, the end of your journey, your wonderful destination. These values are often thought to be good in themselves, needing no other justification. Justice is obviously something we all want. We don’t need to be convinced that it is a desirable goal and we don’t need to wait and see whether justice produces something else that’s good in order to perceive it as good. That is why sometimes they are called intrinsic values.

In the second case, your value is the means to achieving some goal or benefit contained in, implied by or demanded by the resolution. National security is the means to achieve stability, to protect human life, etc. It is not necessarily a good or a goal in itself. After all, some nations protect terrorists or tyrannical leaders or promote the abuse of women. So ensuring the security of those nations wouldn’t qualify as a good goal. We value national security because of where it can take us. That is why it is called a pragmatic or instrumental value.

Finally, a value standard is a sort of guiding star. If we steer with reference to those coordinates, we will be able to navigate toward our goal through all sorts of distractions and barriers. The third statement above is an example of this. We value the Constitution, not because it is our goal, but because it provides the standard that will allow us to achieve our goals. It is not the road, but the means to navigate and to measure progress where there is no road. With a value standard, you could shoot the moon.

In all cases, the challenge is to connect the value firmly to the resolution and to understand exactly how the value you choose functions in your case.

There are a number of fundamental values a debater can choose. The job of the debater is not to prove that these values are always better than others, but rather to prove that in this case, the one value he chooses is paramount.

One way to select a value is simply to list some basic virtues or values suggested by the resolution. Then set up a grid to determine which side that value supports. The following is the grid that we came up with in a brainstorming session with a room full of L-D debaters. Your club or family can come up with another one, but we will use this one for example's sake.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Value Brainstorming Grid | | |
| **Value** | **Affirmative *(value isolationism more)*** | **Negative *(don’t value isolationism more)*** |
| Stability | X |  |
| Constitution | X |  |
| Duty of Government | X |  |
| Duty of the Powerful |  | X |
| Economic Stability/development | X | X |
| Women’s rights |  | X |
| Courage |  | X |
| National Security | X | X |
| Liberty/Freedom |  | X |
| World Peace |  | X |
| Self-determination | X | X |

This exercise can be applied to any value resolution. It shows a list of reasons to support one position or the other, sometimes both. Notice that the list includes simple ideals like “stability”, as well as complexes or systems of values like “quality of life”, and value standards such as “duty of government” and the Constitution. Some values could be used several ways. For instance the Constitution could be treated as a value standard or as a system or composite of several values. Or it could provide a philosophical criterion, which is not a value in itself, for measuring the truth of the resolution. For example the “duty of Government” could provide a measuring stick for us to use to evaluate whether isolationism is valued properly.

This year many of the values could fit on both sides of the argument. The critical questions being, ***“Must we pursue and promote virtue only within the United States or must we promote virtue throughout the world?”*** and ***“Is it proper to use government policy to enforce virtue or must virtue rise from within a people first?”*** The most interesting debates will focus on the reasons why we ought to operate either in a limited or an unlimited arena and what specific aspects of national life ought to be either limited or unlimited.

The next step is to state briefly how or why each value might be said to support a given position. This is often called the value justification. This step helps to bring your use of your value into focus in the case. The following are some of many that could be included in your case.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Value Analysis Grid** | | | | |
| **Value** | **Affirmative value justification** | **Negative value justification** | **Criterion** | **Application or Example** |
| **Stability** | A nation maintains its internal stability by keeping consensus on the core values embodied in the country’s legal code. Therefore it is important not to mix or dilute the legal structure of the US by embracing foreign legal norms. We should take a more isolationist approach to law. |  | Maintenance of Constitutional Law | 1) Justice Sandra  O’Connor says the US Supreme Court should consult foreign legal codes to determine the best legal solution. There is confusion about whose law citizens must obey.  2) Proposed solutions to illegal immigration problems change fundamental legal principles. Americans don’t know what is and isn’t legal. This leads to social unrest, miscarriage of justice, and instability. |
| **Constitution** | The Constitution is the standard by which we must measure what our country may do. The Constitution does not provide justification for intervention in or manipulation of other nations’ affairs. It does, however, provide for free and open trade relations. Therefore the US should more highly value isolationism in the arena of foreign entanglements, but should preserve an open international trade. |  | Not helpful. The value is the criterion for the resolution. | Repeatedly bending and re-defining the Constitution’s stipulations on war powers and the declarations of war undermines the authority of the Constitution and our sense of who we are as a nation. See the Korean Conflict, the Vietnam ’War’, the irregular declaration of war for Operation Iraqi Freedom. |
| **Duty of Government** | According to many philosophers, the duties of government are fairly simple: to protect the citizens under its protection from foreign enemies and to administer justice. There is no duty to impose one nation’s vision & standards on other nations, however grand those standards may be. |  | Not helpful. The value is the criterion for the resolution. | Imperial Rome, Imperial Britain, France and Russia all sought to extend the benefits of civilization and law to less well-organized cultures. However, those cultures resented and resisted those “offerings”, causing wars, rising taxes back home and eventual collapse of the imperial regimes. |
| **Duty of the Powerful** |  | Those who are wealthy and powerful have an obligation to help those who are weak and oppressed. If US intervention can free an oppressed people from a tyrannical regime, the US should do it. We should choose service to our fellows over personal comfort. |  | The war in Afghanistan freed that nation from the tyranny of the Taliban. |
| **Economic stability & development** |  |  |  |  |
| **Economic stability & development** |  |  |  |  |
| **Women’s rights** |  |  |  |  |
| **Courage** |  | Isolationism is a fear-driven policy. We ought not to allow fear to dictate our actions. We ought to live courageously. |  | Will we allow the fear of terrorism to lock us up within our own borders? Or will we take the battle to the terrorists – in Iraq, in Afghanistan, wherever they may be? |
| **National Security** |  | In order to keep our country safe, we must also guarantee the security and stability of those areas and resources in the world which are essential to the defense of our country. Therefore we cannot afford isolationist policies. | Defense of national interests worldwide | We must ensure that our access to oil is unhindered even if it means intervening in other countries in armed conflict. |
| **National Security** | American intervention in foreign conflicts is prompting growing resentment towards the US even among our allies. Our military is spread too thin to respond adequately to direct threat to US security. Therefore we should pull back into a more isolationist policy. |  |  | British opposition to Iraq war. Inability to respond to North Korean nuclear threat. |
| **Liberty/ Freedom** |  | See Duty of Powerful |  |  |
| **World Peace** |  |  |  |  |
| **Self-Determin-ation** |  |  |  |  |

Mile Markers: Criteria

You’ll notice that the Value Analysis Grid has more than just the value justifications on it. The next category is “criterion”. Depending on how the value is functioning in your case, it may need to be clarified, quantified or confined by some standard of measure. A criterion may be the tool you need to accomplish this.

Explicit criteria in a case will prevent accusations of imprecision. A good criterion will focus attention on how the value works in the case, how much is enough, how we know when we achieve the goal, and the like. A poor criterion or one that isn’t logically associated with the value will become a bludgeon with which your opponent will batter your case.

The interesting feature of this year’s resolution is that it requires us to be very clear about how we are using values and what really counts as a value.

Let’s look at an example from the Analysis Grid. Consider the National Security section. Using National Security as a value on the Affirmative side, the basic argument is:

American intervention in foreign conflicts is prompting growing resentment towards the US even among our allies. Our military is spread too thin to respond adequately to direct threats to US security. Therefore we should pull back into a more isolationist policy.

Think about this argument for a moment. Are we really valuing National Security or are we valuing something prior to National Security? All the evidences offered are practical concerns. So really this argument values *what works*. The argument at bottom is actually, “If it doesn’t work, abandon it. If it does work, adopt it.” It is purely a pragmatic appeal, not an ethical one. A possible rebuttal to this argument could focus on whether it is wise to adopt pragmatism as our bedrock value. Pragmatism has no place for ethical or emotional considerations.

Views from the Road: Applications

Moving to the last section of the grid, we find “Applications”. Here you can place examples of what you meant when you drafted the value justification or thesis section of the grid. *Show* your judge how it worked in the past, how it could look or why it’s best. It might include late-breaking news or it might be a centuries-old model. In value debate, both are equally valuable (pun intended!).

These applications are the examples you will want to research in depth, so that you can thoroughly understand and effectively argue them. We will discuss this kind of evidence more deeply in the next chapter.

Scouting the Route: Research in context

(Chapter Homework)

Brainstorm value justifications, criteria and applications for the other values in the grid.

Brainstorm other values if you like.

Add more than one application or supporting evidence to your three favorite values. These will become extension arguments in your rebuttals later.

Read the next chapter, after you have worked through these grids.

Safari Guide Trail-Marker

1. Begin with a discussion of last week’s research. Have each research team report orally and hand out their bibliographies and summaries to the others in your club.
2. Move to a discussion of the concepts in this chapter.
   1. Why do we need a value in this type of debate?
   2. Explain three functions of the value in a Lincoln-Douglas case.
   3. How could a criterion help your argument? How could it hinder?
3. Work through at least one value in the Value Analysis Grid together.
4. Assign the chapter homework above.

Chapter 3

Mapping your Quest: Creating the Affirmative Case

Now that you’ve done a substantial amount of research, you know every bend in the road, every hazard and every stupendous view. You’re ready to chart out the journey for the judge; you’re ready to begin writing your constructive case on the affirmative side of the question. The structure of the affirmative case will be similar to an essay. An effective case follows this basic outline.

1. Introduction
2. Body
   1. Definitive Issues (called "Observations")
3. Definitions of the terms in the resolution
4. Definition & explanation of values in the debate
5. Declaration of the affirmative strategy
   1. Application Issues (called "Contentions")
6. One to three reasons with support for affirming the resolution.
7. Conclusion

This basic structure holds even when an advanced debater wants to try an alternative case model. In this chapter, we will first demonstrate how to build the most basic kind of constructive case: the core value case. In later sections, alternative structures for both affirmative and negative will be discussed. Even if you are a first-year debater and do not plan to use some fancy kind of case, it is wise to become familiar with the different kinds of cases you may face in a tournament.

Introduction

The debater must capture its audience's attention. The debater can do this by relating the debate topic to the audience's interests or needs. The debater's job in the introduction is to entice the judge to take an interest in the conflict of values, show how the conflict will impact his own life, and state briefly the affirmative position with respect to the resolution.

For instance, a debater could spark the audience's interest by connecting the resolution to a surprising analogy with everyday life. Here is a sample introduction:

“Most children know the story of the brave outlaw Robin Hood. They know that he stole from the rich to give to the poor, and that he was quick, cunning, and courageous. However, his actions may cause others to pause. Who was he to decide whether the rich or the poor deserved money? It is because of this question that I stand Resolved: That the United States of America ought to more highly value Isolationism.”

Although the introduction is heard first, it might be a good idea to write it after the rest of the case is written. Why so? Because the debater must have a clear idea of what she must argue in order to summarize it effectively in an introduction. The body of the case is where these core arguments are forged.

Body – Definitive Issues

The first section of the case proper deals with definitive issues called "observations." These are intended to lay down a *neutral* ground for the debate. They form the compass rose and scale key to your adventure map. These must be as straight and true as possible in the debate as they are on a map. There are three major areas that need careful definition: 1) the terms of the resolution itself, 2) the value or standard you will champion, and 3) the boundaries of the clash or the affirmative strategy in the debate.

*1. The Terms of the Resolution*

Each major term of the resolution should be addressed. Remember, the aim is to provide an unequivocal, neutral ground for a true clash of values, rather than to manipulate words to serve only one side of the debate. You may use dictionary definitions, phrase definitions, affirmation and denial definitions, or genus and difference definitions.

*Dictionary definitions* provide connotative or denotative definitions. An example of a connotative definition for "eligible voters" might be "all citizens who have registered and have resided in the voting district for at least 90 days." This definition lays out the necessary and sufficient conditions for being an eligible voter. If one of the conditions is not met, the person is not an eligible voter (the conditions listed are all *necessary*). On the other hand, the fact that the person also has paid taxes on property has no bearing on his eligibility to vote (the conditions are *sufficient* to define an eligible voter). A denotative definition of "eligible voters" is the county's list of all persons who will be admitted to the voting booth. Usemainline dictionaries or dictionaries aimed at a specific discipline (i.e. *Black's Law Dictionary*).

*Phrase definitions* are used to define entire phrases in the resolution. The terms in this year’s resolution don’t lend themselves to phrase definitions. But some of the value terms may benefit from being defined as a phrase. "The duty of government," for example, may not be adequately described, for the purposes of this debate, if the words are defined separately. It may be more effectively described by using a philosophical treatment of the whole idea. For these phrase definitions, use philosophers, statesmen, common usage, etc. Dr. Chris Leland of Focus on the Family Worldview Institute suggests textbook glossaries for finding field definitions of phrases. Check out a nearby university library's philosophy, political science, cultural studies or American studies sections for a wide selection of textbooks on this year's topic.

*Affirmation and denial definitions* are definitions that clarify an idea by saying both what it is and what it is not. Example: "The United States is the people, institutions and governing bodies that pertain to the citizens of America. It is not limited to the federal government only." The definition is clear both as to what the United States is and what it is *not.*

*Genus and difference definitions* begin with a general category. It then works down to the specific object by a series of distinctions. For example: "Democracy is a system of government in which citizens participate in governing by directly voting on the issues which affect them.” So we work more and more specifically from a form of government (which could include monarchies, oligarchies, dictatorships, democracies, etc.) to a government in which citizens participate (which could include republics, communistic and socialistic governments, parliamentary monarchies, etc.) to detailing the participation as a direct vote on issues (which could only be a democracy).

*2. Defining Your Value*

Some combination of these types of definitions will suffice to define the terms of the resolution clearly. But defining your value requires a bit more. Typically, you will state that you affirm the resolution because you believe in this value. "Because I value *Stability*, I support the notion that the United States should more highly value isolationism." This year debaters will often be using a value as a standard by which to evaluate the resolution.

Then you will use one of the above methods to define your value. Additional quotes from the Bible, philosophers, or Founding Fathers will help the judge understand why your value is so important in considering the resolution's conflict.

Sometimes, but not always, the value is in need of a criterion—a way of detecting whether or not that value is being properly represented in the clash situation. A criterion could help to further **define and confine consideration** of your value within the round. For instance, Justice would be fenced into to a manageable issue by a criterion of “consent of the governed”. A criterion could also provide a standard for measuring how well your value would be upheld or will show the means by which a society achieves your value. As NCFCA's David Graham is fond of saying, "If your paramount value is the destination, the criterion is **the road** that takes you there." For example, “Giving every man his due according to established standards of ethics and law” is a criterion that gets us down the road toward justice. Finally, a criterion can also be seen as a **measuring rod**. Just how many lives would we have to protect in order to achieve the value of human life? Your criterion would need to show us.

A word of caution about criteria. Criteria are not a requirement for all case structures. If you need to use them, the criteria *cannot be arbitrary*. A criterion must either be both necessary and sufficient to achieve whatever goal your argument posits; or it must be the necessary evidence that the goal has been achieved.

**Necessary evidence criterion**: "Steam rising from a kettle of water is the criterion which tells us that the water is boiling."

**Necessary-and-sufficient criterion**: “Boiling water has been achieved when the water has been brought both to sea-level pressure and to 212F”.

*3. Defining Boundaries with Criteria*

Criteria for a value will help the judge determine the limits of your value – the edge of your debate-world. Take, for example, the value of life. Even this value can be skewed with questionable criterion. Consider the difference the criteria of *quality* and *sanctity of life* make. *Quality of life*, a very worthy criterion, contrasts greatly with *sanctity of life*. In fact, pro-choice activists claim the former is more important than the latter. Leaving the value "life" by itself, without limiting criteria, could bring doubt to the debater's stand on the resolution.

Before you move on to the contentions of your case, you may want to take a few sentences to state the strategy you intend to adopt as you argue for your value. This will help the judge and your opponent to focus on the thesis that binds your arguments together. It is an overview of your roadmap. A debate roadmap might sound something like this:

“Isolationism was an important component that shaped our nation, however in the wake of modern global communication, rapid intercontinental transportation, international free trade and political interdependence it is a true relic. Isolationism has served its use for the short term of our country’s infancy, but it is now obsolete. In the next few minutes, I will show that isolationism is practically impossible, causes our government to neglect its duties to its citizens and serves to impoverish the American people.”

The roadmap not only defines the scope of the affirmative position, but also allows the debater to move smoothly into the application section of the case.

Body – Application Issues

This section contains all the arguments to support the affirmative strategy. These arguments are partisan, non-neutral statements called *contentions*. You should select only the two or three strongest arguments you can see, rather than trying to present every argument there is. Each contention should make a point *distinct* from the other arguments in the case, but each contention should connect your value to the object of evaluation in the context specified in the resolution. And good reason must support each contention. In the example above, the three contentions would be something like this:

* 1. Isolationism is practically impossible in the modern world. Therefore isolationism is unworkable and should not be pursued.
  2. Isolationism causes government to neglect its duties to its citizens. Therefore isolationism is immoral and should not be pursued.
  3. Isolationist economic policy impoverishes our people. Therefore isolationism is cruel and should not be pursued.

In the above example, each contention is a self-contained argument against the resolution. Sometimes each contention is a premise of a single logical argument.

Another model that beginning students have found useful for generating distinct contentions that have strong connections to the resolution is this:

Contention #1 - focus on your value

Contention #2 - focus on the object(s) of evaluation

Contention #3 - focus on the impact to the resolution

So an example under this resolution could look like this:

Contention 1: Upholding justice through natural rights promotion is a worthy goal

Contention 2: Foreign alliances aid in protecting justice

Contention 3: Isolationism harms the advancement of justice

The contentions will be supported by as wide a variety of warrants as possible. Not only are the pronouncements of philosophers and theologians helpful, but statistics, practical realities, historical precedents, logical reasoning, analogies, and common sense are helpful as well. A well-balanced and resourceful gathering of contentions makes for a more persuasive case.

Conclusion

The first and last words of a speech are usually the most important, for the judge will remember these points the most. Refer back to the attention grabber you used in the beginning that showed how your case is clearly good. The case should fit the required six minutes as closely as possible.

Photos & Testimonials: Evidence in Value Debate

The role of evidence in a value debate differs from policy debate. It makes sense, really, that the newer the evidence in policy debate, the better it is. Policy changes with time. Values, however, carry over time and cultures unlike political issues. Because of this, older evidence that has stood the test of time can be more valuable than the most recent study, newspaper, or periodical.

The role of evidence in a value debate is different in another sense. In a policy debate, a great deal hangs on your policy or application. Will your application work? Does it solve the problem? Is it significant enough? In a policy debate, your whole case hangs on your application. Not so in value debate. Here, an application is merely an example or an illustration of the philosophy you are outlining. It is not the core of your argument – at least, it *shouldn’t* be.

Your case *does* need at least one application, so that your judge can envision what your philosophy looks like in real life. It is like a snapshot of your destination. If your opponent criticizes your snapshot, you should be ready to defend your core argument with a whole portfolio of snapshots. But, usually, you don’t need to abandon your entire thesis just because your opponent says your snapshot is out of focus.

Organizing Evidence

So you can’t slack off on your research. When preparing for value debate, you will want to **tag**, **impact**, **cite**, and **block** the evidence just like preparation for a policy debate. You will title or "tag" your evidence card/sheet with the argument you want to make. Then cite the source of the quote. Finally, you will file it in the "block" (tab section of your debate notebook) with other quotes supporting that point in your case. On the next page is an example for an Affirmative argument that democracy does not necessarily produce the most stability.

When **tagging** evidence, make sure your tag line is not merely a summary of the quote on the card, but actually *is the argument* you want the quote to make. At the end of the quote, you will want to think about how this piece of evidence impacts the resolution. What difference will this argument make in the strategy of the whole debate? This is called **impacting** the evidence.

**Citations** are particularly important in debate, because they validate your evidence. Your evidence will only hold up to an opponent’s or a judge’s challenge if you can show a citation that is detailed enough to allow the judge to find your quote in open sources easily. You may summarize your citation orally during the round for the sake of time, but be certain that you have the full footnote in case of challenges.

After you tag your evidence, you will want to gather together all the arguments of a similar type, for ease of use during a debate round. This is called **"blocking."** So you would gather all the cards that have affirmative arguments about interventionism as the epitome of pride, and place them behind a tabbed card or divider labeled “Affirmative: Interventionism as Pride”. Some debaters find it helpful to have all their negative arguments on one color of paper or one color of tabs, and all their affirmative arguments on another color.

During a debate round, you can pull out this evidence to bolster evidence you have already brought out in your constructive, or to destroy your opponent's argument in your rebuttal, as needed. Each piece is another snapshot to convince the judge that your destination is the one he wants.

**TAG: Interventionism fails to promote democracy**

**Citation:** “Why Gun-Barrel Democracy Doesn’t Work”, Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George W Downs. Hoover Institute <http://www.hoover.org/publications/digest/3021131.html>

“In the typical cases, the United States—like other interveners—has been motivated less by a desire to establish democracy or reduce human suffering than to alter some aspect of the target state’s policy….Although democracy would no doubt be a nice by-product, it is rarely the most important goal.”

**Impact:** Isolationism protects democracy within our nation, but interventionism cannot promote democracy elsewhere. Therefore isolationism better supports democracy.

So as you are listening to your opponent's case, you can look through your tagged evidence to find an argument—an argument you thought out in your preparation—to bring up in your next speech. When you get up to give a rebuttal, summarize your opponent's argument, then contrast it with your position and read your evidence card, starting with the tag line, which summarizes your counter-argument. Finish up the point by again contrasting your position with your opponent's and telling why your position is better.

If you were planning a safari package, you’d want to include testimonials from satisfied travelers, vivid photographs of your route and destination, and clear facts to back up your claim that your customers can get there in the promised amount of time. In a value round, evidence has basically the same three functions. First, it provides credibility to your arguments. If a great thinker from the past has used the same argument, your audience will be more likely to accept it. Some of the great thinkers of the world will be debated over and over again no matter what the resolution is. Western philosophy, the Bible, classic theology, and modernists can all be quoted. Second, evidence provides examples, photos if you will, of your value—within the context of the resolution—working out in the real world. Third, evidence warrants your logical assertions, just as mile-indicators prove how long it will take to get there.

A case needs a well-balanced selection of evidence: philosophical authorities, Biblical principles, and real-life examples. The round will not be drowned in evidence like a policy round, but debaters who cite no authorities or practical applications leave themselves open to the charge that their arguments are unfounded, impractical and unproved.

Alternative Case Models

We have examined the most basic model for constructive cases, the core value case. This model can be used for constructive cases from either the affirmative or negative perspectives. But a constructive case does not need a core value in order to be effective. There are several alternative ways to analyze the resolution and to generate cases on either side of the resolution.

Alternative case models depend on two factors: 1) the type of resolution we are asked to address, and 2) the way in which the value is approached.

So let’s consider the main types of resolutions that we could be asked to debate.

1. *Absolute:* Defines the way something ought to be. Example: Capital punishment is justified.
2. *Superlative:* Something ought to be held in the highest value. Example: The primary duty of a congressman is to honor the will of his constituents.
3. *Hierarchy/Comparison:* One object or subject is more important when conflicting with another. Example: When they conflict, Native American sovereignty ought to take precedence over national sovereignty.
4. *Advantage/Disadvantage:* A resolution that calls for a cost-benefit analysis. Example: The advantages of a moral education outweigh the disadvantages.

This year’s resolution is an idiosyncratic type of resolution. Not quite an absolute. Not quite an advantage/disadvantage. It’s almost a comparison with only one side of the comparison defined. This presents some interesting possibilities in the way you can approach its evaluation.

When you have classified the resolution, you will be able to weigh what kind of approach will give you the strongest case for your assigned position. Basically, there are two types of alternatives: value-driven cases and resolution-driven cases. Within those types, Cox and Whitley's categories are very helpful.

Value-Driven Cases

Virtually any class of resolution can be viewed from the value-driven perspective. As we have seen in the grid exercise above, simply asking, "why?" will generate a whole list of values to support or to oppose a given statement. The basic training above is a detailed outline for developing the core value case. But this approach can be honed to produce a more focused case.

1. Basic or Core Value

The basic value-driven case chooses a core value from outside the resolution and argues essentially that this value is or should be the most central consideration in our evaluation of the given situation. That value must be the goal of implementing or opposing the resolution. It is the good toward which we should strive. Every contention in a basic value case must connect directly to the value. Conversely, every argument, no matter how good, that does not connect to that value, must be cut from the case. If it is not, it will become irrelevant, and your opponent may exploit it.

Refutation strategies can be brought against the case on the basis of its structure as well as on the strength of the logic within the structure. For a core value case, look for weak connections between the resolution and the core value. Is the core value really the goal of affirming or opposing the resolution? Secondly, look for weak connections between the contentions and the core value. Does this argument directly connect to the value? If it doesn't, it is irrelevant to this debate.

2. Value-Plus

Adding criteria to a basic value case puts another layer of distance between the case and the resolution. The contentions in a case with criteria will mainly address the criteria, rather than the value. The focus will be how to achieve the value by means of the criteria. If the value cannot be logically linked both to the resolution and the criteria, the case should fail. Furthermore, the criteria must be both necessary and sufficient for the attainment of the value. In other words, in designing criteria, the debater must ask 1) what cannot be done without in order to achieve the value chosen, and 2) is that sine qua non enough to produce or ensure the value?

The necessary-and-sufficient test for a criterion is a very stiff one, and debaters who use criteria must be prepared for their opponents to test those criteria according to the necessary-and-sufficient standard. But there is another sense in which a criterion can be employed. A criterion may, instead, be necessary evidence that the value has been achieved. For example, steam is always produced when water boils, so if steam is present, we know that there is water at the boiling point. Steam is the necessary evidence that water is at the boiling point, and we can say so with confidence, even if we don't have a thermometer and can't see the fire.

A value-plus approach is useful when the resolution is very broad, for the criteria can limit the scope of debate to a manageable size.

Refutation strategies against a Value-Plus case would center on the connections between the resolution and the value, and the value and its criteria. Don’t forget that if these structure-related refutations are ineffective, you will still have opportunity to challenge the internal logic of the arguments presented within this structure.

3. Value Systems

A value-systems case argues that isolating single values is impossible. Really, people make moral judgments based on a complexity of values that are intertwined. And being true to one's value *system* ought to be the underlying impetus for every course of action. The Judeo-Christian ethic, Liberalism, Rousseau's Social Contract, and American democracy are all examples of value systems. The values clustered in the value system become distinct contentions, each one showing how affirming the resolution (or denying it) achieves the value, and thus upholds the value system.

A value-systems case can be very useful when your brainstorming produces several strong values, but only one argument for each one. It is an alternate approach to focusing a broad resolution.

Refutation here is basically the same as for a core value case, except that you will have several value-to-resolution connections to test.

4. Value Standards

This type of case argues that values are primarily useful as standards for behavior. In this model, values are what we strive to display in everyday life, but, naturally, everyday life doesn't ever measure up to the pure virtue. A value is not a means to anything; it is an end in itself. As Cox and Whitley put it, "Affirmation or negation is not perceived as instrumental to the attainment of an exterior value, but rather abides by a standard of action or code of behavior rooted in absolute values." These cases focus on ends rather than on means to the good, arguing that if we keep striving to act in accordance with the guiding light of our value, we will arrive at the morally right answer to the question posed in the resolution. Conversely, the resolution either is or is not consistent with the abstract value. The resolution either does or does not advocate a code of conduct that is in line with the value chosen.

These cases are challenging to write, but are very strong. They tend not to have the logical gap between value and criteria, or value and resolution, to which basic core value cases and value-plus cases are prone. And while core value cases claim that their value will be achieved by affirming or denying the resolution, value-standard cases make the smaller, more defensible claim that affirming or denying the resolution will move us closer to the ideal state represented by the value.

Refutation strategy for a Value-Standard case would look for gaps between value, criteria and resolution, just in case. But the strongest attack would be to ask, 1) Is the value really the destination if we follow (or refuse) the resolution? and 2) Does the resolution actually prescribe a code of conduct, which supports the value championed?

Resolution-Driven Cases

Value-driven cases look outside the resolution for values that support or oppose the resolution. Resolution-driven cases see the resolution itself as carrying implicit values that are sufficient to carry the case. These cases have the strength of immediate identification with the resolution.

1. Philosophical Criteria

This case depends on a resolution, which articulates an obvious value on its own. Absolute and Superlative-class resolutions usually imply some obvious value: morality, duty, justice, etc. Hierarchical-class resolutions usually ask the debater to weigh two outright values. Last year's resolution was characteristically absolute in this sense. We were asked to evaluate the US Government’s interaction with Democracy, which can easily be seen as a value in itself.

The debate focuses on the criteria for the resolution's value(s), and these criteria are drawn from a philosophical system rather than from common sense. Each criterion will provide the basis for each contention, referring back to the resolution each time. This is the resolution-based equivalent of a Value System case. And this year, a Philosophical Criterion case will be virtually indistinguishable from the Value System, because no point of comparison is specified in the resolution.

A rebuttal will focus on the criteria's connection to the resolution in the same way a core value rebuttal focuses on the values' connection to the resolution.

2. Unified Analysis

Pure logic and commonsense reasoning are the basis for a unified analysis case. Basically, the case assumes that there is a value inherent in the resolution, and that whoever proves that the resolution is (or is not) valid in large part, should win the round. There is no attempt to argue that the resolution should be affirmed (or negated) because it upholds or achieves a given virtue from outside the resolution, or because it advocates a code of conduct. The only criterion is the validity of the resolution. The debater's task becomes articulating a set of unique contentions why the resolution is (or is not) valid.

The strong commonsense appeal of this type of case is persuasive, especially to a lay judge. As a negative constructive case, it allows a great deal of freedom to rebut the whole core-value approach.

The rebuttal to a unified analysis case will be as unique as the logic employed to prove (or disprove) the resolution to be valid or true. This is a bout of pure logic, but some pitfalls can be anticipated. For instance, ask, "Are each of the contentions unique or are there only three ways of saying the same thing?' or 'Do my opponent's contentions actually prove what he claims?' For more rebuttal ideas, look in the Rebuttals chapter.

Scouting the Route: Research in context

(Chapter Homework)

1. Using one of the handy models suggested for the three contentions in a debate case, develop contentions for your strongest value analysis.
2. Write all of your analysis and contentions into a structured Affirmative case.
3. Compare your introduction with your conclusion. Do you maximize the "rounding up" effectiveness of your attention grabber?
4. After everything, read the next chapter.

Safari Guide Trail-Marker

A. Begin with a discussion of this chapter.

1. How is an affirmative case similar to an essay? How is it different?
2. How can a debater capture his audience's attention? Give examples of effective attention grabbers for the value analyses you have completed in your grid.
3. What are the three areas of definitive issues that need careful definition?
4. There are four specific types of definitions given in "terms of the resolutions." Explain what each are and look up some examples.
5. How is value debate evidence different from policy debate evidence?
6. What are the various alternative cases? Which ones do you believe will be helpful in your debating? Which alternative cases will likely come up under this year's resolution?
7. Ask the students to choose their favorite value analysis on the Affirmative side. Work through each student’s choice, brainstorming contentions and applications.
8. Assign the homework above.

**NOTE:** If you have longer than 6 weeks to present the initial learning, spend another week on this material before going on to the next chapter. In your second week, spend the whole class time having each student read his/her case, and then ask rest of the class members to provide one encouraging comment and two suggestions for improvement. This is called “piranha-packing” a case.

Then send the students home to revise their Affirmative cases.

Chapter 4

The Diverging Road: Creating the Negative Case

Now that you’ve begun to chart your affirmative trek, and you understand how to create a constructive case, it’s time to take that know-how for a walk on the wild side – or well, on the other side of the resolution. The negative debater needs a constructive case of his own, a uniquely different trip complete with mile-markers, testimonials and photos of the other side of the world.

The negative team creates a case just like the affirmative team (with all the alternative case model possibilities available to the affirmative), but the value, criterion and contentions are chosen to *negate* the resolution. For this year's value resolution, the debater will choose a value—with criteria and contentions to support it—that shows that the United States should NOT value isolationism more than it already does.

Negative Philosophy

Deciding exactly how to say "no"—a straightforward negation of the resolution—is the first step in developing a negative philosophy. Every type of resolution has its own characteristic negations. Using our earlier examples, this can be seen easily:

Absolute: "Capital punishment is justified."

Negations: *Capital punishment is never justified.*

*Capital punishment is only sometimes justified.*

Superlative: "The primary duty of a congressman is to honor the will of his constituents."

Negations: *Honoring the will of constituents is not the most important of a congressman's duties, but only one of many equally important duties.*

*Honoring the will of constituents is less important than some other duty.*

Hierarchic: "Cultural unity in the United States ought to be valued above cultural diversity."

Negations: *Cultural diversity must be valued above cultural unity.*

*Cultural unity and cultural diversity must be valued equally.*

*Cultural unity and cultural diversity are essentially the same thing.*

*Cultural unity and cultural diversity do not conflict in the United States.*

Advantage/Disadvantage: "The advantages of a moral education outweigh the disadvantages."

Negations: *The disadvantages of a moral education outweigh the advantages.*

*The advantages and disadvantages are equal.*

*There are no advantages of a moral education.*

As you can see, while the affirmative is held to the parameters of the resolution, the negative usually has a whole array of ways to say "no" to the resolution.

This year’s resolution is a sort of hybrid, which puts Affirmative and Negative options on a more equal footing. A Negative could say, ‘*The United States should not value isolationism at all.’* Or ‘*The United States should not value isolationism any more than it already does.’*

In order to construct a negative case, use the negative philosophies above to brainstorm distinct reasons to oppose the resolution. Next decide which will allow you to create the strongest and most convincing case from your side of the resolution. This will be your negative philosophy. Finally, arrange the parts into a constructive case.

The Negative would use the same outline form as the Affirmative. A basic negative constructive could shape up like this:

* 1. Introduction
     1. Grabber
     2. Negative philosophy, strategy and roadmap
  2. Observations
     1. Counter-definitions (***only*** if needed)
     2. Counter-Value(s)
     3. Criteria (if needed)
  3. Contentions

1. Reasons to oppose the resolution, each linked to a counter-value or a criterion.
   1. Conclusion

In his first speech, the Negative has the additional burden to begin to focus a clash between the negative and the affirmative positions. Following the 6-minute affirmative constructive and the cross-examination, the Negative has 7 minutes to deliver both his or her constructive case and a rebuttal. The speaker will want to divide this time in half, making a 3-4 minute constructive and a 3-4 minute rebuttal. So, a negative case is not complete without significant strategizing about refutation. Though the rebuttal section is an unscripted portion of the speech, it can be planned ahead of time.

Negative Strategies

A ***negative philosophy*** addresses the resolution and a ***negative strategy*** addresses the specific affirmative case that you face in a specific round. A negative strategy is your plan of attack against the affirmative constructive case. The Negative can negate by direct refutation, counter value, or value balance.

Negating by Refutation

The Negative can win on direct refutations. When you consider the various affirmative positions, begin to develop your negative strategy by asking yourself these questions.

*Is the affirmative claim* ***true****?* Usually, the Affirmative will not try to put forward a bald lie, but many-a-dictator has prospered with big lies. Using this test to any claim is a good first step in refutation.

*Is the affirmative claim* ***valid****?* The Negative does not have to argue that the affirmative case is untrue, only that the argument isn't properly made. Validity is different than truthfulness. An improperly crafted argument is not necessarily untrue, but it can certainly be invalid. For instance, if the affirmative value doesn't link to the resolution or the affirmative value criteria are arbitrary rather than necessary to the value, then serious doubt can be cast on the Affirmative's claims.

*Are the results or outcomes the Affirmative claims actually* ***good/bad****?* For example, if the Affirmative argues that isolating ourselves from foreign alliances would increase national security by decreasing our obligations to defend foreign allies, the Negative could argue that it would actually decrease our national security leaving us without allies when our enemies attack.

*Is the Affirmative's* ***value actually supported*** *on the affirmative side of the resolution?* For example:

**An affirmative “freedom” case:** “If the United States valued isolationism more highly we would cut ties with the United Nations and thus be able to decide things for ourselves. This freedom to make decisions would maximize our military’s ability to reach full potential, without being blocked by other nations. Therefore isolationism would increase our government’s freedom to make decisions concerning our military to maximize our security.”

**The Negative rejoinder:** “Freedom for the government is not the same as freedom for the people. Without isolationist policies, the people would be free to make their own decisions about who to trade with and how much to charge for goods. Therefore freedom is actually better supported on the negative side of the resolution.”

*Are the Affirmative's claims* ***relevant*** *to the case?* If an Affirmative argues that isolationism should be more highly valued because the government should be paying attention to internet fraud, the Negative should argue that internet fraud is irrelevant to this discussion.

*Is the Affirmative's* ***evidence credible****?* This is a weaker response because it deflects the debate from the value clash to secondary issues. It attacks only the proof or warrant, but not the affirmative argument itself. Still, if the affirmative is quoting the American Medical Association on isolationism, it would be worth asking why a physician would be a credible expert on foreign policy issues.

Policy-Model Negative (Flex-Neg)

Sometimes an advanced debater will take the direct refutation to the ultimate range. This strategy is not for the faint-hearted. Essentially, the debater approaches research and case writing like his policy debate counterpart. After researching a variety of the strongest affirmative cases, the debater organizes his arguments and evidence, and then indexes them against each of those strong affirmative cases on separate sheets or note cards. Just like the policy debater, the Lincoln-Douglas Negative refutations can be taken out one by one and organized into a case uniquely fitted to answer the Affirmative presented.

So, the Negative Index, or the tabs that organize your note cards, could look something like this:

*Human Life*

*Justice*

*Stability*

*Constitution*

If, for instance, the Affirmative chose the value of the Duty of Government, we would look at the tabbed card for Duty of Government to see a numbered list of arguments that could be made by the Affirmative to support that value.

**Duty of Government *(possible affirmative claims)***

1. The duties of government are: to protect its citizens from foreign enemies and to administer justice.
2. The duty of government extends only to the citizens under its jurisdiction.

Most likely, one or more of these arguments will be made by the Affirmative. As the argument is being made in the debate round, the Negative would look for the sheet or card bearing the number for that argument to find his negative rebuttal to that claim.

**Affirmative Claim 1: *The duties of government are: to protect its citizens from foreign enemies and to administer justice.***

**Negative Rebuttal A**

No, the Duty of Government is to protect and promote the liberty of its citizens. Protectionist policies restrict the liberty of citizens to choose their trading partners and to set their own prices. Therefore isolationism does not promote liberty best, and should not be more highly valued.

**Negative Rebuttal B**

No, our Declaration of Independence details the Duties of Government quite differently:

“*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...”*

Because these rights are God-given, they transcend national boundaries. It is the duty of government to see to it that God-given benefits are not impeded by governments of men. Therefore, isolationism is already overvalued.

The negative debater who uses the Policy-Model technique must be able to assemble a complete case in the three minutes prep time allowed, and must be very confident within the time constraints imposed by the speeches. Otherwise, time may run out before the debater has completed his arguments. This is difficult to do, but can be done.

More advanced debaters will find this a highly refined tool for crafting a response that can fit the affirmative challenge like a glove. This strategy can provide for some spectacular clashes, but be sure you know what you are doing. Unless you are very confident in your brainstorming possible Affirmative positions, Flex-Neg can leave you panicked in the middle of a round with nothing to say. And unless you are very skilled at time management, you will leave out important sections of your burden. An inept Flex-Neg looks like you just didn't care enough to do the research on the other side of the question.

Negating by Counter-Value

Simple refutation argues only that the Affirmative cannot be right or best. Another strategy is to emphasize the differences between the affirmative and negative values, asserting that not only is the Affirmative wrong, but also that the Negative's value is prior to or better than the Affirmative's value. Very often the negative strategy is a combination of refutation and counter-value. This combination of strategies is more satisfying to a judge, because it not only shows what we must not do, but gives a positive alternative as well.

The Negative will be most successful at this by articulating the clash between his case's value and the value of the affirmative. For example, a common affirmative value may be *justice* to uphold the resolution. The negative case, that of *pragmatism*, can argue that justice is only an idealistic dream if it is not fitted to the specific situation. Therefore, the judge could decide to go with the Negative for pragmatic reasons.

This does not mean that the Negative needs to throw out any loyalty to the affirmative's value. Negative debaters, don't be pushed into this corner! Just because you value pragmatism does not mean you spurn justice. The Affirmative may try to get you to assert that justice is not worthy to be valued. Deny this wholeheartedly—and deny this no matter what value you are countering—because you need not be pushed into this rhetorically difficult position.

Negating on Value Balance

Rarer is the tactic of arguing that the negative value must balance the affirmative value in order to achieve the greater good. This approach focuses on the interdependence of the two values. It goes a step further than simply saying that the two values are equal; it argues that neither value has meaningful application in the real world without the other.

Take the example of faith (affirmative) and freedom of conscience (negative). The affirmative team will be arguing that faith is the paramount value. The negative strategy would be to argue that faith doesn't work without freedom of conscience. Valuing faith without the criterion of freedom of conscience can lead to a failure of all the advantages of faith, and the Negative can come up with many examples to show this.

This season, crafting a balanced Negative will have extra pitfalls. Because the resolution only specifies one object (Isolationism) to be evaluated, any balance arguments will have to relate to the values the two debaters in the round expound. It will be easier for the debate to derail on ideals that don’t connect with the resolution even though they might connect with the values.

Safari Guide Trail-Marker

(Classroom Instructions)

A. Begin by hearing each student’s Affirmative case. Test each one with questions. Recommend revisions. Remember commentators need to give both a positive comment and a suggestion for improvements.

B. Discuss the chapter.

1. What is the difference between a negative philosophy and a negative strategy?
2. When will counter-definitions be needed in a debate round? Are you prepared for such situations for your Affirmative case?
3. Test the Affirmative cases you’ve just heard with the *negation by direct refutation* questions.
4. The Affirmative team may try to get the negative team to refute the affirmative value completely when countering the value. What corner should the Negative avoid being pushed into, and why?
5. How is negating on value balance a persuasive negative argument? How can it be seen as weaker or stronger than the other positions under the current resolution?
6. Why is the policy model is the most difficult of the negative positions?
7. In a debate group or as a family project, brainstorm the negative positions on the resolution. List the good reasons to negate the resolution.

C. Assign the homework.

Scouting the Route: Developing a Negative Case

(Chapter Homework)

1. Following your brainstorming session, develop a negative outline. Which philosophies and strategies do you feel will be most effective in the upcoming debate rounds?
2. Draft a negative case.
3. Read the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Challenge! The Art of Cross-Examination

Once a debater has charted a journey for the judge, it is his opponent's job to challenge the charted path. Is the map to scale? Is that really the destination we want? Does this road actually go there? Did you mention the snake-infested swamp along the way?

Cross-examination is a progression of questions designed to clarify, probe possible weaknesses and prompt admissions of faulty logic, irrelevance, overstatement, etc. It is not a willy-nilly collection of questions to fill three minutes. And while cross-examination is meant to focus on the points of conflict for the judge, it must never end up as a shouting match.

In the NCFCA, cross-examination protocol requires the debaters to stand side-by-side, facing the judge rather than each other. In normal conversation, eye contact with the person you are speaking with is good manners. In debate, courtesy is expressed by a verbal greeting between the debaters, and ultimate courtesy to the judge by making eye contact with him or her. This face-front posture helps keep emotional outbursts to a minimum and reminds debaters whom they must impress: the judge. Just as in everyday life, we are not primarily contending with our fellow men; we are performing before the heavenly Judge, who alone weighs our deeds.

If your opponent is rude, smile for the judge and be courteous. This will not only infuriate an opponent who would like to enrage you, but will also highlight for the judge the other guy's rudeness. This is similar to Proverbs 25:22, "In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you." Your upset opponent will lose speaker points, and you will win the judge's respect.

Preparing Your Challenge

When debaters rise to give cross-ex, it all looks so impromptu; but in fact, the core of cross-examination should be prepared and skeletally scripted long before the debate begins.

How? First, you need the mind-set that you will only ask questions that will advance your case. This means that you will avoid asking questions that allow your opponent extra time to make his case on your valuable cross-ex time. It also means that you will ***leave to the end of your cross-ex time questions that merely fill in your flow***. If you need to fill in something critical, wait until the last 15-20 seconds, and then ask your fill-in questions. You will run out of time before your opponent can answer. So you will finish with something like this: *"I see we are nearly out of time. Please try to clarify that point in your next speech."* That way, your opponent must take *his* valuable rebuttal time to make his point clear, rather than *your* valuable cross-ex time.

Before the Debate

Prepare for cross-ex much the same way as you prepare for rebuttals. You will be preparing a series of cards, each containing a line of questioning that leads to a point you want to make in your speeches. Your questions should make points both bringing out problems in your opponent's case and supporting your own case. Never ask questions just to fill time.

Bolster your own arguments

First, study your own case. What are the points of your case, with which everyone would generally agree? If you can get your opponent to testify to the reasonableness of those points, it will strengthen your position. Write that point down on the top of your card, like a tag line on an evidence card. These are the admissions you want your opponent to make at the end of your line of questioning. Then develop a set of questions leading up to these points. Structure the questions to have either yes-or-no answers or very limited scope answers. Word them so that your opponent will have to answer the way you want, or risk looking uncooperative and silly.

For example, suppose you want to argue in your upcoming negative constructive that Isolationism would harm America’s security. It would be especially nice if your opponent would say so for you. A line of questioning supporting your intended point could look something like this:

**Admission**: *Isolationism would harm America’s security.*

**Questions:** Do you recall what country was our principal enemy in the Cold War?

And what issue or ideal was the chief point of conflict?

Did the United States consider the threat of communism a threat to our national security?

Were there any other countries involved?

Were they our friends or our enemies?

Did any of them invade our territory?

Where did most of the conflict occur?

Did we need the cooperation of other countries to defeat the Communist Bloc?

In most of these questions, your opponent doesn't even have to answer in order for the judge to get the point: *National security issues are no longer contained within our borders and cannot be brought to a close without international cooperation.* If your opponent resists these questions, she looks obstructionist, even foolish.

By the time you have finished with this line of questioning, there should be no doubt in the judge's mind that you have strengthened your position and that your opponent had to agree. When you give your negative constructive, be sure to bring up the fact that your opponent agreed with your position in cross-ex. You would sum up in your speech*, "In cross-examination, my opponent agreed that isolationist thinking would have been inadequate to meet the national security risk in the Cold War."* Then you would go on to argue that modern security threats are much more like the Cold War than they are like the attack on Pearl Harbor. Therefore isolationism would harm national security.

Prepare a challenge for opponents

Next, look at the strong cases you are likely to face. Consider the main points of weakness in those opposing cases (see the chapters on alternative case structures and rebuttals for honing in on those weaknesses). Write these down on the tops of cross-ex cards. These will not only become the admissions in your cross-ex, but also the main points in your rebuttals. Then, of course, write a series of progressive questions leading up to that admission.

Do not try to get your opponent to agree with your major argument *as such*, or to make her agree to destroy her own major argument. You will have to circle around it with his agreement on the supporting premises.

Imagine you face a negative case which claims that the United States has a moral imperative to stand up for the oppressed everywhere. Your line of questioning might run something like this:

**Admission:** *Intervening everywhere in favor of the oppressed violates the ethical standards expressed in our law.*

**Questions:** You maintain that the United States has a moral imperative to support the same ethical standards in the world that it enforces within its own borders. Correct?

Would those ethical standards be embodied in our law?

Would you consider our Constitution to be a part of our law?

Would it be a good expression of our ethical standards?

According to the Constitution, where may our government enforce those ethical standards?

You will have to wait for your rebuttal to be able to draw the conclusion that since your opponent agrees with each of those points, she really has little ground to disagree with your major premise: *"Intervening everywhere in favor of the oppressed violates the ethical standards expressed in our law."* It is like drawing a dot-to-dot picture. Your questions are the dots; then in your rebuttal you draw the lines and posit that your opponent really has admitted there is a picture there.

The Primrose Path: Clarify, Probe, Prompt Admission

A line of questioning has a specific route. You are going to lead your opponent down this primrose path to the admission she doesn't want to make, but which, by the time you get there, should be unavoidable.

Start with **clarification** questions. The purpose of clarification questions is *not* to fill in your flow. The purpose is to start from something we all agree was in the case presented, and to springboard from there to some flaw in that case. You want to connect your challenge directly to an argument in your opponent's case. You might start with a question as innocent as, *"So, your definition for Justice was basically, ‘giving each man his due, right?"* Notice that this question doesn't allow for a restatement of your opponent's definition in his own terms.

You may suspect an argument is not well formed in your opponent's mind, so your clarification question could ask for a more succinct statement of that argument. *"Would you summarize your contention #2 in one sentence?"* The danger of this question is that your opponent may try to go on and on. Your rejoinder in that case is: *"I see you can't give us a clear, simple statement of that point."* In your rebuttal you would want to exploit that lack of clarity as a lack of coherence.

Once you have asked a clarifying question, don't let it drop there. Develop a line of resistive reasoning—a few **probing** questions—that will begin to expose a problem for your opponent's case. Take the following example:

*YOU: So, your definition for Justice was basically, ‘The fair and proper administration of laws, right?*

*OPPONENT: Right.*

*YOU: So when the United States operates in the context of another country, whose laws should we administer properly? Ours or theirs?*

*OPPONENT: Ummm…*

As you can see, an affirmative debater is in a bit of trouble with this definition. (You probably won't actually get an "ummm" out of your opponent, but you can cut in on a pregnant pause with another pesky question.) Often you can stop here. You have made your point just by asking the questions—no matter what your opponent answers.

But the questioner can complete this line of resistive reasoning with a question that **prompts an admission**. This is a bit more delicate. The object is to make a clear and logical problem that will need to be addressed. You might follow up with:

*YOU: Now, in how many of your contentions is “advancing Justice” your primary evaluative tool? How about contention #1? Contention #2? etc…*

This admission question has not only pointed out that the definition of Justice is flawed for his purposes, but that it is central to your opponent's whole case. If that definition is untenable, his whole case falls.

Here is where the greatest temptation of cross-ex comes in. *You must* ***not*** *ask* that last question: *"So, your whole case essentially crumbles since the definition of your key term is flawed, doesn't it?"* You'll never get him to admit it. And you'll look predatory.

The best course of action is to employ the **courtesy disengage**. A courtesy disengage allows your red-faced opponent to escape having to verbally dismantle his own case, especially when the flaws have already been displayed during your probing questions. The judge will have seen that there is trouble for the constructive case and will be more impressed by your willingness to forego the *coup de grace* than by your ability to move in for the kill. Remember, your goal is to convince the judge, not to persuade or to humiliate your opponent. The rebuttal is the time to draw that devastating conclusion to your line of questioning.

A disengage ending to the line of questioning above would be:

*I see. Now moving on…*

Or simply,

*Thank you.*

Practice Makes Perfect

Practice your cross-ex ahead of time. Roswell, New Mexico District Attorney, Tom Dow, advises, "Practice and prepare, but prepare to be surprised. Rarely will you get exactly what you scripted out of a 'hostile witness' like your debate opponent. Keep your questions as short as possible. Build your wall with a lot of little bricks, so that the ultimate size and purpose of the wall is concealed for as long as possible."

At first, read the questions from your cards. As you become more comfortable with the flow of the questioning, arrange your cards so that you only see the Admission Line at the top and improvise the questions leading up to it. Add only one additional fact in each question, so that you have a very clear step-by-step progression in the direction you wish to lead your opponent.

As you improvise, be careful not to personalize your questions against your opponent. Practice using a neutral or friendly tone of voice, and polite rather than emotionally charged vocabulary. Use the address: "the Affirmative" or "my opponent" or "the negative contention was." Don't use: "She said" or "You said." In the context of cross-ex, this is extremely personal. It makes your substantial disagreement on the issue look like a personal vendetta. In cross-ex, you have a unique opportunity to entice the judge to like you, as well as to lay the groundwork for a strong rebuttal. Don't waste it with a personalized attack or a sarcastic tone of voice.

Now you are ready to try this out against a real opponent.

During the Debate

Plan your cross-ex time before the debate, being ready to make adjustments as you listen to your opponent's case. First, pull out two Admission Line cards that make your case look good. Next, plan to find two or three Admission Line arguments against your opponent's case as you flow his case. Finally, add one Admission Line in your own favor for reserve after you see which arguments will most need bolstering after your opponent's constructive.

Identify your opponent's weak points as you flow. Listening carefully is the critical thing. Question the case as it unfolds. Ask:

* Are the definitions unequivocal and neutral? Or do they eliminate the possibility of reasonable opposition? Could they be interpreted in several ways?
* Are the values adequately explained and intrinsically linked to the resolution? When you have achieved the value, where does it get you? Is the value relevant to the question? Does the value really give the benefit claimed?
* Are the criteria necessary and sufficient to produce or to measure the value?
* Does the resolutional analysis give a clear summary of the thesis of the constructive case, and does that thesis provide a good and fair field for discussion? Does the thesis address the entire resolution or does it leave out a section?
* Are the contentions relevant to the topic? Are they necessary, given the values? Given the resolution?
* Are the contentions each distinct? Or do they all make essentially the same argument?
* Are there actual arguments or only unsupported claims?
* Are the arguments valid? Are they linked logically to the resolution and the values? Do they display a coherent philosophical position?
* Do the arguments actually make a difference? Are they significant and relevant?
* Are the examples drawn from the United States, from foreign policy and international trade issues? Or are they from foreign countries or philosophical questions that have nothing to do with the obligations of nations to one another?
* Are the sources and authorities credible? Is the evidence drawn from a variety of sources?
* Is the case satisfying in common sense terms?
* Are there unspoken presumptions and presuppositions, which underlie the case? Are there unwanted repercussions that could flow from the case?

As you listen to your opponent's case critically, you will find some lines of questioning that will help you to explore and to point out some of the weaknesses in the case. Hopefully, you will have anticipated many of them in your cross-ex preparation before the debate. Pull out the Admissions Lines you have already practiced, which apply to the case at hand. If you need to, draft new Admission Lines during his case. You won't have to write out the whole series of questions, only the admission to which you wish to lead.

Informal Logical Fallacies

Informal fallacies result from inaccurate use of language. Finding an informal fallacy does not necessarily mean that the claim is untrue, but it does mean that the argument is sloppily made and less likely to be true. Where an informal fallacy has been allowed to creep in, other fuzzy thinking is likely to cluster around. Informal fallacies will often give you the entering wedge to take apart a whole line of reasoning. It is usually not enough simply to identify the fallacy; you will want to show how it brings the whole argument into question. And, of course, the best time to begin is in cross-examination when you can innocently assert that you don't *understand* what your opponent means by his ambiguous language, and ask for clarification.

Slippery slope

Definition: Asserting that one event will necessarily lead to a chain of events.

Example: *If we allow Government to restrict even one civil right, soon we'll be living in a dictatorship.*

Similar fallacy: *If we do not stop the snowball now, it will turn into a roaring avalanche that will destroy the mountain town.*

Fallacy of Composition

Definition: Imparting the qualities of the parts to the whole. Equating the parts to the whole.

Example: *Individual are morally obligated to intervene when he sees one man beating up another, therefore nations must intervene when they see other nations beating up their people.*

Similar fallacy: *All dogs are animals. People are animals. Therefore people are dogs.*

Fallacy of Division

Definition: Imparting the qualities of the combination or intersection of several sets to each of the parts.

Example: *The UN has world peace as its goal. Therefore, the policies of the UN bring about world peace.*

Similar fallacy: *Sodium Chloride is harmless table salt. Therefore, sodium and chloride are safe to eat.*

Circular reasoning (Begging the question or petitio principii)

Definition: Presuming what you are trying to prove, or using the conclusion as a premise in the argument.

Example: *National security is what makes a nation secure.*

Similar example: *We can believe the Bible because Scripture says it is true.*

Equivocation/Amphibology

Definition: Using a word (equivocation) or phrase (amphibology) in more than one sense in the same argument.

Example: *My opponent claims that self-government will abolish the necessity for state control over civil rights. But surely self-government is what democracy is all about.*

Similar example: "*We must all hang together or most assuredly we will all hang separately"* (Ben Franklin on signing the Declaration of Independence).

Appeal ad populum (to the crowd)

Definition: Using popularity or general acceptance of a statement as a reason for accepting it as true.

Example: *Everyone knows that the democracy is the best form of government.*

Similar example: *We must act because everyone expects us to.*

Appeal ad misericordiam (to pity)

Definition: Using the circumstances that would move a listener to pity as a reason for accepting an argument.

Example: *People in foreign countries are impoverished and oppressed by tyrants. Therefore, we must intervene to rescue them.*

Similar example*: If you don't marry me, I can't go on*.

Appeal ad hominem (to the man)

Definition: Appealing to someone's status or circumstances as a reason for accepting an argument, or impugning the motives of your opponent (poisoning the well)

Example: *Of course you're in favor of monarchy. You just want to be the next king.*

Similar example: *You are a jerk, and that is why your opinion is wrong.*

Appeal to authority

Definition: Appealing to the status of someone who advocates your position regardless of his expertise in the field under debate

Example: *All the nations in the UN believe that internationalism is the answer to world hunger. One hundred and fifty nations’ upper classes couldn’t be wrong.*

Similar example: *If the King is wearing no clothes, it must be the right thing.*

Tu quoque (you're another)

Definition: Deflecting an argument by equating your opponent's flaws to those he points out in you.

Example: *My opponent claims that my case won’t solve terrorism, but that’s not as bad as promoting anarchy like his case does.*

Similar example: *You claim I'm lazy, but I am not as lazy as you.*

Non sequitur (accident)

Definition: Drawing a conclusion completely unrelated to the premises.

Example: *Arnold Schwartznegger was able to win the Governor’s election in California, therefore illegal immigration must be stopped.*

Similar example: *It is cold outside, so we should go sledding.*

Straw man

Definition: Carving the heart out of an argument and attacking the shell.

Example: *My opponent maintains that we must respect the sovereignty of other nations. But I think supporting Taliban-style oppression of women is unwise and unjust.*

Similar Example: *We can't abolish the Dept. of Education, because we must support public education. We must see to it that our children get a good education.*

False dilemma

Definition: Offering two equally distasteful alternatives as if they were the only choices there are.

Example: *Either we have to intervene in the Middle East or we are isolationists.*

Similar example: *We're darned if we do and we're darned if we don't.*

Appeal ad baculum (to force)

Definition: To require action with threat of force.

Example: *If you don’t accept democracy, we’ll bomb your capital.*

Similar example: *He'll pay my fee, or I'll beat him up.*

Complex question

Definition: Asking more than one thing at a time.

Example: *Would everyone have to be just like you in order for you to feel safe?*

Similar Example: *Have you stopped beating your wife?*

Receiving Cross-Examination

How can you use cross-examination to your advantage even when you're on the receiving end? First, don't panic! Look calm. Answer confidently. Smile at the judge. If your questioner is rude or pushy, thank God and smile some more, because your questioner will be losing credibility with every inflammatory word. *Cheerful confidence* no matter what gets thrown your way is a nearly insuperable obstacle to your questioner.

Second, if you have a clarifying remark to add to a simple yes-or-no answer, be sure to *comment first* and answer yes-or-no last. This will frustrate a questioner's effort to lead you meekly down his primrose path.

If your questioner should make the mistake of asking an open-ended question, be sure to make the most of the opportunity to use his three minutes to *extend your explanations* of how wonderful your case is at his point of questioning. However, don't keep talking if your opponent politely interrupts you—as she should.

Answer with a dash of *humor*. If you can add a humorous flair to an answer, you have seized a measure of control. The judge knows you are on the hot seat, but you are so far from feeling threatened, you are actually making light of these jabs at your case.

Finally, *don't avoid or obstruct* a line of questioning. If the judge feels you are uncooperative, his sympathy will swing to your opponent.

Safari Guide Trail-Marker

(Classroom Instructions)

A. Begin by hearing each student’s Negative case. Test each one with questions. Use the bulleted list in this chapter to help you. Recommend revisions. Remember commentators need to give both a positive comment and a suggestion for improvements.

B. Discuss the chapter.

1. What does NCFCA protocol require in healthy cross-examination? What would the league consider "unhealthy" cross-examination?
2. If you meet a rude opponent, how should you respond? In your club or with family members, practice such situations.
3. A strong cross-examiner may frustrate his opponent too much. When can it be courteous to disengage in the cross-examination without losing the success of the cross-examination?
4. How can informal fallacies plague a debater's case? Why is it best to raise these fallacies within the cross-examination speech of the round?

C. Practice the cross-ex techniques in the chapter.

D. Review the example fallacies given in this chapter. Imagine addressing a fallacy in a cross-examination. Incorporating the clarify-probe-admit method of questioning, bring your opponent to admit a logical fallacy.

E. Assign the homework.

Scouting the Route: Anticipating Objections, Cross-Ex

(Chapter Homework)

1. Review the clarify-probe-admit method of cross-examination. Write Admission Lines and develop lines of questioning against arguments you’ve heard in the cases in your club, or against cases in this book.
2. Write Admission Lines and develop lines of questioning against arguments in *your own* cases.
3. Revise and improve your Negative case.
4. Read the next chapter.

Chapter 6

Champion! Rebuttals

The final aspect of the debate is the rebuttal. This is the section in which you summarize the differences between your path/destination and your opponent's, and draw the judges' attention to the great superiority of your view. Here you can champion your case. You will not be re-drawing the map, but selling the cruise.

Dr. Chris Leland of Focus on the Family's Worldview Institute, a former collegiate debater and award-winning coach, maintains that the most challenging aspect of Lincoln-Douglas debate is focusing on the clash of values. Because debaters on both sides usually present fully formed, pre-fabricated constructive cases, sometimes the values advocated don't readily conflict.

"So often the two cases pass like ships in the night without actually connecting on value clash at all," Leland says. "It is the debaters' job, particularly in the rebuttals, to help the judge discern exactly how these values would come into conflict."

In order to champion your case properly, you will need a CAR:

* Crystallize conflicts
* Accentuate advantages
* Rivet the resolution

It is very important to remember that nothing can be added to either constructive case during the rebuttals. The main function of rebuttals is to analyze and compare the cases, not to change them. So the rule is *not* "no new arguments in rebuttals," but "no changing the constructives in rebuttals."

You will still use the classic rhetorical form: introduction, body and conclusion. But in rebuttals you will shift to addressing the *constructive cases* rather than addressing the *resolution* directly. Your introduction should summarize your intent in your rebuttal. For instance:

*“Today’s debate turns on the question: Can the historic ideal of isolationism stand up to the challenges of a modern world of instant communication, global economy and international terrorism? Or is isolationism obsolete?”*

Without further ado, move directly to the body of your rebuttal.

Crystallize conflicts

Time constraints in rebuttals mean that debaters must summarize arguments or group similar arguments together for refutation. You will not have enough time to follow the flow point-by-point. You will have to choose two or three key issues on which you and your opponent disagree, and focus on those. The cross-examinations will already have revealed the arguments, which (you hope to show) are weaker in your opponent's case. When you have identified these, you will choose two or three of the strongest to use as refutable points in the body of the rebuttal. Cluster these arguments so that you can focus in on the points that are winnable.

The best rebuttals will not simply choose among the whole list of your opponent's arguments. The best ones will collapse several arguments under one heading and address them all together. This year’s debates will tend to center on the ***standards the debaters choose as a means of evaluating isolationism.*** Which is a better standard? Which most clearly shows whether isolationism is valued correctly?

Clearly articulate the differences between your argument and your opponent's. The object here is ***not*** to find common ground, as it would be in a real-life dispute in which you were seeking reconciliation. The object is to clarify the issues on which your cases divide. For instance:

*“My opponent maintains that only isolationism can preserve the rights that national sovereignty protects. However, in short, my arguments have demonstrated that not only is isolationism ineffective to protect national interests in the modern world, but also that it is immoral in removing citizens’ rights to trade and to associate freely across national boundaries.”*

In the example above, the clash is crystallized by denying that the Affirmative’s criterion is the path to natural rights, and the debater turns the argument by claiming that some natural rights are actually harmed by isolationism.

Avenues of Attack

You actually have several options for refutation in this stage of the debate. The strongest is the ability to attack the **argument** itself. The next choice would be to attack the **evidence or warrant** for the argument.

Challenging an Argument

Basically, an argument can be attacked:

*1) On its relevance to the resolution.* Cox & Whitley ask, "Even if your claim is true, so what?" Are the arguments important to solving the dilemma posed in the resolution? Does the argument have a significant impact on the question the resolution asks us to solve? These challenges are applicable to every part of the case, but this is where you will particularly want to consider your opponent’s definitions and value. Ask yourself questions like these:

Does the definition unfairly skew or limit the debate? Has he defined everything that needs to be clarified?

Does the value have anything to do with the resolution? Does its criterion actually measure anything? Is the value or its implications good?

*2) On its validity.* Is the argument properly made? Does it incorporate any fallacies or contradictions? Is the argument consistent with the definitions and criteria proposed?

*3) On its commonsense appeal.* Does the argument stand up in the real world? This is where you would especially consider the examples given (or not given). Do they actually show what that argument claims? Would it actually work? Has it worked ever in the past?

Challenging a Warrant

The warrant or proof for an argument can also be attacked. The debaters should not rule out attacking the warrant based on…

*1) …its relevance to the argument.* Does it actually support the argument or does it contradict the argument, or does it even address the same idea?

*2) …the credibility of its source.* Who is the author of this evidence, and are they qualified to have a significant opinion?

*3) …the credibility of its facts.* Could that really be true? How were these statistics compiled? Can they be verified?

*4) …its connection to the resolution.* Again, does it actually address what we should be debating? Does the analogy fit?

Obviously, other attacks can be conceived, but these are your major avenues. By far the most satisfying debate comes in concentrating on the arguments themselves. Debates about the warrants for arguments often descend into petty bickering over the qualifications of a single piece of evidence. Do your best to preempt and/or short-circuit these by having evidence from several sources for the same argument. That way your response to any attack on the credibility of your source would be simply, "*Oh, I have several other pieces of evidence on that point, if you are unsatisfied with that source. Let me read you this one…*" Attack derailed. Do not allow debates about evidence to dominate your rebuttals.

Accentuate advantages

Now you need to press your claims by championing what has been effective in your arguments. Continuing the clash above, accentuating the advantages might sound like this:

*“Since isolationist and protectionist policies actually interfere with the natural right of citizens, if we are to value and protect natural rights, we will not elevate isolationism. Natural rights are really only protected on the negative side of the resolution.”*

The most devastating advantage press of all is called a ‘***turn***’. This is a ninja sort of strategy that seizes everything your *opponent* argued well and turns it into a weapon for your side. The argument we have been developing above is a turn. In this example, the Negative has seized the criterion of protecting natural rights and has agreed (tacitly) that it is a good standard by which to measure the value of isolationism, but she has argued that a non-isolationist worldview does it better. All of the Affirmative’s great rhetoric about natural rights becomes an advantage to the Negative case, while this opponent will have to scramble to show why democracy is best only in his context or will have to devalue his own value.

These are great arguments, but if you stop here, you have not decisively silenced the opposing claims. You must show how your logical juggernaut specifically relates to the resolution. This will be particularly important, since you will be most effective when you make an appeal based on a value *from outside the resolution*, as you will need to do under this resolution. You must…

Rivet the resolution

*“Even if we grant that by affirming the resolution we might protect some natural rights, we don’t have enough. By negating the resolution, we actually are able to protect all natural rights. By negating the resolution, we uphold an ethical and an effective standard, which the Affirmative cannot claim. Therefore, the greater moral imperative lies in refusing to value isolationism more highly than we do.”*

This is really the coup de grace for that negative argument. It doesn't matter how many little points you score, casting doubt on a source, claiming victory on logical reasoning, etc. Unless your victories directly impact the resolution, they are just hot air. Without this last statement, the judge could be unclear about what the implications of your refutation are. With it there is no question, and it will be very difficult for your opponent to wiggle out of this corner.

Voting Issues (“Voters”)

By Chloe Anderson

Many advanced debaters organize their rebuttals around a few summary statements called voting issues or voters. The technique is used to help focus those few precious minutes, especially in the Affirmative’s last rebuttal when time is of the essence.

Take the top three or four clash issues of the debate and show how your position ‘wins,’ spending about a minute on each argument. Less than that and your reasons become assertions, more than that and you’re out of time. Make sure there’s a clear (short) tagline to each of your voters so that the judge is sure of the point you were trying to make. These will need to be the sharpest, shortest sound-bite tag lines in your whole debate. The judge should be able to write just three or four words on her flow to summarize the whole argument.

Negative voters are usually presented in the last three minutes of the rebuttal after all the loose ends of the debate have been answered. Many Affirmative speakers choose to spend their entire last rebuttal on the voting issues. Go down point-by-point, first refuting the voters that the Negative argued and then presenting an affirmative voter against each negative voter.

As the Affirmative, be sure that you address all the Negative’s voters because those are the issues that the judge will probably be deciding the round on. If you didn’t address the fact that the Negative’s vacation destination has a pool and you simply tell us that your destination has mountains there’s no real clash and no real refutation.

Safari Guide Trail-Marker

(Classroom Instructions)

A. Begin by discussing the chapter.

1. How are the rebuttals in a value debate round different from the constructive cases?
2. "No new arguments in the rebuttals" is not the rule in value debate. What, more specifically, is not allowed in the rebuttals?
3. Once an argument is presented by your opponent, in what ways can you challenge it? How can you weave these challenges into the body of your rebuttal?
4. What is a ‘voter’ and how is it used?

B. Practice the rebuttal techniques in the chapter.

1. Start by having a student read his/her Affirmative case. Flow the arguments. Have another student stand up afterwards and give a rebuttal against the first argument. Have another try a rebuttal against the second, and so on until you have covered the whole case.
2. Have another student summarize each of the rebuttals into 3 or 4 “voters”. Give them sound-bite sized tag lines.
3. Then have someone read their Negative case and do the same.
4. Make sure that every student has a chance to try giving a rebuttal, and cover as many cases as you can.

C. Assign the homework.

Scouting the Route: Anticipating Objections, Crafting Rebuttals

(Chapter Homework)

1. Consider the three requirements for a rebuttal speech given at the beginning of the chapter. Thinking objectively, write a fair rebuttal against either your affirmative or negative case, or both.
2. Taking the rebuttal speech you prepared in question 2, write another rebuttal rebutting this first rebuttal. Consider this preparation for a possible 2R.
3. Revise and improve your Negative case.
4. Read the next chapter.

Chapter 7

Checkpoints for Destination Victory

Now you’re ready to put it all together! You’ve learned to construct each of the pieces of a debate. You are ready to start your engine for your first real safari. There are a few things you’ll still need in order to make that first trip profitable and enjoyable.

There are three key checkpoints in convincing the judge that your trek is better than the other guy’s, and winning the round: proper flowing of the debate, taking up the responsibilities of each speech properly, and following through with your own burdens of proof or presumption in the round.

Flowing a Value Debate

Flowsheeting is paramount in proper debate. It is the specialized note-taking technique debaters must develop to keep track of the development of the arguments presented in each round. Without proper flowing of arguments, debaters become potshot dissenters who get to the bottom of nothing. "Going without the flow" is like trekking into the wilderness without taking your bearings. You'll be lost in space.

Because it is *imperative* that debaters take proper notes during a debate round, Training Minds Ministry publishes a flowsheet method that is a simple and effective form of flowing a round. The Lincoln-Douglas Debate Flowsheets are designed specifically for the demands of the LD debaters. Features include:

* Coil binder for easy access during the debate round
* Cardboard backing for sturdiness during cross-examination
* Date and ownership label to help keep your flowsheets orderly

Training Minds Flowsheets™ gives the debaters the opportunity to keep a history of flows to retrieve from throughout the year. What is especially nice is the ability for coaches and parents to sit with a debater or the team to review rounds together, pointing out the progress of student flows.

Figure 6.1 shows the flexibility of flowing with the Training Minds Flowsheets™. Notice the arrows the show the flow of arguments through the eight speeches of the debate round.

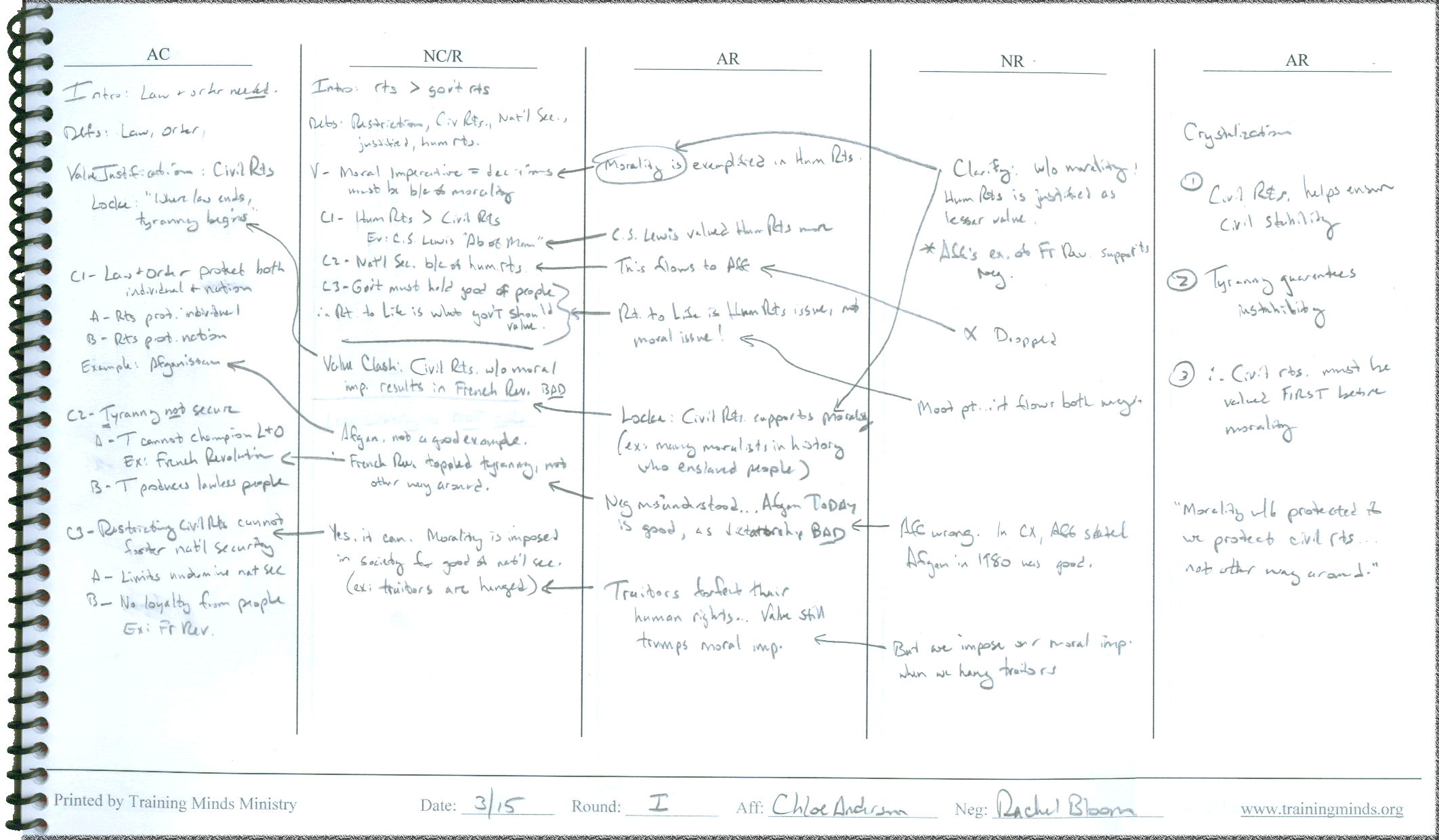


Figure 6.1   
Training Minds Flowsheets™   
(Lincoln-Douglas)

Proper flowsheeting is important for the judge and the debater to keep the arguments flowing logically and well. Make no mistake: flowing is the key to proper argumentation, and the debater who is able to flow arguments is the one who wins arguments. Nothing is more frustrating than listening to a debate that really doesn't answer any of the doubts raised, and flowing—following the arguments—is the way to keep up with the quest for truth.

Outside the round, your flowsheet will become your tool for reviewing the cases you meet in club and out. During a debate, you have very limited time to hear, process and respond to the arguments presented. Looking at your flowsheet after the debate, you will have as much time as you want to craft responses to the case you flowed and cases like it. It is your chart for future success.

Of course, we recommend Training Minds Flowsheets™, but there are many methods of flowing a value debate round. Two that have worked well for value debaters are listed below.

Traditional Flowing

Traditional Flowing resembles the policy debate flowsheet with respect to the time categories. Five columns representing the five speeches are divided with vertical lines and each column is headed with the proper abbreviation.

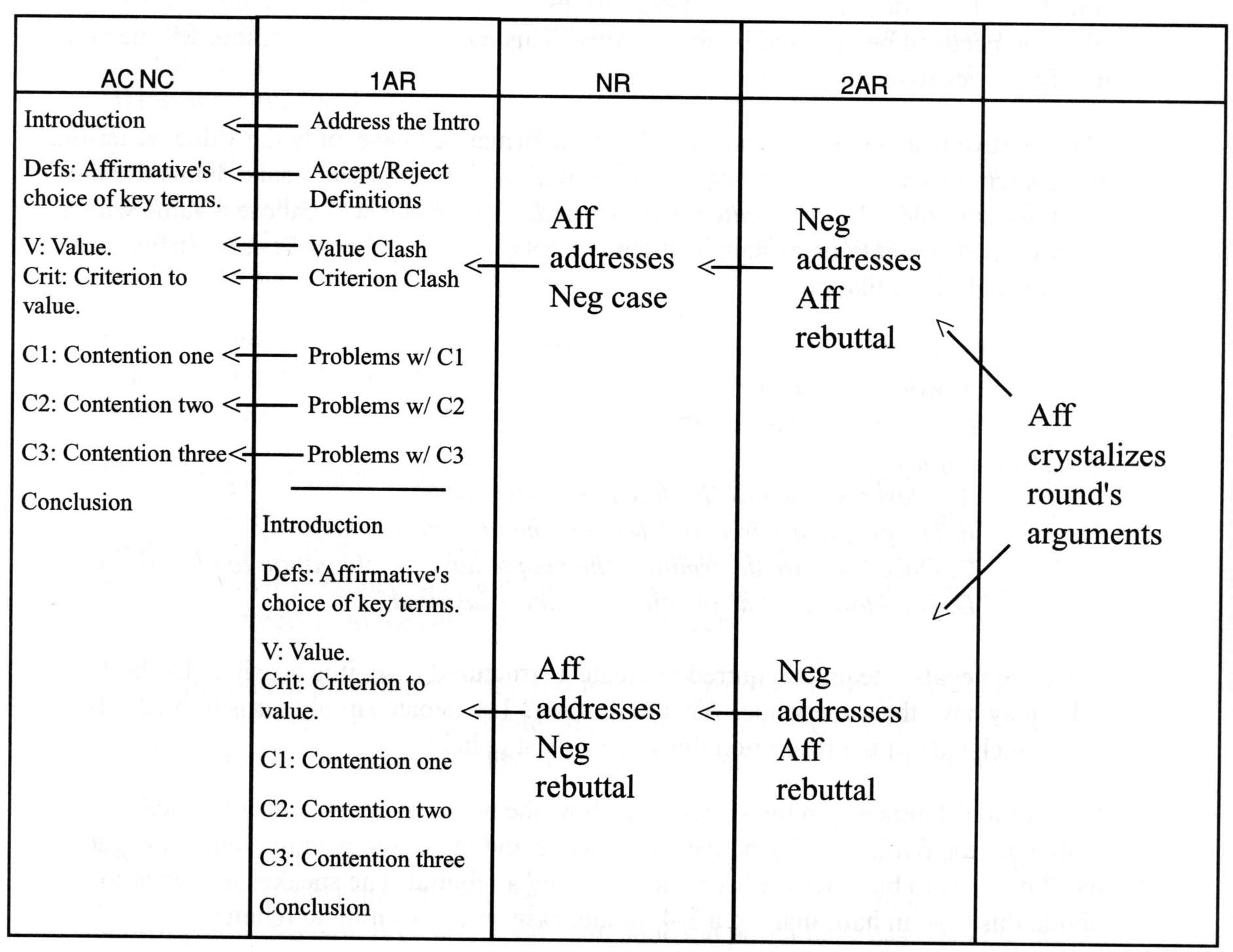


Figure 1

In Figure 1, you will see how the 40-minute round can be easily fit into five columns. In the AC, the affirmative makes his or her case. As you flow, you should leave about half of the column empty to make room for the NC. In the NC, which is the speech and rebuttal, the negative case is recorded at the bottom to make room for the rebuttal at the top. The arguments flow through the next two speeches, and the affirmative closes with crystallization.

Since the Lincoln-Douglas debate round is much shorter than the policy round, and because the round is not weighted with extensive evidence or rapid-fire delivery, the debater and judge can be more flexible in constructing a flowsheet. The second method provided here quarters the paper into four parts, each part representing the flow of the value clash in the round.

Figure 2 shows this. Since there are only five speeches (compared to eight in a policy round), the L-D debater can be less sequential than the policy debater. This "quartered" method of flowing gives the debater more room to scribble his or her arguments in a more abstract fashion. This may work for you.

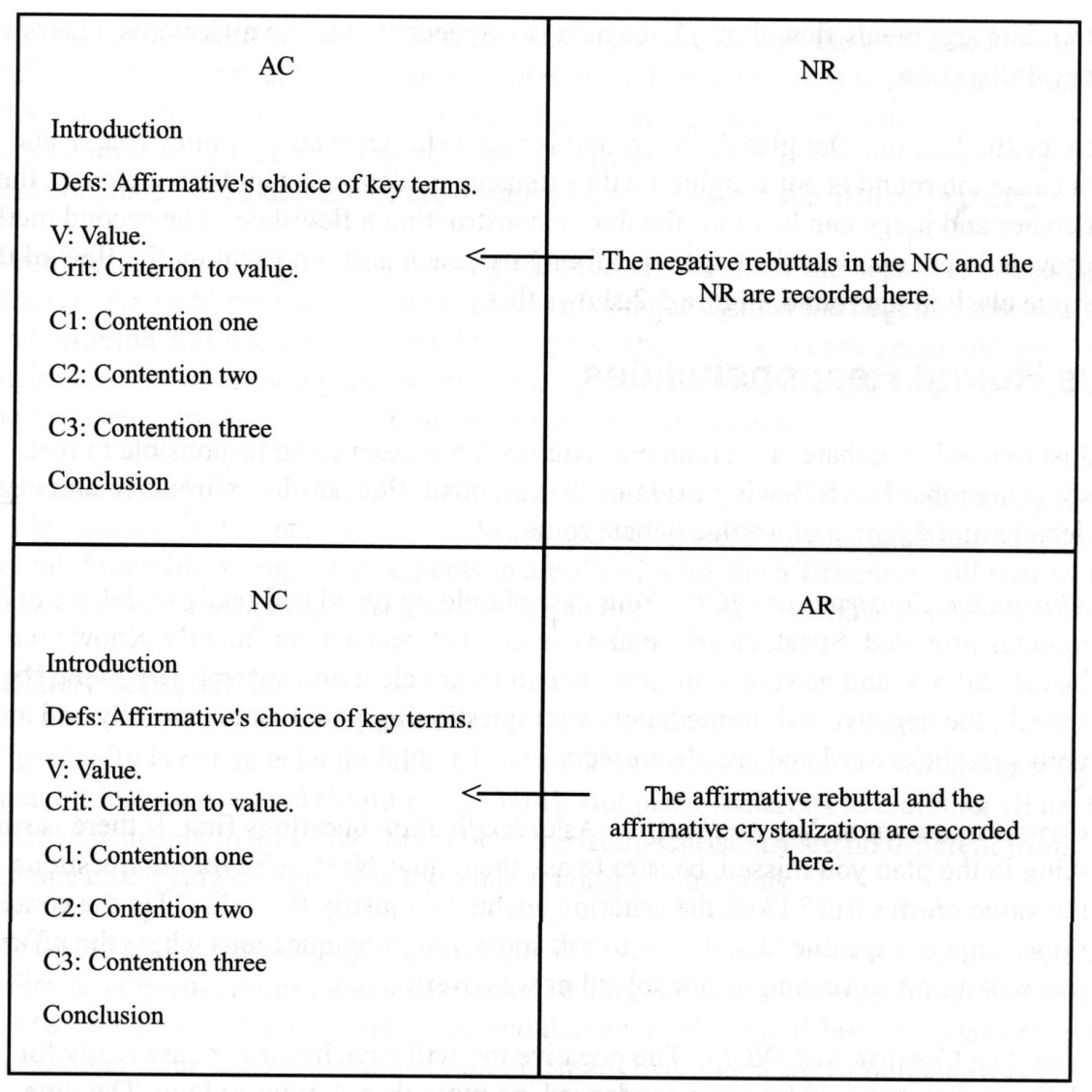


Figure 2

Let us re-emphasize: It is incredibly important to take proper notes during a debate round. Debaters will not adequately understand their opponents if they do not flow the round. A debate where one or neither side properly flows becomes a round of dropped arguments, frustrated debaters, and a confused judge. We are speaking from experience when we say this: the most common error of a debater is the failure to flow the round. So, flow the round!

Structure of the Round

The Lincoln-Douglas round consists of five speeches and two cross-examinations.

Affirmative Constructive 6 min.

Negative Cross-examination3 min.

Negative Constructive & 1st Rebuttal7 min.

Affirmative Cross-examination3 min.

Affirmative 1st Rebuttal4 min.

Negative 2nd Rebuttal6 min.

Affirmative 2nd Rebuttal3 min.

(prep time of 3 minutes allowed each debater)

Value Round Responsibilities

Just like policy debate, a tournament requires the debaters to be responsible to their speaking jobs. The following explains the responsibilities of the affirmative and negative debaters at the points of a value debate round.

*Affirmative Constructive (AC):* Your case should be typed and ready to deliver in the 6 minutes provided. Speak clearly, make eye contact and act confident. Know your case inside and out, and be sure your pronunciations are clear and correct. Following the speech, the negative will immediately start questioning you. Listen carefully and answer with straightforward and simple answers.

*Cross-examination:* Negative questions the Affirmative. Ask clarification questions first. If there is something in the case you missed, be sure to ask about it now. But better yet, make your opponent to entrench himself in a position that you wish to attack, by asking a clarification question. Next, ask probing questions. Is the value always primary? Is the claim always true? Is the criterion both necessary and sufficient to achieve or justify the value? Do the contentions support the value? Lastly, try to ask some admitting questions in which the affirmative will admit something is not solved or was overlooked. Remember: only ask questions that lead to a point you wish to make. Don't just fill up time.

*Prep time:* Each debater gets 3 minutes of preparation time per round. You may take the time after cross-ex and between rebuttals. You may allocate it however you need. Usually, the Negative takes most of her prep time right here, because she will need to plan all her major strategies for rebuttal before rising to make her first speech. Naturally, both debaters work during the prep time. The Negative has tipped her hand in Cross-Ex, so the Affirmative can begin to prepare against the attack he expects.

*Negative Constructive (NC):* The negative, too, will have his or her case ready for delivery, but it should be more condensed, no more than 4 minutes long. The time allowed is 7 minutes, but the negative must attack the affirmative's case also. This is why the negative should take at least half of his prep time before beginning this speech. Deliver the prepared case thoroughly, then using the flowsheet, begin challenging the affirmative case. First, establish the clash between the values. Second, address the criteria to the affirmative's value. Third, attack each contention of the affirmative case. And finish with a quick summary impacting your objections on the resolution.

*Cross-examination:* Affirmative questions the Negative. Much like the Negative's cross-examination, the Affirmative will ask clarification questions first, but these questions will need to reveal doubt concerning the Negative's case as well as his or her rebuttal. Probing questions, which challenge the validity of the claims made in the negative rebuttal, should follow. Try to have the Negative make admissions that can be expanded in the affirmative rebuttal. Again, have two or three points to make, and let your questions lead your opponent toward *your* conclusion.

*Prep time may be taken here.*

*Affirmative Rebuttal (1AR):* The affirmative should take half the preparation time before starting his rebuttal. In only 4 minutes, the affirmative needs to attack the negative case *and* defend his own. Work down the flow, making sure to address all the arguments. Summarizing and condensing are critical for getting through everything in such a short time. Start with the value clash, move through the criterion and contentions of the negative, and conclude with a defense of the Negative's challenges to the Affirmative case, impacting your arguments on the resolution.

*Prep time may be taken here.*

*Negative Rebuttal (NR):* This is really the second rebuttal for the Negative. The Negative needs first to address the attacks the Affirmative made against the negative case (value, criterion clashes, and contentions). The Negative then needs once again to address the affirmative case, minimizing any damaging points and pressing the winning points. Bring up the conflicts raised in the cross-examinations. Summarization is important here as well. Many judges in the league want to hear what they call “voters” in this speech. “Voters” are a list of reasons why the judge should vote for your case. These would include arguments you have won, critical points you have made which your opponent has not refuted, and spikes against possible new arguments the Affirmative may be tempted to make in his “last word” speech coming up.

*Prep time may be taken here.*

*Affirmative Rebuttal (2AR):* The affirmative has only three minutes to keep his case afloat. The best way to do this is to crystallize the main arguments of the round. The Affirmative must narrow the issues to three or four key points, each of which the Affirmative will claim to have won. Again, many judges will only vote for your case if you present “voters” in this speech. They consider the ability to crystallize the clashes in the case into three or four key claims, which you can spin to favor your case, an advanced skill and they like to reward that extra work.

Burden of Proof & Presumption in Value Debate

Policy debate addresses the status quo, and the affirmative policy team must always advocate changing it. But the philosophical presumption is against them. We all presume that nothing should be changed unless there is a problem, because change is risky. Therefore, the affirmative team in a policy debate has the burden of proof in order to overcome this presumption. The affirmative team has the responsibility to prove 1) that there is a problem big enough to warrant a change and 2) that they have a plan that will fix the problem. In a policy round, all the negative has to do is maintain that the status quo is not flawed enough to warrant a major change.

Value debate views presumption and burden of proof differently. First, value debate addresses the *resolution*, not the status quo. The Affirmative is not necessarily advocating change, but must affirm the resolution. The Negative is not necessarily defending the status quo, but must negate the resolution. At first glance, this looks like an equal burden. But recalling the discussion about creating the affirmative and negative cases, you will see that the Affirmative usually has much less leeway in crafting a case. The Affirmative is locked into the position articulated in the resolution. The Negative has the logical run of the universe outside the bounds of the resolution. That is why, even though there is no "presumption" issue in the same sense as there is in policy debate, the Affirmative is given the advantage of speaking first and last.

In value debate, both Negative and Affirmative have equal burdens of proof. Both must make a prima facie case on their own side of the resolution and prove each contention. A prima facie value case has adequately discussed both definitive and applicative issues. Nothing can simply be asserted to be true. Likewise, both Affirmative and Negative have equal burdens of rebuttal. Both have the responsibility to answer each contention of the other.

Safari Guide Trail-Marker

(Classroom Instructions)

A. Begin by discussing the chapter.

1. How does a debater ultimately win the debate round? What three things are crucial components to the winner?
2. What reasons support the fact that flowing is the paramount duty of both debaters? What do debates that do not flow look like?
3. Review the responsibilities you have for each speech in a value debate round.
4. How does value debate view "burden of proof" and "presumption" differently from policy debate?

B. Choose two debaters and run a whole debate. A parent or one of the students should keep time for the round. Everyone should flow the debate. Stop between speeches to give help and feedback. Timekeepers should stop the time while you are talking to the debaters. Sometimes it will be necessary to stop the debaters to help them over a rough patch *during* a speech. You will probably have time to do two of these in your club time.

C. Assign the homework.

Scouting the Route: Putting it Together, Practice Debates

(Chapter Homework)

1. Revise and improve your cases as needed.
2. Write out lines of questioning and rebuttal points for each of the cases you saw or participated in during class.
3. Read the next chapter.

Chapter 8

There and Back Again…

So, you’ve been there and back again. And you survived! You probably even enjoyed the scenery. Now what?

Once you’ve done your first debate, you’ll see lots of things you’ll want to change and improve. So how do you get to the next peak? Faster? With less fuel and more horsepower? Well, practice!

Practice smart!

Briefing Your Flows

Start by reviewing the flows you took during the debate you saw or did. Now, without the pressure of only three minutes to prepare, look at those arguments carefully. Now that you have virtually infinite time to consider, what would be the most effective challenges to those arguments?

Using a clean sheet of paper, make a column on the left hand side and list the value, criterion and major contentions of one case. Leave plenty of room between each item. In the column next to it, write a response or objection to each piece. Label it with the debater’s name and speaker position (Aff or Neg). This is called a brief.

The next time you meet that debater, you won’t be starting from scratch. Naturally, he will have improved his arguments, but you will have a general idea what he will be saying. So you’ll be able to pull out your rebuttals and lines of questioning, and just embellish or revise them as you flow the debate.

You will want to start a file of briefs that you can share and consult throughout the debate season. The usual etiquette for sharing briefs is that you can share what is yours or what is public. A case that has been presented at a round robin, tournament or some other multi-club function is public. A case that you helped a friend develop or that has been presented only in club is private. You shouldn’t share those private cases. And usually you only share a brief with those who will trade a case to you in return.

Debating Yourself

Next, try pitting your own Affirmative case against your own Negative case. Brief each and try clashing the two. Do it in real time, if you’re brave.

Isolate Skills

You will find that some parts of debate are easier for you than others. You don’t need to go through an entire debate just to practice your cross-ex. Use one-third to one-half of your practice time to train specific skills that elude you at first. Use the drills in the coaching section on your own to focus on the things that *you* need to improve.

Branch Out

Many of the skills you need in order to do well in debate, are featured in the NCFCA Individual Events. If you really want to succeed, branch out to try some of these events. They are:

**Original Oratory** – Informative, inspiring, persuasive or uplifting speeches written by the student who delivers them on just about any subject in just about any style except acting.

**Persuasive Speaking** – Just what you think. A student-written speech designed to persuade.

**Expository Speaking** – A student-written speech in which visual aids are a key component.

**Impromptu Speaking** – Students have 2 minutes to prepare a 5-minute speech on a topic that is drawn from an envelope on the spot.

**Extemporaneous Speaking** – A current-events impromptu. Students prepare by clipping and filing news articles. They have 30 minutes to prepare a 7-minute speech on a topic drawn on the spot. Speeches must include quotes from news sources.

**Apologetics** - Students prepare speeches on over 100 theological questions that would help students explain their faith to non-believers. Students draw one of those topics and have 4 minutes to gather thoughts and notes for a 6-minute speech.

**Humorous Interpretation** – A presentation of a humorous piece of literature using acting techniques. Emphasis is placed on making great literature come to life.

**Dramatic Interpretation** – Same as the above, except dramatic material.

**Open Interpretation** – This category allows student-written fiction or published material that may contain poetry, narrative or just about anything else.

**Duo Interpretation** - Allows two students to work together to present a piece of literature. May be humorous or dramatic.

Complete rules for these events may be found at [www.ncfca.org](http://www.ncfca.org) . And you can learn to hone these skills in *Jeub's Guide to Home School Speech & Debate* from SpeechSupplies.com.

Video Debates

Finally, try videotaping yourself debating in club. You will be surprised at what you see. Watch for repetitive or quirky gestures. Listen for peculiar vocal habits or tones of voice. What are you conveying with your physical presentation? Does it help or hinder the message that you want to get across?

If you don’t have access to a video camera, the next best thing is to debate in front of a mirror. You’ll correct a lot of things subconsciously, looking in a mirror, but you will see some of the things that could lessen your effectiveness in a debate round.

Preparing for a Tournament or Round Robin

Getting ready for a competition is really exciting! All your work is soon to be tested and honed by peers who will probably become your friends for life. But you will want to do a few special things before you go.



First, you will want to practice debating in **tournament attire** at least once at club. You’ll be surprised at the difference it makes. Ladies, you especially need to be aware of your appearance and of the practicality of some of the fashions that are out there (pumps that have heels high enough to hurt before you finish your round, etc.). Your physical presentation does make a difference! Check out the dress-for-success books you can find at your local library and take a tour of business dress websites like

<http://www.symsdress.com/basics.htm> *(a site built for college students just entering the business world)* or

<http://amdt.wsu.edu/research/dti/General_Guidelines.html> *(a site built as part of a master’s thesis on perceptions of professional dress)* or

<http://www.quintcareers.com/dress_for_success.html> *(an advice site for job-hunters)*.

These all have good suggestions and photos.

Some enterprising students in my club are organizing a suit-exchange for those fast-growing boys. The plan is that when the gents outgrow their suits, they donate to the exchange and pick out a new one.

Second, you will want to take a couple of extra **copies of your cases** just in case you 1) lose one, 2) get asked by a judge to let him see it or 3) spill lunch all over one. You should *never* give a judge a copy of your case unless she asks to see it for a *moment*. If the judge asks, be sure to get it back as soon as she has finished checking the point. Debate is a strictly timed activity, and is meant to be an exercise in oral communication, not written communication. If you give the judge your case in print, you just unfairly extended your argumentation time to include the time the judge takes to read your case before the round. Very bad form! And you will be disqualified at an NCFCA-sponsored qualifying tournament.

Third, in the week before the tournament, **value rest** over preparation. Resist the temptation to stay up late putting the finishing touches on your case or research. You will argue much better on a good night’s sleep than on a new argument you thought up at 2am. Usually the critical factor in a debate is how well you argue rather than how many arguments you have.

Fourth, read all the tournament **registration information** carefully. You may find that there are parking restrictions or special events or facility quirks that you need to be aware of before you arrive.

Tournament Survival Tips

* 1. Drink plenty of water between rounds. When you are dehydrated, you feel tired and can’t think as well.
  2. Don’t forget to eat! Take lots of protein. Pack meals and snacks that you can eat on the go. You might not have time between rounds to go out for fast food or to sit down for a leisurely meal.
  3. Go home and sleep after each day’s work. Resist the temptation to go out with friends until after the tournament is over.
  4. Girls, bring or wear comfortable shoes between rounds.
  5. Be sure to exchange contact information with the debaters you meet. You’ll want to keep up with each other. Networking is one of the best opportunities in the tournament!
  6. If you don’t break to out rounds, be sure to go and watch. You’ll learn from the best! And you’ll get their flows!
  7. If you don’t break to out rounds, but some of your teammates do, you can still be a part of their success. Pray with them. Lend them your flows if they are meeting someone you’ve debated. Go watch their round to support them. You are still an important part of the team!
  8. If you do break to out rounds, you have your biggest challenge still ahead. Seek out your teammates who didn’t break. They are a big part of the reason you are at the head of the pack. Their support will be critical to you. Pray with them. Discuss strategy with them. Ask for their critiques after each out round so that you can learn from your performance.
  9. Don’t change out of debate attire before the awards ceremony. You never know when you might be up for a speaker award or some such honor – even if you didn’t advance! Plus staying in debate attire shows honor to the organizers of the tournament and to the whole activity. Tournament staff really appreciates not being asked a bazillion times whether students can change into their grungies before the ceremony.
  10. Enjoy the people, the repartee and the Christian fellowship!

Safari Guide Trail-Marker

(Classroom Instructions)

A. Begin by discussing the chapter.

1. Explain some ways to practice smart.
2. What are the benefits of writing briefs against the cases you’ve seen?
3. List some ways to prepare for a tournament.
4. Why is it bad form to give a copy of your case to a judge if he doesn’t ask for it?

B. Choose two debaters and run one whole debate in front of the whole club. A parent or one of the students should keep time for the round. Everyone should flow the debate. Stop between speeches to give help and feedback. Timekeepers should stop the time while you are talking to the debaters. Sometimes it will be necessary to stop the debaters to help them over a rough patch *during* a speech.

Pair up all your debaters and have them go to different rooms or areas, so that they can all debate. Run stop-start debates just like the one everyone saw. Station parents in the rooms you can’t see to time and to advise the debaters.

C. Assign the homework.

Scouting the Route: Practice Smart

(Chapter Homework)

1. You are going to begin to debate weekly from now on. Each week, you should put new revisions into your cases, lines of questioning or refutation and rebuttal techniques. Don’t feel that you have to do everything at once, focus on one thing each week.
2. Continue to read about the topic. New applications and arguments are often generated from this late-season research.

Chapter 9

The Marco Polo Club: Advanced Debate Theory

You’ve been there and back again. You’ve lived to tell the tales. You don’t need to be taught basic navigation. This section is for you! Here you will find tips from nationally-ranked competitors and their coaches, time-tested and experimental debate theory, advanced end-game strategies, and more!

Presuming Burdens: Affirmative & Negative Responsibilities

By Kim Anderson

In policy debate, notions of presumption and burdens are well established. Since the Affirmative is proposing change, the Affirmative must overcome the presumption that change is dangerous, and that therefore things should stay the way they are unless there is overwhelming proof that the status quo isn’t working. Policy debaters think of this as the Affirmative burden of proof.

Value debate has no such clear-cut burdens. No one is proposing a policy change. Depending on the resolution, the status quo may be nothing more than a footnote. So, who is responsible for what? What burdens does each debater bear? What do we have to prove and how far do we have to prove it?

Since in the NCFCA, we make use of lay judges much more extensively than do other leagues, esoteric boundaries for presumption and burdens make little sense. A lay judge wouldn’t necessarily understand an academic paradigm for presumption if he heard one. So it really comes back to questions of basic persuasiveness and clarity of communication.

Does this mean that there can be no guidelines? By no means! But we will need to ask different questions. Debate scholars have devised myriads of ways to evaluate and challenge a value system. But I’d like to present a common-sense approach that makes use of some of the arcane arguments without all the academic magic words.

Value debate implies that our argumentation centers around ethics and moral imperatives. Therefore winning a value debate will have to do with persuading a judge to reconsider common ethical positions and presuppositions. This is necessarily a subjective exercise. Can a judge get outside of his own presuppositions or shed his own values? Can we assume that a finite human being can hold a truly objective viewpoint? Probably not. The only truly objective view of ethics is in the mind of God. The best we can ask is that a judge starts with a willingness to admit that men of conscience might hold a position different from his own and that it might be a position worthy of his consideration. It would be the job of the debater to shift the judge toward the debater’s position, not necessarily to cause her to change her whole worldview.

So the first burden of a value debater is to consider what ethical presuppositions are commonly held concerning the topic presented in the resolution. It will be strategic to analyze the range of ethical convictions that come to the fore. These will be the colors a value debater will have on her palette. The challenge then, is to decide how best to use them to serve your audience by uncovering truth.

In the context of a case, it might be wise to identify these ethical assumptions and to explain your view of them. Basically, there are three approaches: reinforcement, avoidance or challenge.

Reinforcement

If you can advocate your side of the resolution by upholding a commonly held moral imperative, then you will be aided by your judge’s own convictions. We each hold our own convictions because we presume they are correct or the best alternative. Your judge is no different. This kind of presumption is very powerful and very difficult to overcome. In fact it is nearly impossible overcome it by a direct challenge or contradiction.

Avoidance

If you find you must oppose a commonly held value, the next most effective strategy is to avoid direct contradiction of the value. The debater’s burden then becomes finding another strongly held value to reinforce. In practice this is usually what has happened in a good debate by the end of the constructive cases; each debater has presented his arguments in terms that reinforce the moral convictions of the judge.

But while this is a strategy for equalizing the presumption borne by each side, it is not a strategy for winning. The burden of a value debater, regardless of side, is to uncover truth by comparing and contrasting the virtues of the relevant moral imperatives and helping the judge to find the best balance. Eventually, you will have to bring the values into conflict, but by using an avoidance strategy at the outset, you will be arguing from a position of relatively equal strength.

Challenge

Sometimes you will need to challenge the validity or relevance of a value from the outset of the debate, but you will always need to challenge it by the time rebuttals roll around. This is the inescapable burden of the value debater. So the question is: Can a view of presumption and/or burdens help a debater show a judge how to decide among virtues? Possibly.

**Policy-style presumption** is psychological in value debate. Whereas in a question of policy, we assume that there is a risk inherent to change, in questions of value, we assume that there is a risk to changing one’s mind. There certainly is a great deal of psychological inertia to overcome. As the C. D. E. put it, “The larger a policy or value change is and the riskier a value or policy, the greater the presumption is against that value or policy.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

What does this mean for the value debate round? Whichever debater is advocating the greater value change must overcome the greater presumption. The burden of proof does not lie inherently in either the Affirmative or Negative position, but instead lies with the debater who is proposing the largest change of mind.

Joseph Tuman proposed an **intrinsic value/pragmatic value system of presumption**.[[2]](#footnote-2) In the now-famous “Tuman model”, the burden of proof falls to the debater who advocates an instrumental (pragmatic) value as opposed to a terminal (intrinsic) value. In other words, a good or virtue that is valued for itself (a terminal value) should be more easily accepted than a good that is valued merely because of the results it might or does produce (instrumental value). It is assumed that if one must wait to see how a value works out, is less certain than a value that is simply desirable in itself.

Again, the burden of proof doesn’t rest in the Affirmative or Negative assignment, but in the value the debater chooses to champion.

Finally, there is the **Scientific-Method presumption**. This theory posits that a debate resolution is similar to a scientific theory. The burden of the debaters is to test it and prove it either true or false. The presumption is that the resolution is false until it can be proved true.

This kind of presumption would be difficult to apply to every kind of resolution, but might be a good model to argue when the resolution is worded like a question of fact:

*Resolved: that democracy is over-valued by the United States Government*

*Resolved: that the United States should more highly value isolationism*

Each of these views can be helpful as templates for organizing your attacks on your opponent’s case. But they are only someone’s opinion. You must educate your judge about the presumption you would like him to make as he listens to your case.

The good news is that (usually) all LD debaters start on equal footing, and presumption and burdens are products of your own argumentation. The bad news is that these theories are only as good as your explanations of them. No community judge is going to come with one of these theories tattooed on his brain. You will have to persuade him that your theory is best, as well as convincing him that your value and your position are wisest, most ethical and most effective.

Definition Battles: How to wield your weapon

By Andrew Roblyer

I can’t tell you how often I hear debaters deliver a definitional argument that sounds something like this:

“My opponent has offered a definition of underwater-basket-weaving that I believe to be unfair. Because their definition is unfair, I present a counter definition.” Or…

“My opponent has offered a definition of woodchuck, but it is too vague so I provide the following definition to clarify it.”

The inevitable response to this type of argument is a very nicely worded “Nuh-uh!” This devolves the definitional battle into meaningless “nuh-uhs” and “uh-huhs”. As debaters, our goal is to be persuasive and clear in our speaking, and neither the above arguments nor the common responses fulfill that goal.

There are some who believe that definitional arguments are frustrating and somewhat pointless, since there is no way to “prove” any definition to be correct. However, I believe they are an essential and interesting part of any debate round, but *only when run correctly*. In this article I have outlined the three-step process to building a true, logical, definitional argument that will add depth and understanding to any debate round in which definitions are being discussed.

Should you run it?

Before you actually run a definitional argument, you must first decide whether the impact to the debate round is great enough to spend your time arguing definitions, because it will take time to do it correctly. So how do you determine impact? How do you decide whether the argument is important enough to warrant use of your precious rebuttal time?

There are two questions I believe are important to ask when determining whether to run a definitional argument.

The first question is: Does my opponent’s definition have a flaw, and does his case depend on this definition? Will my counter-definition make arguing his position any more difficult? If the answer to this question is ‘yes’, then you might want to run the argument. If the answer is ‘no’, try the next question.

The second question is also whether your definitional argument is necessary for your own position to stand. Sometimes you will find that while your opponent’s definition may have a logical flaw, your position will still stand under it. In this case, it is not worth your time to argue against it. However, if the definition provided by your opponent makes it impossible for your position to stand, you may want to run a definitional argument. You could consider that definition to rob the Negative of ground for ethical argument.

If, after asking these questions, you decide that it is necessary for you to run a definitional argument, then the following three steps will be essential.

Step One: The Standard

The first task of anyone running a definitional argument is to identify why they are running it. Why do you feel it is necessary to provide a counter definition? Perhaps your opponent’s is illogical, or else it is necessary for you to counter define. This standard, like any other argument, must be based on logical reasoning and be presented clearly to the judge. Here is a possible definitional standard for the word “isolationism”:

*“My opponent has defined isolationism to mean an elimination of military involvement in other countries. However, I believe that a definition in today’s round should uphold the standard of field usage. In other words, I believe that a definition of an international relations theory should stem from the commonly used definition of isolationism within the realm of international relations.”*

This argument is clear, concise, and logical. Once you have a similar argument prepared, you can move on to step two.

Step two: the violation

Here you must clearly outline why your opponent’s definition violates the standard you have logically supported in step one. In our current example, the violation would probably sound something like this:

*“According to [Insert expert in field here], the definition of isolationism is very broad. This view is supported by [insert other experts here] as well. As my opponent has much less support for his/her definition within the field in which this debate is taking place. For this reason, I believe we should discard his definition in favor of my solution.”*

Note: Even if your opponent’s definition is logical in and of itself, it may violate a different, perfectly logical standard. In this case, it is acceptable to argue against it, as long as you are willing and able to defend your standard during the remainder of the round.

Now on to step three.

Step Three: The Solution

Now it’s your time to shine. You have the job of providing a definition that fulfills the standard you created, and at the same time makes logical sense that will appeal to most judges.

Here you will lay out exactly why your definition is so much better than your opponent’s. Be sure to reference your standard often, impact your argument to the round and resolution, and reiterate to the judge how much better your definition fits into the round.

The most important thing you must remember is that one speech is not enough. Definitional arguments must carry through the entire round if they are to be considered on the judge’s ballot. You must also be sure to continue to operate as though your own definition has been accepted, while arguing in favor of it at the same time. This proves to the judge that you are confident in your position, and gives credibility to both your case and definitional arguments.

Conclusion

Definitions can be the biggest issue in a debate round, and if the discussion is justified, it is one of the most important. Learning how to persuade your judges with a clear, concise, consistent method of definitional argumentation is something that you will use for the rest of your life. Spread the word about the right way to run definitions, and maybe we judges won’t have to sit through another “nuh-uh!...uh-huh!” debate.

Friend or Foe? Analyzing the Power and Limitations of Applications

By Joanna M. Griffith

Evidence - It’s that word Policy debaters love and LDers are notorious for despising. But any good debater knows that whether it’s a study from a Harvard professor or philosophic reasoning derived from John Locke, support is essential to the debate round. And more specifically, a values debater must have some tangible examples to connect idealistic rhetoric with the real world. Applications have traditionally provided a medium to do this within Lincoln-Douglas debate. But as with any tool, applications can be detrimental to the round if they are not used correctly.

In this article we will look at the legitimate weight that can be given to applications, some tools for relating them to the round, and strategies for recognizing and successfully refuting misused applications.

The Power

Despite the generally negative connotation of reading “evidence blocks” in LD rounds, it is crucial for every debater to have credible up-to-date research on the real-world issues relating to any given resolution. The fact-based nature of recent NCFCA LD resolutions accentuates this need.

For example, when evaluating how much emphasis the United States should place on isolationism, one must be fluent in articulating the exact ways in which the U.S. *has used and is using* isolationism. Take the rightly respected value of liberty. An affirmative debater might contend that interventionism harms liberty and thus isolationism should be more highly valued. Without credible, real-world evidence, this is simply an assertion. When has U.S. intervention inhibited liberty? What examples suggest that isolationism would better protect liberty?

Solid, strongly supported applications can transform these arguments from mere assertions by a teenager to a formidable case verified by expert testimonies. Additionally, these examples aid judges in understanding the consequences and applicability (pardon the pun) of the abstract philosophic concepts that are often central to the debate round.

The Pitfalls

In short, applications should be used as credible, tangible examples that verify the overall philosophic ideal presented in an LD case. For them to be used in this way, it is crucial that debaters effectively tie his or her applications to the overall framework of the round.

First, show how the application relates to the value and criterion in the round. To take our earlier example of the value of liberty, suppose you decided to use the application of the U.S. involvement in 2006 Palestinian elections that resulted in the election of Hamas. For this application be effective, you must show how the Palestinian elections affected liberty.

Furthermore, be sure to compare the agent in a given application with the agent specified in the resolution. The United States, obviously, is the agent in this year’s isolationism resolution. If the United States is not the actor in any given application, be sure to show how this example still identifies a proper US approach towards isolationism. An unjust squabble between warring tribes in Africa does not prove that the United States should change its emphasis on isolationism unless a clear link is made between the African war and America’s circumstances and actions.

The Proving-Ground

Now that we’ve considered the role of applications and some tools for effectively tying them into the overall round, let’s look at a few strategies for rebutting your opponent’s applications.

To begin, remember, applications are merely supporting the overall philosophy of a case. If your opponent presents one or two examples where an action taken by the United States (or any other agent in a resolution) did not produce a favorable outcome, this alone does not prove either side of the resolution. Point out that invariably perfect outcomes are impossible in an imperfect world and demonstrate how your side of the resolution tends towards a better outcome on the whole. Rejecting an entire philosophy because of one or two failures is an example of wrongly throwing out the baby with the bathwater, so to speak.

Secondly, closely follow the link between your opponent’s application and his or her value/criterion pair. Were the value and criterion present in the occurrence of this example? If the link between the value/criterion and application breaks, this application is practically useless. Its only valid weight is as a credible support for the case’s overall philosophy. If it does not meet that burden, the application is not valid proof.

Finally, research! Research! Research! Particularly in broad fact-based resolutions, solid research is vital. Develop a brief with key facts and arguments for any application you are likely to run into. Note the specifics. How long has the U.S. been providing military support in that nation? Did the unemployment rate spike result from the introduction of foreign competition or did other factors (e.g. corporate scandals, natural disasters, etc.) also contribute to greater unemployment?

In his book *Basic Economics*, Thomas Sowell quotes fellow economist Steven Landsburg who wrote, “A few lines of reasoning can change the way we see the world.” As you research, build cases, and debate, develop solid lines of reasoning through the theoretical ideals you present. Then use applications to back-up that philosophy, connecting it with modern issues and showing how these powerful ideals can truly change the way we view the world.

The Best Laid Battle Plans: Strategies for those difficult rebuttals

By Andrew Roblyer

Across the ages, nations have waged war. Battles have been fought all over the earth, and all imaginable tactics have been used. However, as any seasoned commander or general will tell you, even “the best laid plans of mice and men gang aft aglyie” *(often go awry).* Debate is a battle of mind and wit, and like any other battle, has many unexpected turns. In the rebuttal speeches, it is especially important that you be ready for anything that comes your way. Even the best cases can tumble to the ground in the minutes following the time your opponent first opens their mouth.

In this article, we will be examining the tactics for using your ammunition (arguments) to inflict the greatest damage, both on your opponent’s own arguments, and his attacks against your case.

Targeting: Primary vs. Secondary

One of the first things you need to determine are your targets. What will you attack? In what order will you attack it? These questions are essential to any battle commander, and can “make or break” your case.

Since you have very little preparation time, it is essential that you learn to listen and think at the same time. Not only must you hear what your opponent is saying and flow it, but you must also make a nearly instantaneous judgment as to whether it is something you should attack. Your preparation time should be spent developing arguments, not deciding what to argue against. Not only that, but you must also begin to decide which arguments are the most important.

For example, the value and/or criterion are perhaps the most important targets on the flow. This is especially true if you feel it is necessary to run a value objection or subsume your opponent’s value.

No general wants to leave any target alone, but if it is unavoidable, it must be the one that is worth the least, such as an unimportant yet illogical definition. So the first target on your list should be the strongest, most fortified target of all. This target must not *ever* be left alone, or else your opponent will likely have already won the round. After deciding which target is the most important, you will need to list the rest in order of importance. This answers the second question, “in what order will you attack it?”

This does not, however, mean that you must jump up and down the flow addressing each point in the order you have them listed. That is only one way of rebuttal, and it is definitely the worst. Next we will examine the different organization strategies that you can choose from to help you launch your attack.

First Rebuttal: The First Line of Attack

The first rebuttal is the most difficult of all. This is because you have the most amount of material to cover in the smallest amount of time. This is especially true for the affirmative debater, as any experienced competitor can tell you. However, the first rebuttal is also the most important of all, since anything you do not address in it cannot be addressed in your second rebuttal. This means that you must at least damage each target to have any chance at all of destroying it.

So how can you organize your arguments to be sure you launch as many attacks as possible with the greatest amount of damage? Below are listed four strategies for launching your attacks.

The Three-Pronged Attack

This is my personal favorite, and is applicable to the affirmative side (and the negative if you are doing direct refutation). This strategy is meant to give you the opportunity to build up a strong attack in a few key places. Simply put, this strategy condenses down your opponent’s arguments into three key points and allows you to therefore spend more time on each point.

It sounds simple in theory, but in practice, it is one of the hardest strategies to employ. It requires not only that you find a way to condense all of the arguments into three main points, but that you also show the judge (and your opponent) what arguments were covered under the three main points. The most common three points to use are Values, under which all the value and/or criterion arguments are grouped; Applications, under which all of the application arguments are grouped; and Resolution, under which all the arguments pertaining to the resolution are grouped. However, these arguments can be condensations of any points. They must act as normal arguments, with a tag line and logical development, but are much more easily argued.

There are two things you must remember. The first is to link all the arguments you are addressing to the three points you are addressing. Secondly, you must also make these links clear to the judge and your opponent, or risk facing a confused (and likely lost) ballot, or confused opponent. If you cannot link all your arguments clearly, I suggest using another strategy.

There are some people who do not believe the three-pronged attack is a good technique to use in the first Affirmative speech, since it gives the Negative a lot more time to speak about each point. However, I do think that if you have supported all of those points, then while the negative may have more time to address them, so will you in your second rebuttal.

The Collapsed Attack

This is a technique primarily used by the Affirmative debater in the first affirmative rebuttal. An increasingly popular attack on negative is something called “spreading”. I address this below, but it is simply a technique that throws a lot of thinly sliced arguments onto the flow to try and use up the affirmative’s rebuttal time. One of the best ways to deal with this argument is using what I call the collapsed attack. This is similar to the three-pronged attack, but usually condenses multiple small arguments against each contention into one main response, which means that there are likely more than three arguments.

The method is much the same as the three-pronged attack. You must be sure to demonstrate the link of all arguments to your main responses, and make sure they are all actually linked. The biggest difference between the three-pronged attack and the collapsed attack is simply the number of main arguments. Using the three-pronged attack, it is possible to use those three main points as voting issues (addressed below), whereas the collapsed attack must be condensed further in the second speech.

The Bullet Point Attack

This technique, applicable to both sides of the debate, is like firing a round of bullets into a line of targets. In the first Affirmative rebuttal, it truly is like having to fire a machine gun. The Negative has it a lot easier, due to the greater amount of time. The Negative most often uses the bullet point approach, addressing each and every point the affirmative made in the time after the delivery of the negative case. However, the affirmative uses this strategy much more rarely, simply because of the time restraints in the first Affirmative rebuttal. Simply put, this is a point-by-point refutation.

If the affirmative decides to use this strategy, as I did in the quarterfinal round of our regional tournament, there are several key points that must be observed. First, you should be sure to explain to the judge that you will merely be making arguments during this speech and moving relatively fast. This is simply because you want to be as clear as possible and make sure that the judge understands.

Secondly, you must be sure to impact every single one of your arguments. My favorite method is simply to say “This matters today because…” and then explain. This guarantees that every argument matters to both the judge and your opponent.

Finally, time management is most important part of this strategy. You simply must learn not to spend more time than absolutely necessary on any one point. This strategy, more than any other, requires that you prioritize and organize your arguments. You must be absolutely certain of which arguments you must attack first, and absolutely clear about your organization, otherwise the judge will lose his place very quickly. This strategy is only suggested for experienced debaters.

The Case Ties Attack

This negative strategy is used to maximize the rebuttal portion of the first Negative speech. The goal is to link all the negative contentions from your case to the arguments against your opponent. This is especially useful when the values of both the Affirmative and Negative debaters are the same. For example, two cases with the value of Justice may have first contentions that are complete opposites. The case-tie here would be to establish a link that demonstrates that the negative contention does actually refute the first affirmative contention. The link must be logical and complete.

The method is simple, but like all of the other strategies for the first rebuttal on either side, requires clear organization and an assurance that you have addressed all of the major points. You may think that there is not much to be done, but if this is done correctly, you should be able to fill all of your rebuttal time doing nothing but reinforcing your contentions while linking them to the affirmative arguments.

Second Rebuttal: The last Line of Attack

One of the most accepted truths of communications is the idea of “primacy and recency.” This idea basically means that the audience (or judge) will remember what they heard first and what they heard last. This means that the second (and last) rebuttal is perhaps the most important speech of the round for both sides. For this reason, the following attack strategies are essential.

Each one of these strategies is designed to build “voting issues” (or “voters”): main issues that you believe are reasons to vote for your arguments. They are tagged, contention-like, arguments that should condense your major arguments into persuasive, easy to understand points. This is the biggest job of your second rebuttal.

The V.C.A.R. Attack

Value, criterion, application, resolution. This is one of the most common ways of organizing voting issues on either side of the debate. Sometimes one or more of the four can be grouped into a single voting issue, such as value and criterion. The most common mistake made by debaters is a lack of impact. Sometimes they feel that since they address all of these major points, they have finished their job. Impact is *essential* and cannot be forgotten.

In order to use this secondary attack strategy, you cannot have dropped any of these issues leading up to the second rebuttal speech. Once again, we see the importance of prioritizing what you address in your first rebuttal.

The Three-Pronged Attack

As mentioned earlier, the three-pronged attack is a ready built set of three main arguments. These three arguments are usually three of the four V.C.A.R, but not always. However, they can almost always be used in the second rebuttal. You must simply be sure, especially if you are the affirmative, that you tie all of your previous arguments to the main voting issues your opponent has brought up.

If you used the collapsed attack, the bullet point attack, or the case ties attack, you can also use the three-pronged attack in your final speech. You must simply collapse your arguments into a few (three is suggested) main points that are clear and understandable. If you are Affirmative, you must also be careful to make sure you address all of your opponent’s voting issues at the same time.

The Turn Attack

This is perhaps my favorite affirmative technique to use when I have not been able to use the three-pronged attack in my first rebuttal. Simply put, this attack tries to pull out the rug from underneath the negative’s feet. Instead of attempting to condense all of your arguments down into three different voting issues, you simply show the judge that the reasons the negative provided for their victory are actually reasons for yours. For example, one negative voting issue might be that their value is greater. Your response would simply be to show that your value is actually the greater.

There are two things you have to remember when using this attack. First, you must be sure that you can still link all of your previous arguments to your opponent’s voting issues. You usually can, but sometimes your opponent has not linked all of his voting issues to his rebuttals of your points.

Secondly, you may have to build one or more extra voting issues onto the turned ones, if there is an argument your opponent missed that is critical to your case. In this sense, it is often helpful to combine the turn attack with a bit of original case defense.

The Original Case Defense

Believe it or not, there will be times when the negative will seem to have beaten every argument you have. You may feel like there is no way you can win the round, and that you simply cannot make any voting issues that will matter. I know that I have most certainly felt that way, and the original case defense has actually come back and won me the ballot in several instances.

The idea is simple: you return to your original case and look for anything your opponent forgot or dropped. This is surprisingly revealing in a lot of cases. Sometimes you will realize that your opponent has based all of his arguments upon a false understanding regarding one of your contentions or even the entire premise of your case. It is very possible for you to not see this during the rest of the round, but if you take a moment to do nothing but review your case itself, much can be revealed to you.

However, I caution everyone who uses this technique, because I believe it is unfair and perhaps even somewhat unethical to purposefully bring up what we call “new arguments” in the last rebuttal. This means that if you didn’t realize your opponent had misunderstood you in your first rebuttal, you cannot accuse her of it now. Your arguments must not be against what your opponent has said, but rather reiterating what you have already argued.

So how do you do this and still make sure the judge understands that your opponent has misunderstood you? Well, when I use this technique, this may be a voting issue I would present:

Judge, my first voting issue is my value of Liberty. I explicitly stated in my case that Liberty included rights such as Life and Property, so since this was never really addressed by my opponent, his voting issue of Human Rights being the supreme value falls.

The important thing to realize here is that I was not simply saying that my opponent dropped it, but rather that my original case was still unaddressed. This is an extremely fine line you must walk, but if you can walk it correctly, you can get yourself out of numerous sticky situations.

Time Management

So now you know all of the different strategies for both of your rebuttals. But how do you make sure you can actually use them? Well, time management is the key. There are many different strategies that debaters use to ensure that they can fit in all of the arguments they want to make, and I’ve outlined a few below.

The first technique is self-timing. This is perhaps one of the most popular techniques, since almost every LDer I debated at Nationals in 2007 uses it. They would bring a timer up with them and start it when they began to speak. What this does is allow them to limit themselves in smaller increments than one minute so that they can make sure to address more arguments. For example, perhaps one argument is only worth 15 seconds of time. Well, you won’t know when that 15 seconds is up unless you are timing yourself. I find this technique especially useful when bullet pointing.

The second technique is practice. Some debaters work very hard on something called “word economy”, which simply means using as few words as possible. One of my most surprisingly formidable opponents laid down a spread of arguments in his first negative rebuttal that rivaled some of the best spreaders in the nation, and he did it without a timer. I asked him afterwards how he did that, and he told me that he worked four hours per day on debate. Now, while I do not believe that everyone has to spend that much time working, it certainly did help him.

The final technique I will outline is actually one I do not suggest using: winging it. It is surprising how many debaters get up to speak with very little idea of how much time they plan to spend on each argument. What usually happens is that either they get lucky, and manage to fit it all in, or run out of time and end up dropping a critical argument. This is why planned time management is so important. Unless you know before you stand up to speak which arguments are the most important and how much time you’re willing to spend on them, then you will likely lose many rounds.

So, we’ve seen a lot of strategies and techniques for laying out and executing your battle plans. The most important thing to remember is that your opponent is likely laying out these plans as well. You must be ready to change your plan at any moment, and still be able to deliver strong, focused attacks that are clear to the judge. The best laid battle plans will not go awry, because they are the ones that are prepared to change.

Chapter 10

Marco Polo Club Treasure Maps: Research Aids

These articles, analyses and bibliography are springboards to your own research: A place to start. But the real gold is out there where our researchers have marked X.

This year, our research focuses on the two major aspects of isolationism: foreign relations and economics. Does it all come down to “blood, iron and demographics” or are there moral imperatives that can and should govern international relations? Explorations of the ethical issues in the relations among nations have been charted for you by great thinkers such as Niccolo Machiavelli, Aristotle, Thucydides, Sun Tzu, Bismarck, Woodrow Wilson, Metternick, and Henry Kissinger. Economic ethics have been articulated by Adam Smith, Maynard Keynes, Karl Marx, and Ludwig von Mises.

Eventually, you ***must*** read the major writings of these masters, but probably that’s not where you’ll start. Get your bearings by reading short summaries of their works and historical background to their theories. Let the summaries quickly and efficiently point you to the larger works and more detailed histories that you need for your cases. Many of these summaries cannot be found online, but do reside in the reference section of your local library.

Hunnex, Milton. Chronological and Thematic Charts of Philosophies and Philosophers. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1986. *(A graphic timeline)*

Johnson, Oliver, ed. Ethics: Selections from Classical and Contemporary Writers. 6th ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1989. *(Short selections from original works)*

Magill, Frank, ed. Masterpieces of World Philosophy in Summary Form. New York: Harper & Rowe, 1961. *(Short summaries of major philosophical works with critiques )*

Weiner, Philip P. Dictionary of the History of Ideas. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1973. *(Major philosophies compared in a topical index)*

And these can be found online, but you’ll have to pay for them if you want to use them at home. Check with your local library.

Philosophy Documentation Center. Philosopher’s Index. Bowling Green Ohio: Bowling Green University Pres, 1967 – present. *(indexed database of philosophy articles)*

These databases can be accessed for free on the Internet:

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/> *(database of articles summarizing the thought of various philosophers, alphabetical by philosopher)*

Philosophy Research Base, http://www.erraticimpact.com/names\_index.htm *(short biographies of a limited number of famous philosophers with links to online versions of their major works)*

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://plato.stanford.edu/> *(database of articles summarizing various philosophical issues)*

Our researchers have prepared both economic and foreign policy springboards for you. But we'll start with a brief explanation of the vocabulary you’ll need.

Glossary of Relevant Terms

Compiled by Robert Anderson

Interventionism

In politics, interventionism is a term for significant activity undertaken by a state to influence something not directly under its control.--*Wikipedia*

The policy or doctrine of intervening, esp. government interference in the affairs of another state or in domestic economic affairs. --[*Dictionary.com*](http://Dictionary.com)

Global competition

Global competition exists when competitive conditions across national markets are linked strongly enough to form a true international market and when leading competitors compete head to head in many different countries *--* [*highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072443715/student\_view0/glossary.html*](http://www.google.com/url?sa=X&start=0&oi=define&q=http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072443715/student_view0/glossary.html&usg=AFQjCNHYaphe38c-8Fza4neEswwe6ZkWkw)

Internationalism

The doctrine that nations should cooperate because their common interests are more important than their differences -- [wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn](http://www.google.com/url?sa=X&start=0&oi=define&q=http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn%3Fs%3Dinternationalism&usg=AFQjCNHPGDqA0t6kOcGbY_X8ZditQjSJ4A)

Internationalism is a political movement which advocates a greater economic and political cooperation between nations for the benefit of all. Partisans of this movement, such as supporters of the World Federalist Movement, claim that nations should cooperate because their long-term mutual interests are of greater value than their own individual short-term needs. -- *Wikipedia*

Parochialism

A limitation of views or interests like that defined by a local parish--[wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn](http://www.google.com/url?sa=X&start=0&oi=define&q=http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn%3Fs%3Dparochialism&usg=AFQjCNHTdzAJIGoFOKnuzOiISthj9gM9xQ)

Selfish pettiness or narrowness (as of interests, opinions, or views) -- <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=parochialism>

Provincialism -

A lack of sophistication

Sectionalism: a partiality for some particular place -- [*wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn*](http://www.google.com/url?sa=X&start=0&oi=define&q=http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn%3Fs%3Dinternationalism&usg=AFQjCNHPGDqA0t6kOcGbY_X8ZditQjSJ4A)

Something from province:something that originates in a province, e.g. a word, phrase, trait, or custom [*http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/dictionary/DictionaryResults.aspx?refid=1861736277*](http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/dictionary/DictionaryResults.aspx?refid=1861736277)

Mercantilism

The economic theory that trade generates wealth and is stimulated by the accumulation of bullion, which a government should encourage by means of protectionism. [*http://www.askoxford.com/concise\_oed/mercantilism?view=uk*](http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/mercantilism?view=uk)

An economic philosophy of the 16th and 17th centuries that international commerce should primarily serve to increase a country's financial wealth, especially of gold and foreign currency. To that end, exports are viewed as desirable and imports as undesirable unless they lead to even greater exports. [*www.personal.umich.edu/~alandear/glossary/m.html*](http://www.personal.umich.edu/~alandear/glossary/m.html)

Protectionism

The theory or practice of shielding a country's domestic industries from foreign competition by taxing imports. -- [*http://www.askoxford.com/concise\_oed/protectionism?view=uk*](http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/protectionism?view=uk)

Government policies fostering home industries by protecting them from the competition of foreign goods, the importation of these being checked or discouraged by the imposition of duties (tariffs) or otherwise. -- [*ucatlas.ucsc.edu/glossary.html*](http://www.google.com/url?sa=X&start=1&oi=define&q=http://ucatlas.ucsc.edu/glossary.html&usg=AFQjCNFPptg7OP4-I0g4c34JeZV9y5wJWw)

Tariff

A tax or duty to be paid on a particular class of imports or exports. -- [*http://www.askoxford.com/concise\_oed/tariff?view=uk*](http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/tariff?view=uk)

Subsidy

A sum of money granted from public funds to help an industry or business keep the price of a commodity or service low. -- [*http://www.askoxford.com/concise\_oed/subsidy?view=uk*](http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/subsidy?view=uk)

Laissez-faire government

Principle of no regulation of industry:the principle that the economy works best if private industry is not regulated and markets are free. -- [*http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/dictionary/DictionaryResults.aspx?refid=1861624722*](http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/dictionary/DictionaryResults.aspx?refid=1861624722)

Refusal to interfere:refusal to interfere in other people's affairs, or the practice of letting people do as they wish

Out-sourcing

The concept of taking internal company functions and paying an outside firm to handle them. Outsourcing is done to save money, improve quality, or free company resources for other activities. Outsourcing was first done in the data-processing industry and has spread to areas, including tele-messaging and call centers. Outsourcing is the wave of the future. -- [*www.answerstat.com/articles/glossary.html*](http://www.google.com/url?sa=X&start=0&oi=define&q=http://www.answerstat.com/articles/glossary.html&usg=AFQjCNHwW0lSd_4olVRpkS2A9Rk0XImLYA)

A formal agreement with a third party to perform a service for an organization. -- [*www.austin.cc.tx.us/audit/Glossary/LetterO.htm*](http://www.google.com/url?sa=X&start=2&oi=define&q=http://www.austin.cc.tx.us/audit/Glossary/LetterO.htm&usg=AFQjCNGs9c1YDAangPPAAOzPWkjEHE3m0A)

Balance of payments

The difference between the amount paid by a national government to other countries and the amount it receives from them. [*http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/dictionary/DictionaryResults.aspx?refid=1861685762*](http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/dictionary/DictionaryResults.aspx?refid=1861685762)

A summary of the international transactions of a country or region over a period of time including commodity and service transactions, capital transactions, and gold movements [*http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=balance+of+payments*](http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=balance+of+payments)

Trade deficit

The difference, measured in monetary value, between a nation's imports and its exports when the imports exceed the exports [*http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/dictionary/DictionaryResults.aspx?refid=1861721282*](http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/dictionary/DictionaryResults.aspx?refid=1861721282)

The amount by which the cost of a country's imports exceeds the value of its exports.[*http://www.askoxford.com/concise\_oed/tradedeficit?view=uk*](http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/tradedeficit?view=uk)

Import duties

Import duties may be payable by recipients of goods in foreign countries. -- [*www.digital-cameras.co.za/Default.aspx*](http://www.google.com/url?sa=X&start=1&oi=define&q=http://www.digital-cameras.co.za/Default.aspx%3Ftabid%3D73&usg=AFQjCNE0t2rkKuY5LXnB8kmB3dkfZscIoQ)

Realpolitik - (German).

Practical politics, in the sense that ideas and theories are unimportant and can be disregarded in the conduct of political affairs. The exponents of Realpolitik were unaware of the fact that their own power was also based on ideas and theories. [*www.mises.org/easier/R.asp*](http://www.google.com/url?sa=X&start=0&oi=define&q=http://www.mises.org/easier/R.asp&usg=AFQjCNHi-4xInQGRfyUhjaGbOKgYL0NO6A)

Politics based on practical rather than moral or ideological considerations -- [*wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn*](http://www.google.com/url?sa=X&start=1&oi=define&q=http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn%3Fs%3Drealpolitik&usg=AFQjCNET5gNEgH4yP050UXPx0dQM_9IfuA)

America First

The America First movement was an isolationalist group that opposed United States involvement in World War II. Many prominent Americans were members, including aviator Charles Lindbergh. At its peak, America First had 800,000 members. [*en.wikipedia.org/wiki/America\_First*](http://www.google.com/url?sa=X&start=0&oi=define&q=http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/America_First&usg=AFQjCNFtC0oBCTPgk2U6WA9Rn3_sRgALHg)

The “isms” of international Relations: the impact of relational philosophies on the Lincoln-Douglas resolution

By Andrew Roblyer

“Isms” are interesting. This short little suffix tags onto words and, for some reason, immediately gives them a power they didn’t have before. Perhaps it is the catchiness of the sound, or the interesting shape the mouth makes when it pronounces them. Whatever the reason, people have used “isms” for centuries. In the age of kings, “monarchism” reigned supreme. During the Cold War, “communism” was widely feared. And now, military involvement in Iraq and other nations provokes discussions regarding theories such as “interventionism” and “isolationism”. Every “ism” carries a specific connotation that has been built throughout the years of its use. In this article we will examine six of the main “isms” in the world of international relations by looking at the philosophies they embody, the real world applications of those philosophies, the relationships to the other primary “isms” and, most importantly, the bearing upon the 2007-2008 debate resolution, “Resolved: That the United States of America ought to more highly value isolationism.”

Let us begin by looking at the “ism” that will certainly be the one most frequently discussed in a debate round.

Isolationism

In its purest form, an isolationist country would have no economic relationships, minimal cultural exchange, and no offensive military involvement with other nations in the global community. Often, people consider isolationism to be a term that can be applied to only one area of global interaction, such as military relations. However, there are other terms, such as “non-interventionism” that apply to smaller subsections of international relations. Isolationism is almost always used to suggest a unilateral severance of contact with the global community.

Perhaps the greatest example of pure isolationism lies with Japan in the years between 1639 and 1868.[[3]](#footnote-3) During the rule of the Tokugawa Shogunate, no contact with the outside world was permitted, under pain of death. This was easy to enforce due to the geographically separate nature of the island of Japan. Historians’ accounts of the subsequent attempts by the outside world to enter into relationships with Japan vary, but they all share one common theme: Japan rejected every attempt. Japan’s isolationism, or *sakoku* (literally “closed country”), led to a decline of technological progress. As a result, they were literally frightened into submission when Commodore Matthew Perry of the U.S. Navy sailed four warships bristling with weapons into the Bay of Tokyo. When the Japanese realized they would have to acquiesce to Perry’s demand that they open trade and relations with the United States, Japan utilized these new bonds to boost their technological advancement quickly and effectively, leading them to soon become one of the most technologically advanced nations in the world.

However, according to Mayumi Itoh, Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, the “combination of natural and voluntary isolation created a uniquely homogeneous culture and parochial mentality that still linger in the habits of the mind that underlie modern Japanese behavior and business practices.”[[4]](#footnote-4) The isolationist mindset continues to this day and is demonstrated by Japan’s stringent citizenship requirements. Unlike most nations, Japan will not allow a child born in Japan to become a Japanese citizen unless their parents are Japanese by blood. In addition, it is extremely difficult for any non-Japanese to gain employment in Japan.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Isolationism is the focus of this year’s resolution, but specifically as this “ism” is viewed through the lens of the United States. During President Bush’s 2006 State of the Union address, he used various forms of the word isolationism several times, all in the negative. It was an option he said must be rejected. Justin Logan from the Cato Institute has this to say regarding the President’s speech:

“During his State of the Union address, President Bush warned Americans about the lure of ‘isolationism.’ The president mentioned ‘isolationism’ or ‘isolation’ four times, warning that the strategy offered only ‘false comfort’ that would result in ‘danger and decline.’… He presented the choice on Iraq in the bipolar manner that has become his trademark: On Iraq, either you’re with the president, or you’re with the isolationists… In the real world, the choice is much more complex than simply between the reckless and militant interventionism of Bush’s forced democracy policy and the head-in-the-sand posture of isolationism… True enough, there are a few on the national stage who embrace something akin to isolationism…But there is little groundswell at the grassroots for this worldview and almost no genuine isolationism in Congress or the punditocracy.”[[6]](#footnote-6)

Mr. Logan seems to understand a fact that will become quite relevant in this year’s resolution. Namely, it is important to remember the specific nature of true isolationism, while at the same time understanding the vague way in which it is used in today’s society.

Imperialism

Imperialism, defined as “any instance of aggressive extension of authority”[[7]](#footnote-7), is perhaps the “ism” closest to being the antithesis of isolationism. Almost every major nation in the world has, at one point or another, demonstrated this philosophy of international relations, and at no point has any nation demonstrated both isolationism and imperialism simultaneously without sacrificing one to the other.

Perhaps the best example of imperialism in recent history is that of Great Britain. One of the modern world’s most prolific colonization forces, Britain utilized its military might for the sole purpose of expansion. In fact, the term “new imperialism” was coined to describe the British Empire. While historians seem to disagree as to the reasoning behind Britain’s expansion, the reasoning was most certainly not an attempt to eliminate trade or military involvement in other nations. This is obvious in examining the necessity of trade for the British Empire, in that its geographical separation from the rest of Europe made trade essential to survival. Contrasting Britain’s imperialism to Japan’s isolationism further supports the idea that imperialism is the antithesis of isolationism.

To an extent, the United States has always been an imperialist nation, attempting in one way or another to assert control over other nations. Be it through our occupation of the Philippines, Korea, or Iraq, or smaller efforts of peacekeeping, we have demonstrated time and time again that we are more than willing to step outside of our borders and into the borders of another country without direct provocation to our own nation. There have been times, especially following the First World War[[8]](#footnote-8), when the United States has adopted a significantly more isolationist policy, but our history seems to indicate a bent for imperialism.

In this year’s resolution, it will be important to consider the government’s actions and the mutually exclusive relationship between isolationism and imperialism. More importantly, the results of those actions must be weighed against an outside guide (the value) to determine which philosophy is ultimately more important.

Idealism

One of the most common discipleship lessons in the Christian church is regarding the horrible nature of duplicity. Christians across the globe struggle to make their public lives equally as glorifying to God as their private lives. Likewise, Woodrow Wilson felt that the United States needed to end its duplicity, and idealism was his solution. President Wilson believed that whatever we are willing to work for within our own nation, we should be willing to work for in the global community. In other words, our domestic policy should have the same goals as our foreign policy. He describes it best in his famous “Fourteen Points” speech:

[What we demand] is that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other peoples of the world as against force and selfish aggression. All the peoples of the world are in effect partners in this interest, and for our own part we see very clearly that unless justice be done to others it will not be done to us. The program of the world's peace, therefore, is our program; and that program, the only possible program, as we see it, is this.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Idealism is a strong force in international relations. Human rights activists are often idealists, as are religious proponents and those that strive to end a worldwide problem, such as world hunger or AIDS. Each group desires that our domestic policy and foreign policy be the same values they feel to be important.

This obviously violates all the principles of isolationism. Because it is one of the few “isms” that can be, and usually is, based upon morals and ethics, it may often be used as justification and motivation for the adoption of another “ism”, such as imperialism.

This particular “ism” will be essential in the value debate resolution, because it is one of the few international relations philosophies that can truly be based upon intrinsic values. As such, it can easily be used to justify the negative side of the resolution and uphold a value such as human rights. However, since it is not inherently based upon a particular set of intrinsic values, caution must be exercised when defining terms.

Realism

This “ism” deserves mention, even though Mackenzi Siebert has written an excellent article on classical realism and its modern usage through *realpolitik* elsewhere in this book. Simply put, it is exactly the opposite of idealism. Instead of basing relational policy upon an ideal of similarity between domestic and foreign policies, realism is based upon practical needs for security for a country within the world arena . International relations policies based upon realism are extremely fluid,[[10]](#footnote-10) as each policy is based upon the practical needs and circumstances of that particular country at that time.

As such, realism can coexist with isolationism due to the fact that an isolationist policy may be the best practical choice at any point in time. This makes it an “ism” that either side can use to formulate their arguments in debate over this year’s resolution.

Marxism

For an American, the term “Marxism” usually conjures up images of communism and the Cold War. Marxism carries with it a very strong, negative connotation in the United States, and as a result, it is almost never utilized in public policy here. However, it is worth studying since many countries throughout the world base their decisions upon this particular “ism.” Also, if we are to truly evaluate whether to isolate ourselves from these countries, it would be best to understand how they make decisions.

Marxism was developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in 1848 and holds that the economy, not the individual, drives society. As a result, Marxism views the outside world as a capitalist organization, therefore making the goal of international relations capitalization. Capitalization is simply the acquiring of new assets in a competing world.

Since this requires interaction, especially in the area of economics, but often also in the realm of military conflict, it cannot exist in harmony with isolationism. While it would initially seem that this would be a logical counter value to isolationism and while it is necessary to understanding the dynamics of the global community, the highly negative connotation for audiences in the United States make it ill-advised to use Marxism as a part of argumentation in support of your side in this year’s resolution.

Constructivism

Constructivism is perhaps the most philosophical relational theory. In order to understand exactly how constructivism works, social anarchy, the premise upon which constructivism is based, must be understood. Anarchy comes from the Greek and literally means “without rulers.” The most common usage of this term is within one nation or state, but it can also be applied to the world at large. In essence, every nation does what it pleases, without any guiding authority. Of course, nations sometimes submit to a higher power, such as the United Nations, but, as was the case with Iraq’s disobedience of United Nations’ sanctions, they can also choose to disregard the higher authority.

Most realist philosophers such as Machiavelli[[11]](#footnote-11) and Thucydides[[12]](#footnote-12) believe that because of social anarchy, nations will inherently interact violently. However, philosophers such as Alexander Wendt[[13]](#footnote-13), a major contributor to constructivist theory, believe that anarchy does not control the parts of the organization (in this case the world), but that the parts determine how anarchy will run its course. In other words, the beliefs that countries hold will determine how they interact. Perhaps Professor Raymond Hinnebusch, the Deputy Director for the Institute of Middle East, Central Asia, and Caucasus Studies (MECACS) at the University of St. Andrews described the difference best:

For materialist theories [such as realism and Marxism], the system level [the world], which largely constrains states [countries], is constituted by the distribution of military power in anarchic states systems or, in Marxist structuralism, the world economic division of labor which makes the periphery dependent on the core. Norms are largely manipulated to legitimize dominant interests. By contrast, in constructivism the systemic structure comprises shared international (or regional) norms into which states are socialized and these not only constrain their behavior but also help constitute the identities that motivate their conduct.[[14]](#footnote-14)

This somewhat confusing passage reaffirms the idea that constructivists view the international scene as malleable, and the interactions among nations as necessarily defined by whatever ethical standards can be held in common.

Constructivism carries with it no guaranteed results. Because the “ism” simply means that violence *can* be avoided, it does not mean that it *will* be avoided. As such, it may be compatible with isolationism in some instances and incompatible in others. The key to understanding it in the context of this year’s resolution will lie in determining how a constructivist isolationist or even a constructivist imperialist policy will influence the global system.

Conclusion

The understanding of the “isms” in International Relations can pack quite a punch in terms of framing this year’s values debate arguments. Hopefully this has provided a quick overview that will whet the reader’s appetite for a better understanding of some of the relational philosophies that can and should come into play during this year’s debate season. Additional study will enable debaters to utilize these terms effectively. Caution must be exercised however, because sometimes the mere mention of a word that ends in “ism” can cause a potent reaction in the mind of a listener. Use of relational philosophies will likely improve the quality of debate this year, but they should be employed carefully.

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expedient politics or Ideological pursuits

Searching for practical solutions in a complex world of foreign affairs

By Mackenzi Siebert

Italian political philosopher, musician, poet, and romantic comedic playwright, Niccolo Machiavelli[[15]](#footnote-15) wrote that, “Politics have no relation to morals.”[[16]](#footnote-16) Machiavelli’s theory that political solutions ought to be decided based more upon the practical outcome than upon ideological premise was revolutionary to political thought and came to be known as realist political theory[[17]](#footnote-17). Machiavelli went on to argue in his title work, *The Prince*,

“The one who adapts his policy to the times prospers, and likewise, the one whose policy clashes with the demands of the times does not.”[[18]](#footnote-18)

Now in the 21st century, Machiavelli’s theory is being reexamined in the light of America’s foreign relations and policies. Dubbed “realpolitik”, scholars and politicians alike have begun to examine the way in which America relates to the rest of the world. *Forbes* argued in March of this year,

“America is fundamentally and instinctively idealistic. But following these ideals and acting as the world’s policeman raises moral issues. We all agree that the sheriff must be righteous, brave and resolute. But should he also, if the situation demands, be cunning, devious and Machiavellian? In short, should America, along with its idealism, also practice realpolitik?... It’s difficult to exercise authority in large parts of the world and, to use Hobbes’ phrase, “keep them all in awe,” without a touch of realpolitik.”[[19]](#footnote-19)

Realpolitik solutions to international crises sometimes mandate that America be willing to withdraw from parts of the world in order to best protect her national interest first and to maintain her position as *the* global superpower. Other times, however, realist theory would suggest that America should become more involved in ethically questionable situations, reaching out to previously unfriendly or standoffish countries in hopes of reconciling and calming perceived threats. Is realpolitik a healthy theory for America to pursue? This is the question that must be answered as the topic of isolationism is considered.

Realpolitik as a Theory

Realpolitik is best described as the foreign policy expression of the John Stuart Mill philosophy of utilitarianism[[20]](#footnote-20). According to most dictionary definitions, realpolitik consists of using practicality as the standard to decide whether to take certain diplomatic or invasive actions with another country. In order to have a full overview of the definition of this theory, I’ve included several different definitions of realpolitik, each of which highlights different aspects of the theory.

*Practical politics, decided more by the immediate needs of the country, political party, etc., than by morals or principles. ~*Cambridge University

*Politics or national policy governed by principles of power, expansion, and expediency rather than by ideals or ethics. ~*Wordsmyth English Dictionary

*A usually expansionist national policy having as its sole principle advancement of national interests.* ~American Heritage Dictionary

*Politics based on practical rather than moral or ideological considerations.* ~Princeton University

*Practical politics, in the sense that ideas and theories are unimportant and can be disregarded in the conduct of political affairs.* ~Ludwig von Mises Institute

The foreign policy ideas embodied by the realpolitik approach often allow a more individualized plan for each international country, situation, or crisis. On the downside, it also means that the moral or ideological ideals held by the country, in this case the United States, can be left by the wayside in the pursuit of a solution. This theory of practical politics was the theory of choice during the late 1960’s during the Vietnam War and the US is once again using this standard as it evaluates its extensive involvement in multiple countries and conflicts. According to a July/August 2007 article from the publication *Foreign Affairs*,

“Grand visions of a global alliance of democracies need to be tempered by political reality. Informal groupings, such as the “contact group” for the Balkans, the Quartet, the participants in the six-party talks on North Korea, and EU-3/US coalition working to rein in Iran’s nuclear program, are rapidly becoming the most effective vehicles for diplomacy.”[[21]](#footnote-21)

The million dollar question then becomes, ‘How does the theory of realpolitik relate to isolationism? The political theory neither encourages nor discourages an emphasis on isolationism, per se. Usually defined as expansionist, realpolitik theory can and often does offer isolationist approaches to international situations. Because the theory rests on following the most practical approach to foreign policy, it can be argued that the most practical approach is isolationism. One thing it is important to note however, the theory of realpolitik rests on the assumption that the most practical approach is one that can be easily ascertained, and one on which everyone (or almost everyone) can agree. This is really the fatal flaw of realpolitik, and one which makes it a dangerous standard by which to guide American foreign policy.

Realpolitik in Past American Foreign Policy – Henry Kissinger

Realpolitik became a force in American foreign policy under the Nixon and Ford administrations, especially as formulated by the Secretary of State at the time of Henry Kissinger. Kissinger is still remembered as the man who headed up the successful offensive against the Soviet Union during the Cold War between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. In fact, Kissinger’s two greatest achievements were both based off of realpolitik solutions to present problems. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger evaluated the stalemate situation against the international presence of the USSR, and realized that the US did not have the strength to withstand alone the threat which Soviet Russia presented. So Kissinger enacted a policy of détente[[22]](#footnote-22) with China which ended 23 years of diplomatic isolation between the two countries as well as bringing a close to mutual hostility which mostly stemmed from differing views regarding Communism[[23]](#footnote-23) and China’s support of the USSR during the early stages of the Cold War[[24]](#footnote-24). Bridging the gap with China led to the formation of a tacit strategic anti-Soviet alliance between China and the US, giving the United States a much needed ally against the USSR[[25]](#footnote-25).

This shows us how realpolitik foreign policy works: when there is an international need or crisis, it is met in whatever way is mutually beneficial to the countries involved and offers a strategy that has high expectations for success. In this situation, the United States compromised on its morals (regarding alliances with Communist nations) so as to achieve a practical solution – an ally against Russia. We see in this example that the US valued its own national interest higher than its morals and principles and therefore compromised based on the realpolitik idea of practicality, solvency, and expediency in foreign policy.

Kissinger also adopted the realpolitik theory of politics when dealing with the Vietnam situation. When it became evident that the US was not winning in Vietnam, and that the US had no public support for the war, Kissinger adopted a policy which has since become known as Vietnamization. Essentially what this policy did was to gradually withdraw American troops from Vietnam while, at the same time, expanding the combat role of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. This plan was adopted in hopes that the American backlash against the war would be greatly reduced and yet the US could still find success in Vietnam against the Communist North. Unfortunately, as we all know, this plan didn’t exactly have the desired effect of achieving both of its goals. What we often see when examining foreign policy decisions made in this mold is that what works on paper and seems practical in theory is not always workable in actuality. Vietnamization is a perfect example of this concept as well as an illustration of the failures that can at times exist from adopting an isolationist policy. The United States ultimately improved public approval ratings by pulling out of Vietnam, but in the process, injustice and Communism were allowed to take root in the Asian country of Vietnam.

Realpolitik in Today’s World – Iraq[[26]](#footnote-26)

The political situation in the county of Iraq is typically labeled as ‘civil war’; one that Professor James D. Fearon[[27]](#footnote-27) argues is a justified title. Civil war is, as he describes it,

“a violent conflict within a country fought by organized groups that aim to take power at the center or in a region, or to change government policies.”[[28]](#footnote-28)

The deteriorating political situation within Iraq leaves the issue open to debate as to how the world superpowers and Iraq’s neighbors will respond to what could quickly escalate into an international crisis regarding terrorism and the Shi’ite/Sunni religious differences.

The eight countries which have the greatest vested interest in the outcome of the Iraq situation are, the United States, Great Britain, China, Russia, France, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. Nearly 50 countries recently met to discuss possible outcomes to the conflict. The outcome of this conference was political rhetoric riddled with individual national interest. Each country advocated a foreign policy approach which it deemed to be the most expedient, not for creating a stable Iraqi nation, but for creating the best possible situation for its own national interest.

The ***United States*** is between a rock and a hard place when it comes to Iraq. The Bush Administration genuinely desires to create a lasting, stable, democratic country in the heart of the Middle East. But with public approval of our involvement in Iraq rapidly declining and with the hints that Iraq is nothing more than another Vietnam, there seems to be no expedient approach. The process of withdrawing American troops while trying to support the role of a native military has already proved in Vietnam to be a less than successful tactic. The Bush Administration is scrambling to find a practical solution to the civil war that will advance our ideals, appease the American public, and give Iraq a fighting chance. Public opinion certainly seems to be swinging back to a more isolationist position as a result of our involvement in Iraq.

***Great Britain*** has found itself in a situation similar to that of the US, but with Prime Minister Tony Blair recently resigning from office and with large public condemnation for UK presence in Iraq, the troops are already being pulled from the Middle East. England has settled its foreign policy on isolationism, focusing on national interest and national unity first and international crises second.

The most populous country in the world and one of the economic superpowers of our era, ***China*** is faced with numerous opportunities in the Middle Eastern sphere. As they continue to expand production capabilities, China finds that they have an ever increasing need for oil and natural gas products, products which countries such as Iraq and Iran can readily supply. China has shown no indication of concern regarding the political situation in Iraq, so long as they can maintain access to the oil which they so desperately need to continue expansion as the manufacturing powerhouse of the world.

Similar to China, ***Russia*** is looking for more resources to fuel its economy. Russia must recoup billions of dollars in contracts signed with Saddam Hussein which were lost to the war. Russia has a historical preference for realpolitik alliances. As the World Peace Herald put it,

“Russia could not care less whether Iraq is run by a democratic or totalitarian regime and will transact with the devil as long as it can secure profitable deals while enhancing its regional influence.”[[29]](#footnote-29)

***France*** is in a state of political flux following the election of Nicholas Sarcozy to leader of the country. Never before closely involved with Iraq, Sarcozy is now attempting to reach out to America to rekindle cold relations between the countries into an alliance that is mutually beneficial. How that will be done is yet to be seen, but it is very possible that France could become an ally in Iraq. The problem that remains is that France, like Russia, lost billions in contracts with Saddam Hussein, billions that it desperately needs to recoup.

Now arguably the strongest country in the Middle East, ***Iran*** couldn’t be happier with confusion in Iraq. The conflict between the two countries is long standing and now that Iraq is no longer a major player in Middle Eastern politics, the supremacy is Iran’s for the taking. As such, the government in Tehran has become involved in arming Shi’ite Muslims who continue to wage war against the Sunnis, creating even more confusion and havoc in Iraq. For Iran, the driving force behind their dealings with Iraq is to centralize their own power and promote their national interests in the region.

***Saudi Arabia*** *and* ***Syria*** view the situation with growing dread. If the civil war between the two different sects of Islam were to exceed the borders of Iraq, they fear for the peace of their own countries. Both seek advance peace first and foremost – Saudi by arming the Sunni Muslims in hopes that peace will eventually ensue and Syria by hoping that Iraq will eventually once again become stable enough to resume their extensive trade.

What we see from each of these countries is realpolitik in action – yet we also see that it looks incredibly different from different angles. Each of these countries is seeking the most practical, most beneficial approach, and is seeking to protect their national interest in the process. The thing that must be remembered about this approach to foreign policy is that there is rarely a consensus on what the practical and feasible solution could be. The difficulties in adopting an expedient and realistic policy are exponentially increased when considering the divisions that exist amongst different factions and political parties domestically. Each group has its own idea for the best foreign policy approach and thus stalemate can often result when realpolitik becomes the rule of thumb. Ironically, if stalemate exists for long enough, no foreign policy is enacted and isolationism can become the status quo simply because nothing else is getting done. The key component to a functional foreign policy is national unity behind the idea, no matter what the policy. As Walter Lippmann[[30]](#footnote-30) noted,

“In foreign relations, as in all other relations, a policy has been formed only when its commitments and power have been brought into balance… The nation must maintain its objectives and its power in equilibrium, its purposes within its means and its means equal to its purposes.”[[31]](#footnote-31)

This truly must be the heartbeat of foreign affairs and foreign policy. National unity on issues of global importance is crucial to success of any international action. As Lippmann went on to warn,

“…when a people is divided within itself about the conduct of its foreign relations, it is unable to agree on the determination of its true interest. It is unable to prepare adequately for war or to safeguard successfully its peace… The spectacle of this great nation which does not know its own mind is as humiliating as it is dangerous.”[[32]](#footnote-32)

To conclude, the foreign policy of the United states often seeks the most practical possible approach, however it is difficult to make that approach work successfully simply because of a lack of unity. When the US seeks the realpolitik solution to international crises however, and is actually able to find one, there is no clear preference for globalization, or isolationism. The beauty of realpolitik is that is allows for the US to have flexible and fluid responses to different situations, instead of forcing an ideology on other nations that may not be compatible with another culture or is not ready to fit a developing nation. Allowing realpolitik to take its course in American politics sets up a foreign policy that does not tie the government’s hands to tradition. Realist foreign policy dictates that the United States exercise practicality in international relations and be willing to adopt an isolationist policy if it is deemed beneficial to America as well as to other nations involved, and follow a more globalist path when that is deemed most advantageous. As Machiavelli suggests, he who can adapt his policies will prosper – and that is exactly what the United States needs to do to maintain her position as the foremost country in our world today.

Proscribing Protectionism, Protecting Prosperity

An Introduction to Free Market Principles in 21st Century International Relations

By Joanna M. Griffith

The year 1776 is etched in the minds of most as the year of the Declaration of Independence. But as the American colonists were commencing a fight for political liberty, a Scottish philosopher and economist on the other side of the Atlantic was writing a book that would transform economic theory throughout the world. His name was Adam Smith and the book is known today as *The Wealth of Nations.* History professor Prasannan Parthasarathi writes:

*“The Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776, is widely credited with laying the theoretical and philosophical foundations for the modern free market system, what Smith referred to as a commercial society but has since come to be known as capitalism.”[1]

Interestingly, the concepts developed in this book have since become integral to free societies such as the one the colonists desired. Today the work of Adam Smith and the principles of free market economics bear heavily on a discussion of isolationism. To explore this it is important to look at Adam Smith’s life and philosophy, the main tenants of free market thinking, and the impact this has on isolationist policies in the 21st century.

Adam Smith the Man

Born in 1723, Smith thrived in studying moral philosophy and economic theory. As a young teen he entered the University of Glasgow, a school at which he would one day teach. Throughout his life he interacted with many of the academic elite of his day from David Hume to Voltaire and was chosen to be a member of the Royal Society. Though he studied logic, rhetoric, philosophy, and morality, he is best known for his defense of free market principles. [2]

During Smith’s life, mercantilism was the dominant economic philosophy in much of Europe. Scientific and industrial progress, coupled with oceanic exploration, had suddenly made global economic trade plausible. In the race that ensued European nations fought for economic superiority. Mercantilism advocated protectionist policies and emphasized gold as the most important commodity. Under this system the primary factor in decision-making was the benefit such a plan could bring to the nation. Smith rebutted this argument by contending for open, competitive international trade, driven by supply and demand forces. [3] Under this system the “Invisible Hand”, not the government would manage these operations.

As Dr. Edward Yardeni describes Smith’s writing:

“His brilliant expose of how mercantilism and protectionism lead to economic stagnation still stands as the most influential manifesto guiding so many governments to privatize their industries, to deregulate their markets, and to join their nations in free trade. His optimism was both refreshing and accurate during the late 1700s, when so many pessimists predicted ruin. His optimism is just as compelling today.”[4]

Principle Tenets of Capitalism

Thousands of pages have been written on free market thinking and its implications, but a look at six primary components of this theory will provide a firm start in applying capitalist economics to the concept of isolationism. In short then, capitalism may be summarized by these six concepts: division of labor, supply and demand, economic equilibrium, open competition, the effectiveness of self-interest, and a laissez-faire government approach.

Division of Labor

In his philosophic classic *The Republic*, Plato outlines what he believes would be an ideal society. Beginning with a miniscule rudimentary structure, he tracks the growth and expansion of this society as labor is divided. From the tailor to the baker, the farmer to the midwife, every job is filled by those individuals best suited to completing them. The tailor buys grain from the farmer and the farmer wears clothes made by the tailor. Plato is not remembered as a free market theorist, but this idea of the division of labor has remained and developed throughout western history and is now a vital component of many 21st century economies. Adam Smith’s book opens with the famous lines:

The greatest improvement in the productive powers of labour, and the greater part of the skill, dexterity, and judgment with which it is any where directed, or applied, seem to have been the effects of the division of labour. [5]

Plato’s discussion of the farmer and tailor sound antiquated to modern ears, but the same incentive to divide labor exists today both on domestically and internationally. No one individual will be an expert in wiring the electricity in his home, making public policy decisions, laying asphalt for the roads in his neighborhood, raising livestock and annual crops, and engineering a computer. But when one group legislates, another farms, others build roads, and still others advance technology, resources are more efficiently allocated to the society as a whole. Each individual is employed in his area of expertise. While providing this service to the society, he simultaneously reaps the benefits of the different, but equally necessary jobs completed by those around him. The extent to which labor may be divided depends on the size of the society. But whether the economy is large or small, this principle is revolutionary in improving economic efficiency and increasing overall quality of life and societal progress.

The modern addendum to this classic idea is to view the world as a single society and apply the principle of division of labor to nations rather than simply to individuals. This means that no one country would be able to support itself. Some would be given over almost entirely to agriculture or mining or manufacturing depending upon its natural resources and its people’s skills. And each would depend for survival upon trade with a large selection of other nations. How far this can be practical or ethical remains to be seen.

Supply and Demand

These forces lie at the root of a free market. For it is supply and demand that determine which goods will be produced, in what quantities they will be produced, how they will be produced, and in what manner they will be sold. In mathematical terms supply and demand are inverse. As the supply increases, demand for that item decreases. Likewise, a smaller supply of a good will result in an increased demand for it. Prices, wages, and market competition all respond to these two corresponding forces. Author Thomas Sowell explains, “The quantity supplied varies directly with the price, just as the quantity demanded varies inversely with the price.”[6] For example, Sowell discusses the effects of supply and demand on oil prices. As the price of oil rises, competitors recognize a potentially lucrative profit to be made in the industry and production expands. This expanded production brings with it a higher supply until eventually the supply exceeds the demand for oil. At this point not every producer in the market can reap a profit. Producers will face stiff competition to remain in business. And those who cannot profit (the marginally successful ones) will be forced to close their doors. Through these transactions supply and demand meets the needs of the consumers in the most efficient way possible. When supply and demand balance out, the market has reached equilibrium.

Supply and demand forces will operate not just within a nation’s economy, but in international trading as well. If protectionist policies are enacted to inhibit the natural course of these forces, the achievement of a true economic equilibrium will be hindered.

Economic Equilibrium

Economic equilibrium is achieved when the right amount of goods are produced and are sold at the right price to perfectly meet the demand of the consumers. If an item’s price is too high or too much of it is produced, an excess will result. If the price is too low or not enough of the product is made, consumers eager to buy the product will be left empty-handed. When allowed to operate freely a capitalist market will generally achieve equilibrium.

Hillsdale College professor Gary Wolfram summarizes these ideas writing:

Any price lower than this [equilibrium] will result in more of the good being demanded than will be supplied, a shortage. Any price higher than this will result in more of the good being supplied than is demanded, excess supply. In either case the incentives are to move to equilibrium.[7]

Open Competition

The actions which drive these market forces are to be undertaken by individual choice. A truly capitalist society is open both in the sense that markets operate freely according to the forces of supply and demand and in the sense that each individual may choose whether or not to compete in a given market in the first place. Without this, the market is not truly free.

Self-Interest

James Madison wrote in *Federalist Paper No. 51*, “If men were angels, no government would be necessary.”[8] In fact the need for government correlates directly with the need to check the ambitions, greed, and evils of men who uniformly seek their own self-interest. But while some government controls are advisable (such as coining money and establishing weights to be used in trade) economies generally need much less government intervention than social policy, for example. On the domestic front governments must censure and punish violence and fraud. Foreign policies must protect a nation against physical animosity from other nations. Oddly, man’s self-interest, though often not guided by pure intentions, generally works within the economic sphere to promote to common good.

Adam Smith described free enterprise economies as being managed by an Invisible Hand:

Every individual is continually exerting himself to find out the most advantageous employment for whatever capital he can command. It is his own advantage, indeed, and not that of the society, which he has in view. But the study of his own advantage naturally, or rather necessarily leads him to prefer that employment which is most advantageous to the society . . . [B]y directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. [9]

In summary, man acts for his own self-interest by attempting to provide resources to the consumer in the most efficient way possible. By doing this he contributes to the overall economic well-being of the society, thus promoting both self-interest and the common good through the use of the Invisible Hand.

Laissez-faire

Finally, Smith’s classic free market theory contends that the economy ought to be free to operate without excessive governmental control. Rather than taxing imports and exports or fixing prices and wages, the government should allow the market to operate separately according to the dictates of supply and demand. This principle stood in direct contradiction to the heavy government interference that typically accompanied mercantilism.

Connecting Capitalism and the Isolationist Debate

Clearly, free market thinking runs contrary to isolationist and protectionist agendas which would prevent nations from engaging in free economic trade. Having overviewed key economic principles these ideas may be juxtaposed with isolationist approaches and applied to current issues. In doing this it is important to remember the classic definition of economics. British economist Lionel Robbins said, “Economics is the study of the use of scarce resources which have alternative uses.”[10] When analyzing an economic proposal one must consider the merits and flaws of this plan in efficiently allocating resources to the consumer. With this in mind, let us examine a few modern issues from both a capitalist and isolationist perspective.

Auto Industry

For much of the 20th century the American auto industry was largely exempt from competition. Today, American producers are being quickly outpaced by foreign producers – particularly in Asia. From an isolationist perspective, it would be expedient to curb international competition through high tariffs and thereby artificially protect American companies from competing producers. But here one must take a step back and consider the impact international competition has on the consumer. Susan Riley of The Ottawa Citizen wrote:

The Big Three North American manufacturers are in trouble because they have been slow to recognize changing tastes, outsmarted by quality-conscious Asia competitors, and stupidly committed to replicating past failures.[11]

International competition provides American consumers with a wider selection from which to choose the car that best fits their needs. In turn, this forces US companies to face extermination or else manufacture automobiles that will meet consumers’ needs and wishes.

Open competition provides a strong incentive for effective, quality, practical vehicles. When US producers fail to heed the wishes of the consumers in the market, others out-perform them. Eric Peters explained this in a May 8, 2007 *American Spectator* article:

It was simply that the Japanese listened to the customers and produced cars the market wanted – while Detroit took its customers for granted and mostly ignored them, building cars managers wanted but which customers increasingly did not.” Hope is not lost for the American auto industry. GM in particular is showing signs of progress. But applying free market economics is exposing US companies to global competition and strengthening the service rendered to consumers.[12]

Free Trade Agreements

Presently, the United States is a member of over twenty trade agreements. One of the most prominent and influential agreements is NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement). As the US Trade Department explains:

According to figures of the International Monetary Fund, total trade among the three NAFTA countries has more than doubled, passing from US$306 billion in 1993 to almost US$621 billion in 2002. That’s US$1.2 million every minute. The NAFTA is an example of the benefits that all countries could derive from moving forward with multilateral trade liberalization. Farmers, workers and manufacturers benefit from the reduction of arbitrary and discriminatory trade rules, while consumers enjoy lower prices and more choices.

NAFTA specifically lifts trade barriers between the United States, Canada, and Mexico.[13]

All of these agreements share one thing in common: they open competition between nations. From an isolationist’s perspective this agreement could harm the market within a specific nation if its companies lag behind in competition. This could cause the standard of living to fall for those workers and a reduction in the country’s overall output. A situation such as this poses complications on numerous fronts. Politically, a country may find itself disadvantaged if its economy depends on another nation’s products for survival. If the United States relies on Mexico for food, Japan for cars, Saudi Arabia for oil, and China for house wares, significant political and diplomatic leverage is lost. Moral quandaries may also quickly arise. Though a country may offer the cheapest goods, it is ethical to buy them even if evidence suggests that slave labor was used in their production? Finally, in sectors such intelligence and defense technology, it is often expedient for a country to manage production itself and keep detailed information on its defense materials secret.

On the reverse, from a free market economic standpoint, opening competition expands consumer choice and encourages quality products.

Hong Kong & India: A Telling Comparison

In the 1930’s India and Hong Kong were economically poor British colonies. In the decades that have since elapsed both nations have earned political and economic independence and have advanced in their standing within the international community. India’s place of prominence is easily understandable. With over one billion people it is the 2nd most populous nation in the world. A large potential work force, western support (the US recently signed a nuclear treaty with India), and abundant natural resources make India a likely candidate for economic success. Hong Kong on the other hand is geographically small and lacks India’s natural resources.[14] Control from Beijing would seem to further inhibit capitalism.

Surprisingly though, it is Hong Kong, not India, who has made the greatest economic progress in the decades since independence. According to Mark Skousen, “Hong Kong enjoys the greatest concentration of wealth in the world. India suffers the greatest concentration of poverty in the world.”[15] ABC analyst John Stossel compared the United States, India, and Hong Kong in a special titled, “IS America #One?” Among his observations, Stossel found that businesses are simple to launch in Hong Kong. An entrepreneur can often be in business within hours. In India launching a business typically requires numerous packets of paperwork, long lines, and months of waiting until the complex bureaucracy makes a decision.[16]

The key difference between India and Hong Kong is economic freedom. Hong Kong consistently lands the number one spot in the Index of Economic Freedom’s annual rankings. That open atmosphere has paid off. In a country with a population density twenty times greater than that of India, millions of poor are prospering and joining the growing middle class. John Templeton, who has studied the progress of this region remarks:

The government of India regulates nearly everything, so there's very little progress; whereas in Hong Kong the government keeps its hands off . . . and the standard of living has multiplied.[17]

While India’s democratic bureaucracy manages countless details, millions are left in abject poverty. In Hong Kong, the laissez-faire government approach has created a culture that fosters innovation, encourages entrepreneurship, and rewards hard work. What is the difference in terms of isolationism? India adopted a policy of protectionism (though progress is being made as they lessen regulation today), striving to create the perfect economic environment. When Kentucky Fried Chicken or the Pepsi Company wanted to invest in India, Parliament debated the proposals for months, while millions of Indian citizens went hungry. Trade barriers and a national currency which is not fully compatible with other currencies add to the protectionist effect. Regional relations have grown tense as nations such as Vietnam and Sri Lanka attempt to compete with their larger, more influential neighbor.

Hong Kong, however, allows free trade and competition both domestically and internationally. This anti-isolationist approach is clearly reaping rich rewards both for Hong Kong’s citizens and for the individuals from around the world who have come to find fertile ground to test their business ideas.

Conclusion

Economic structures are central to evaluating isolationism. Adam Smith’s free market theories predominate in western economics, yet many still debate the extent to which they should be used. Open international competition may jeopardize American jobs, but also grants consumers a wider range of products. Nations such as India and Hong Kong must balance political structures (India is democratic, Hong Kong is under communist China’s influence) with economic ones. In relating to nations such as these the United States must consider the comparative worth and compatibility of varying political and economic systems.

While debate will continue over the specifics, capitalism has made an indelible mark on Western Civilization. Penned over two centuries ago, Adam Smith’s free market theories shape both national fiscal and monetary policies along with individual economic choices.

Footnotes

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[8] Madison, James. *The Federalist Papers.* New York City: Signet Classic, 2003. 319.

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[10] Robbins, Lionel. Quoted by Sowell, Thomas. *Basic Economics*. New York: Basic Books, 2004.

[11] Riley, Susan. “On Making Cars People Want.” *The Ottawa Citizen*, 16 Feb 2007.

[12] Peters, Eric. “Why Toyota’s Number One.” *American Spectator*, 08 May 2007.

[13] *North American Free Trade Agreement*. Office of the United States Trade Representative. 16 Jul. 2007. <http://www.ustr.gov/Trade\_Agreements/Regional/NAFTA/Section\_Index.html>

[14] Skousen, Mark. “Poverty and Wealth: India Versus Hong Kong.” *The Freeman.* 52.2 (2002). <http://www.fee.org/publications/the-freeman/article.asp?aid=3996>

[15] Skousen, Mark. “Poverty and Wealth: India Versus Hong Kong.” *The Freeman.* 52.2 (2002). <http://www.fee.org/publications/the-freeman/article.asp?aid=3996>

[16] *Stossel in the Classroom Series: Is America #One?*. John Stossel. DVD. In The Classroom Media. 2005.

[17] John Templeton: Quoted in William Proctor, The Templeton Prizes (New York: Doubleday, 1983), p. 72.

“This is Not Team Policy”

All about economics, isolationism, values and their place in the LD round.

By Matt Pitchford

When I made the switch from Team Policy to Lincoln-Douglas, I was reasonably certain that I would never again have the opportunity to debate about that exhilarating topic of economics. Well, I was obviously wrong - and never so happy to be proven so.

But this resolution is not your policy-geek's economics debate. This is Lincoln-Douglas after all. This is a discussion about the philosophy of economics and the vibrant interaction between economics and underlying values. This article is going to look at two of the most important (and opposing views) of economics - free market economics and the concept of "protectionism;" then we will delve into their history, theory, and real life current events within a context of the meat of LD ... value clash.

Some definitions

First, as always, it important to define terms. Economics is broadly defined as “the science that deals with the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.”[[33]](#footnote-33) This is important because as value debate, the only real place for a very numbers-oriented science is the realm of application and demonstration. One can use economics as a standard to measure the effectiveness of a value, as an example of a value's real life effect, or as a point demonstrating isolationism in all its forms.

One of the clearest and most easily understood delineations of economic theory is between free markets and protectionism.

Free Trade and its assumption

Free trade, defined by the Columbia Encyclopedia "in modern usage, [is] trade or commerce carried on without such restrictions as import duties, export bounties, domestic production subsidies, trade quotas, or import licenses."[[34]](#footnote-34)

There are multiple heavy-duty economic terms in that definition that simply mean that free trade is trade without extra restraints. *Import duties or tariffs* are a tax on imports that enter the nation from other countries. *Export bounties* are payments by government to companies that export goods to other countries; those companies can then use that extra money to provide cheaper goods in foreign markets. *Domestic production subsidies* are payments made by government directly to domestic industries in order to provide a product cheaper than foreign competition. *Trade quotas* are a maximum limit of a particular good that can be imported. *Import licenses* are national authorizations to import goods. Each of these governmental policies is an example of protecting a domestic market. The removal of these restrictions allows a free market.[[35]](#footnote-35) [[36]](#footnote-36)

The definition from Columbia is especially useful because it goes on to define one of the underlying assumptions of a free market.

"The basic argument for free trade is based on the economic theory of comparative advantage: each region should concentrate on what it can produce most cheaply and efficiently and should exchange its products for those it is less able to produce economically."[[37]](#footnote-37)

If the underlying assumption of comparative advantage is true - and truly advantageous - then you have a compelling case for free trade ... but this assumption is certainly debatable. For example, the economist Richard Benson contends that while comparative advantage is a true benefit, identifying it is much harder.

"Where there is true and honest Comparative Advantage, there are clear benefits. However, the true Comparative Advantage is not always clear and the outcome is not always simple, except perhaps for the naive. Indeed, it is naïve to believe that just because there is "trade" or cross border activity taking place, there is Comparative Advantage at work. Every economic activity relies on exchange; not all are a Comparative Advantage."[[38]](#footnote-38)

Another important assumption in the realm of free trade is that humans, when given the opportunity, will do what is in their own best economic self-interest. This assumption presumes that people can actually identify the correct path to achieve their self-interest, which is not always the case. For example, look at Holland between 1634 and 1637. People sold their land, houses, and spent their life savings in order to buy ... tulip bulbs.[[39]](#footnote-39) The tulip market was perceived as limitless, and people began to buy tulips purely on speculation. At some point, the people of Holland began to realize that they had just sold their house for a tulip bulb that they could not sell even to foreigners for any kind of profit. Needless to say, the market crashed and many Hollanders lost the entirety of their possessions. This is admittedly an extreme example, but it demonstrates that you can't always assume that human nature will act in its own long term self-interest.

Protectionism and its assumptions

The idea of market protection is the inverse of a free market, as noted above. The reasons and assumptions behind protectionism are just as varied and debatable, however. Protecting a market presumes that when goods are placed in competition, that there is effectively a win-lose situation at hand. If you have a job or sell a specific product to a customer, then no one else can have that job or sell a similar product to that customer. You win, and everyone else who did not get that job or sell that good loses. In light of this fact, the next assumption is that it is in the nation's best interest to enrich its citizens by allowing them exclusive or greater access to domestic markets thereby limiting competition from foreign sources. A nation can also seek to protect a specific "vital" market, such as national defense manufacturers.

As with free markets, sometimes these assumptions are shown to be false. Very rarely is it true that when jobs are taken away from one sector, such as from domestic labor pools, that there is an overall increase in unemployment. The entire economic market, essentially, is not a zero sum game. The market "pie" is itself growing. [[40]](#footnote-40) It is also debatable whether it is better to, essentially, monopolize domestic markets. Competition is a powerful motivator and innovator, and it may be better for the consumer and the nation as a whole to allow such competition, even from foreign markets. Francois Bar echoes this sentiment, specifically regarding telecommunications.

“Market competition is not an end in itself, although the US debate sometimes suggests otherwise. It is, rather, a means to generate and capture new opportunities for economic growth and industrial innovation opened by the new information technologies. The introduction of competition has been found to be necessary in the advanced economies...”[[41]](#footnote-41)

Historical background

This is not a new arena of discussion. Since the very beginning of this country, there has been debate over whether market isolationism or free trade is the better option. As with other theoretical and ideological debates, however, proponents of each side seem capable of looking at the exact same historical facts and arriving and completely different conclusions.

The American Colonies began in a typical colonial "mercantile" economic relationship. Great Britain, as the mother country, "expected to gain materially" from all trade with the colonies. Great Britain expected to have a "favorable balance of trade," where the value of domestic goods exported exceeded the value of foreign goods imported. America was given a heavy burden that, in part, "was a significant cause of the Revolution."[[42]](#footnote-42)

In 1776, Adam Smith penned "An Inquiry in the Nature and Cause of The Wealth of Nations." In it, he argued that economic growth depended on "specialization and the division of labor"[[43]](#footnote-43) rather than the relationship between imports and exports. Therefore, international trade effectively increased the size of the market for any given country, allowed for more refined specialization, created an international division of labor, and thereby benefited all countries by increasing the world's productivity and output.

America, however, started with a wave of protectionist policies with its first tariff in 1789. Alexander Hamilton, in his 1791 "Report on Manufacturing," justified the tariff in context of America's infant industries and the Federal Government's need for revenue.[[44]](#footnote-44) Protection escalated until the 1828 "Tariff of Abominations." During this time, as the US Tariff Commission notes, average tariff rates rose to nearly 49 percent on imported goods. By 1832, Congress began to scale back tariffs with further reductions enacted the following year. In 1842, tariffs were again raised; but by 1846, tariffs were moving downward, and were lowered further in 1857. Following the 1857 act, tariffs averaged 20 percent.[[45]](#footnote-45)

Historian Frank Toussig points to the time period above as proof that tariffs had little effect on domestic growth, even in regard to infant industries. He writes,

"The intrinsic soundness of the argument for protection to young industries therefore may not be touched by the conclusions drawn from the history of its trial in the United States, which shows only that the intentional protection of the tariffs of 1816, 1824, and 1828 had little effect."[[46]](#footnote-46)

On the other hand, Pat Buchanan contends that protectionism is the very cause of economic success in the rise of several nations, including the United States. He says,

"[P]rotectionism has been behind the rise of every great power in modern history: Great Britain under the Acts of Navigation up to 1850, the America of 1860 to 1914, Germany from 1870 to 1914, Japan from 1950 to 1990 and China, which has grown at 9 percent a year for a decade. As China demonstrates, it is a mistake to assume free trade, or even democracy, is indispensable to growth."[[47]](#footnote-47)

A somewhat spastic pattern continued throughout the 1800s and the early 1900s. Tariffs would increase to protect "infant" industries or otherwise, and then some free trade laws would be enacted to reduce tariffs, only to have tariff rates raised again later, and so on. The Smoot-Hawley Tariff of 1930 is a notable exception, however. This tariff brought import duties to historically high levels, some increasing by 100%. The U.S. State Department sums up the situation,

"The original intention behind the legislation was to increase the protection afforded domestic farmers against foreign agricultural imports. Massive expansion in the agricultural production sector outside of Europe during World War I led, with the postwar recovery of European producers, to massive agricultural over-production during the 1920s. This in turn led to declining farm prices during the second half of the decade. ...The Smoot-Hawley Tariff was more a consequence of the onset of the Great Depression than an initial cause. But while the tariff might not have caused the Depression, it certainly did not make it any better."[[48]](#footnote-48)

Debate still rages over what kind of impact the Smoot-Hawley Tariff had on the Great Depression. Bruce Bartlett, writing for the National Center for Policy Analysis, notes:

"According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, the initial economic decline of the Great Depression began in August 1929, well in advance of the stock market crash or Smoot-Hawley. While it is true that international trade collapsed after 1929, it is difficult to say how much was due to the tariff or the depression.”

On one side of the debate are economists Barry Eichengreen and Mario Crucini, who argue that Smoot-Hawley's impact on the economy was negligible and possibly even expansionary. Writing in Research in Economic History (1989), Eichengreen says,

"Contrary to the presumption informing most analyses of the subject, ... the direct effect of the tariff on the U.S. economy is likely to have been expansionary."

Crucini, writing in the American Economic Review (June 1994), agrees, concluding that "the Hawley-Smoot Tariff Act of 1930 did not have the massive deflationary implications that are widely attributed to it."

On the other side of the debate are economists Douglas Irwin, Judith McDonald, Patrick O'Brien and Colleen Callahan. Irwin, whose research appears in the Review of Economics and Statistics (May 1998), argues that because many of the tariff increases were specific monetary amounts, deflation had the effect of increasing their real effect by 30 percent. Consequently, he concludes that Smoot-Hawley was responsible for at least 40 percent of the decline in imports after 1930."[[49]](#footnote-49)

When discussing tariffs, especially the Smoot Hawley Tariff, one also must keep in mind retaliatory measures. Countries that have to pay American tariffs often turn right around and put tariffs on American goods in the same market so America does not have an unfair advantage in *their* domestic market. Very rarely will you find unilateral protectionist policies.

Since World War II, after the U.S. recovered from the Great Depression, America has been characterized by increased freedom in trade. The United States played a pivotal role in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) that started in 1947 to freeze tariff rate levels with the eventual goal of decreasing tariffs to benefit all countries. The latest GATT round in 1993 created the World Trade Organization, which continues to support the long term goals of decreasing import restrictions of all kinds.[[50]](#footnote-50)

Current events

You may remember the 2002-2003 steel tariff controversy. This is a current day example of not only tariff policies, but tariff *politics.* In 2002, President Bush placed a temporary protective tariff on American steel industries which had been facing difficult times. The move elicited responses from all political spectrums. Some analysts said that the tariffs were ineffective and actually "weakened U.S. steel.”[[51]](#footnote-51) Partly in response to such pressure, the tariffs were cancelled in 2003 rather than sun-setting in 2005. Industry leaders said that "Bush ended the tariffs when restructuring was 'little more than halfway through.'"[[52]](#footnote-52)

Pat Buchanan, again lobbying for protectionism, points out the positive benefits of the steel tariffs. He writes,

"As for the U.S. steel mills Bush sought to protect, consider this item buried inside the free-trade Wall Street Journal. Under a headline, "Steelmakers Post Improved Results for 2nd Quarter," a reporter writes: 'Buoyed by import tariffs, the country's two largest steelmakers reported vastly improved second-quarter results, as mills operate at nearly full capacity and prices rise. ... The outlook for the rest of the year looks solid ...' Well done, Mr. President."[[53]](#footnote-53)

Steven Moore from the Cato Institute responds,

"Mr. Bush's faltering on free trade couldn't come at a worse time. The global trading system is under assault. ... The rise in worldwide tariffs, quotas and government subsidies to domestic industries is arguably the most dangerous new development in the global economy. It has been the expansion of free trade and the chopping of tariff barriers over the past quarter-century that has helped propel the dramatic rise in living standards and wealth creation in the U.S. and much of the rest of the world. Nations that have entered the global trading marketplace have exploited the magical force of Adam Smith's comparative advantage to increase growth and wages by producing what they produce best."[[54]](#footnote-54)

Clearly, the issue of isolationism versus free trade is still strong in contemporary politics and policy.

Thomas Friedman, in his book "The World is Flat," describes an important point. He contends that the world has entered the stage of "Globalization 3.0" The world is becoming tied closer together, communication and trade are becoming easier, and because of this intertwining of economics, the global economy is much more important to each individual country. The debate over isolationism and free trade contains the same ideas, but the scope of the world is expanding and changing. The consequences of increased isolationism may be felt by countries removed from direct domestic impact; America's economic might remains critical to more than just American consumers and businesses.[[55]](#footnote-55)

The Bottom Line:

So, we've discussed underlying assumptions and waded through historical analysis. Now we are going to go out a level and look at the bottom line. Free trade proponents can look to a healthy supply of numbers that show a benefit to the entire country.

"The gains from freer trade are substantial. Today, the $12 trillion U.S. economy is bolstered by free trade, a pillar of America's vitality. In 2005, U.S. exports to the rest of the world totaled $1.2 trillion and supported one in five U.S. manufacturing jobs. Jobs directly linked to the export of goods pay 13 percent to 18 percent more than other U.S. jobs. Moreover, agricultural exports hit a record high in 2005 and now account for 926,000 jobs."[[56]](#footnote-56)

Protectionists can look to the "little guy" in specific domestic industries. Loss of jobs, capital and good markets can have a weighty impact on American citizens. Protection against Ross Perot's "giant sucking sound" as jobs, income, and industries are outsourced is the case for economic isolationism.

Remember this is LD after all ...

In my experience in Team Policy, the discussion of economics is usually confined to the effects of economics. If free trade helps more people than it hurts, then it is good. If protectionism protects jobs and doesn't harm international relations, then it is good. But one can go so much deeper in LD. One can discuss the ethical standard used in policies and whether that standard is worth upholding. Instead of discussing pure numbers or whether there is more money in the entire economy, one can point out the negative impacts of free trade on a minority industry ... and this itself can show the need to increase the valuing of isolationism or vice versa.

Since we have discussed the history and consequences of each economic theory, we can then apply those consequences to our value and thereby determine whether the resolution is true or false. For example, is it more just to protect national manufacturing interests with tariffs or to allow everyone in the whole world to compete for the lowest price in a market? If it is just to protect interests, then the resolution is true and the U.S. ought to more highly value isolationism in the name of justice. Or perhaps there is a strong link between economic freedom and liberty itself. So the resolution is false in the interest of liberty propagated by economics. It is important to distinguish between ethical and pragmatic, or utilitarian, arguments in economics. One may consider the ethical and moral consequences of competition, trade, wealth and employment on different groups of people. One can also look purely at the numbers, the benefits and the costs, in order to determine the correct extent of isolationist policy. Ethically or pragmatically, economics can help to demonstrate that either side of the resolution is true in certain instances.

The "impact" to this article is that you have to impact any economic examples, history or theories directly to the resolution for it to actually be relevant to the debate round. So, while this isn't a numbers game like in team policy, economic theory and history is a strong addition to any LD case. You can use it as an application to demonstrate the benefits of free trade, or an example to show the need for protection in certain sectors. However you include economics, there is a need to bring your debate back to the resolution, your case, and your values.

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Appendix

Value-Driven Cases

The following appendixes contain examples of each type of case. The point isn't to free you from your own good preparation, but rather to serve as an example of solid value cases. Remember that you can apply every case-type to either affirmative or negative, regardless of which side is illustrated here. Each case style uses values differently. Notice particularly what role the value plays in each case.

Following each case is a Coach's Commentary, which helps you analyze the case's strengths and weaknesses. Use these cases not only as models for your own constructives, but also to practice applying the rebuttal strategies you've studied. Start by reading one of these cases aloud and practice devising lines of questioning or rebuttals in real time.

Political Isolation

Affirmative Core value case

By Karyn Louritt

Political analyst Richard Perle said: “National sovereignty is an obligation as well as an entitlement of all governments.” When isolationism is not valued highly enough, this goal of government will not be achieved. National sovereignty violation can lead to the infringement of human rights, violation of justice, and direct infringement upon what political analysts claim to be a right of the government. Because I believe National Sovereignty will be better upheld if the United States chooses to value isolationism as a greater good, I stand Resolved: That the United States of America ought to more highly value isolationism. For the purpose of clarification, I offer the following definitions.

Definitions

1. More highly value: An object which should be considered to have more significance and desirability. (Black’s Law Dictionary, 8th Edition.)
2. Isolationism: Avoidance of international relations. A government policy based on the belief that national interests are best served by avoiding economic and political alliances with other countries. (Encarta World English Dictionary.)
3. United States of America: The combination of Federal, State and Local laws, bodies and agencies. (Encarta World English Dictionary.)

Value Analysis

Let’s now look further at my value. Black’s Law Dictionary defines my value of National Sovereignty as: “…an independent [national] existence that is not part of a larger whole, to whose government it is subject.” David Bederman, author of the book International Law Frameworks explains the idea of national sovereignty by saying: “The principle that each nation answer only to its domestic order leads to sealed units sometimes colliding, sometimes cooperating, but always separate and apart.”[[57]](#footnote-57) When a government values isolationism at a balanced level, they are doing their part to enhance the value of national sovereignty. When the value is upheld, each government is better able to tend to their countries individual needs. The United States should value isolationism higher in order for the ideal of national sovereignty to be upheld.

Contention 1: Isolationism promotes National Sovereignty:

James Monroe said that: “It is only when our rights are invaded [that we should] make preparation for our defense.”[[58]](#footnote-58) This idea of isolationism has benefited several countries both politically and economically. We can understand the political benefits through a concept that Thomas Jefferson presented by saying: “Peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations; entangling alliances with none.”[[59]](#footnote-59) When the ideas of Monroe and Jefferson are combined, we have a concept of isolationism that upholds a perfect balance of national sovereignty.

If our government were to value isolationism more, we wouldn’t have the obligations that come with foreign alliances and would only get involved with international political affairs if our ground was attacked. Our country would also be secure from actions taken as a result of political hatred from opposing countries.

There would also be enormous economic benefits. Our government wouldn’t have to rely on foreign trade markets, and we would not be investing money into foreign affairs that have no impact on our country. The CATO Institute explains why Isolationism is ideal by saying:

“There are no allies and clients to be defended, no threats of extended deterrence, interventions, negotiated settlements, or military and economic programs.”[[60]](#footnote-60)

Through these ideas we can see that valuing isolationism more and striving for national sovereignty is a worthy goal for the United States.

Contention 2: Isolationism has helped our country in the past:

George Washington said that: “The great rule of conduct is for us to have as little political connection as possible. It is unwise to implicate ourselves to other politics.”[[61]](#footnote-61) The Founding Fathers were clearly supportive of isolationism and this mindset continued for several years. In the 1930s, the idea of isolationism dominated the United States foreign policy. The Congress Neutrality Acts of 1935, 1936 and 1937 showed that our government was happy with the outcome of isolationism and had no intention of changing. Isolationism was a popular policy because it protected our country from foreign wars. The United States was nationally sovereign, and saw no reason to alter that policy. Political Analyst Eric Nordlinger said:

“There is virtually no disagreement about isolationisms having served the country exceptionally well throughout the nineteenth century. With the benefits of hindsight, the reasonableness to full validity of isolationism can be readily argued.”[[62]](#footnote-62)

Currently our government has strayed away from what has historically worked. Our goal of promoting freedom and justice to all is not possibly achievable, and is causing more political hatred in the process. When we look at countries such as Canada and Australia, we can see that because they are not trying to enforce their values world wide, there are no countries that want to destroy them. Previous to the time the United States abandoned the isolationist policy, we had no countries attack us either.

Contention 3: Valuing isolationism more would benefit the United States:

Isolationism Reconfigured, published through the CATO Institute, claims that:

“The United States need not go abroad to ensure its security. On the contrary, doing so is counterproductive because the United States is strategically immune by being insulated…thus it has few reasons to become involved in world affairs.”[[63]](#footnote-63)

Today the United States has bought into the idea that our interests can be best served by intervening in other nation’s policies. However, as we have seen through the first and second contentions, national sovereignty is important, and isolationism can benefit a country. Our current National Security Strategy makes it clear that our goal is to protect every country in the world by giving them freedom and justice. There is no respect for other governments’ obligation to uphold their national sovereignty. Focusing directly on internal threats and becoming more isolated would protect our national sovereignty, and ensure other governments this right as well.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can see that isolationism should be valued more highly. We have seen this by acknowledging isolationism has worked in the past, and that by valuing it, we are protecting and promoting national sovereignty. Because I believe that national sovereignty needs to be valued more highly, I ask the judge to join me in affirming the resolution. Thank you and I now stand ready for cross-examination.

Coach’s Commentary

Karyn starts right out with a very strong thesis statement outlining the dangers of neglecting national sovereignty, when she says:

“National sovereignty violation can lead to the infringement of human rights, violation of justice, and direct infringement upon what political analysts claim to be a right of the government.”

This declaration not only focuses the audience on the value, national sovereignty, but it also gives us several reasons to prefer national sovereignty as the measuring rod for this round. Her (very sound) reasoning here is pragmatic: the principle of national sovereignty should be highly valued because it leads to other social good such as protection of human rights.

Sadly, this wonderful thesis is under-utilized throughout the rest of the case. It could easily have been proposed as the proper standard for measuring not only the Affirmative case, but the Negative as well. It leaves us expecting to hear how isolationism promoted justice and human rights in the past.

Contention 1 gives us a taste of how isolationism protects national sovereignty without sealing us off from the world, focusing on vigorous trade and few political obligations. But it leaves us wanting more. Which countries benefited? How does isolationism promote National Security? The economic and military benefits could fit into Contention 2. But benefits don’t necessarily equal a strengthened National Sovereignty.

Since the examples given here are all American and all positive, a judge may well be left wondering what’s wrong with America’s commitment to isolationism. We don’t have any reference to how America currently values it, so it’s harder to judge whether we need to value it more highly.

Basic rights are not basic

Negative Value Plus Case

By Karyn Louritt

“The ideas that have inspired our history are increasingly inspiring individuals and nations throughout the world. We choose leadership over isolationism…we seek to shape the world, not merely be shaped by it.” These are the words used in an introduction to the National Security Strategy of the United States government.[[64]](#footnote-64) Because of the values the United States government supports through our foreign policy, I stand Resolved: That the United States of America does **not** need to value isolationism more highly.”

Value Analysis

The value I will be upholding in today’s debate round is Justice. Black’s Law Dictionary defines Justice as “The fair and proper administration of laws.”[[65]](#footnote-65)

In order to further clarify what Justice is, and provide a means of achieving it, I will offer the **criterion** ‘advancement of natural rights’. Justice will be achieved when natural rights are promoted and protected. Black’s Law Dictionary defines natural rights as: “Those basic rights thought to exist independently of government, specifically the rights to life, liberty and property.”[[66]](#footnote-66)

The United States acknowledges the importance of protecting justice through promoting natural rights. I will demonstrate that this can be best achieved when isolationism is not valued more highly. David Hume explains: “We are to look upon our government as having ultimately no object or purpose but the distribution of justice.”[[67]](#footnote-67)

Contention 1: Upholding justice through natural rights promotion is a worthy goal:

Thomas Jefferson said that: “Natural rights are the objects for protection of which society is formed, and municipal laws established.”[[68]](#footnote-68) Our Founding Fathers emphasized the importance of natural rights promotion through personal thoughts, and official documents. As Thomas Jefferson said, the protection of rights is the duty of government; therefore every nation should be established with this objective in mind. Because these rights are not defined by government, but rather foundational to all, protecting them in foreign countries is a justifiable goal.

Contention 2: Foreign alliances aid in protecting justice:

In order for justice to be effectively promoted, the United States must work with other countries. If foreign governments have the same objectives as the United States, natural rights will be advanced more efficiently.

We can come to a better understanding of this concept by looking to the history of the United States. Our country only began to advance justice after we created economic and political ties with other countries. Before establishing these relations, our nation would have been too weak to promote this value. Countries of the past have never been capable of impacting the world greatly until they formed alliances with other nations. Therefore we can see that having foreign alliances is essential in order to promote natural rights worldwide. Through this we can see that when isolationism is valued, the advancement of justice will be hindered.

Contention 3: Isolationism harms the advancement of justice:

As we saw in the first contention, promoting rights with the objective of achieving justice is a worthy goal. However, this is not going to take place in an isolated country. President Bush claimed repeatedly through his State of the Union Address that isolationism leads to a false comfort.[[69]](#footnote-69) Isolationism allows foreign governments to get away with injustice, and also jeopardizes our natural rights protection. If the United States were to uphold isolationism, places such as Iraq and Afghanistan would not have governments that were striving to protect life, liberty and property. In order for the goals of our government to be achieved, isolationism is not an option. Six of the eight pillars of our National Security Strategy talk about creating a world of justice through the promotion of natural rights.[[70]](#footnote-70) Clearly our objectives for avoiding isolationism are justifiable.

Conclusion

We have seen that justice must be upheld through natural rights. We have also seen that foreign alliances are essential in order for this to take place, and therefore we should not value isolationism more highly. Let’s look at this concept further by addressing my opponent’s case.

Coach’s Commentary

Karyn has done a masterful job of giving us a clear moral imperative and strongly connecting it to the resolution and her contentions. She can argue persuasively in Contention 1 that the pursuit of justice in foreign lands is justified because she has already laid the groundwork in her value analysis by pointing out that natural rights transcend national government. Because of this transcendence, the moral imperative transcends national boundaries. Very nicely crafted!

Contentions 2 and 3 need a little work, however. Contention 2 suffers from vagueness and therefore fails to prove its core argument. This leaves Contention 3 without justification. Even if we grant that foreign alliances aid in the protection of Justice (which Contention 2 failed to establish), it does not prove that foreign alliances are **necessary** to promoting justice. The necessity of foreign alliances is the only backing which would be sufficient to carry the argument that Isolationism harms Justice.

The Last Best Hope

Affirmative Value–plus case

By Jonathan Seppo

“Freedom is the last, best hope of earth.”[[71]](#footnote-71) This gutsy quote by Abraham Lincoln sums up the affirmative’s position in today’s debate. Because of freedom, the United States of America ought to more highly value isolationism.

Observation 1: Definitions

1. **United States of America**: North American republic containing 50 states - 48 conterminous states in North America plus Alaska in northwest North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean. (Dictionary.com)
2. **Ought**: used to indicate duty or correctness. (Compact Oxford English Dictionary)
3. **Value**: the importance or worth of something for someone. (Cambridge English Dictionary)
4. **Isolationism**: the political principle or practice of showing interest only in your own country and not being involved in international activities. (Cambridge English Dictionary)
5. **United States Government**: the executive and legislative and judicial branches of the federal government of the United States. (Dictionary.com)

Observation 2: Value Analysis

In today’s debate round I will be championing freedom. Webster’s 1828 Dictionary defines freedom as any exemption from constraint or control. In the Revolutionary War men fought and gave their lives for this sacred value. Why? Because they believed that freedom was the last hope of the world. By valuing isolationism the United States Government would not be obligated to get involved with the affairs of the world. And, instead, focus on our country’s problems, such as securing our borders.

Observation 3: Criterion

My criterion, or how I achieve my value, is isolationism. Simply by valuing isolationism more we will achieve freedom. This is not to say that isolationism would achieve all the freedom in the world. Rather, the freedom achieved is economical, political. This is the main point of my case, and it will be expanded upon in the following contentions.

Contention 1: Isolationism increases economical freedom.

In our world today, one of the most-watched issues is rising gas prices. These gas prices are affecting our economy in a negative way. The high prices are leaving an average American with less money. They, in turn, spend less and everyone around the country looses money. Before we go any further we need to ask a question: What can isolationism do to help solve this problem and free the economy from the constraint of raising oil prices?

Isolationism would advocate cutting ties with such countries as Iran and Saudi Arabia, who both give the United States much of its oil. By cutting ties the government would be forced to find another way to get oil, such as mining oil out of Alaska. This action would put the United States in charge of its own prices and would thus be free from Arab economic manipulation. Thus, in this case, isolationism would free our economy, which is good for all of America. Therefore the United States of America ought to more highly value isolationism, because it furthers economic freedom.

Contention 2: Isolationism increases the United States Government’s freedom.

Throughout the years the United States military has been the most efficient military ever; having won almost all the wars it has entered. The United States government has also been efficient in deciding if and when to use this powerful military. However, the United States is also a member of the United Nations. This organization has its benefits, such as encouraging alliances. But its weaknesses far exceed its benefits. One of these weaknesses is how proposals are handled. With fifteen nations on the Security Council there are a lot of disagreements and debates, but no agreements and actions.

If the United States valued isolationism more highly we would cut ties with the United Nations and thus be able to decide things for ourselves. This freedom to make decisions would maximize our military’s to full potential, without being blocked by other nations. Therefore isolationism would increase our government’s freedom to make decisions concerning our military to maximize our security.

Contention 3: Isolationism would force the United States Government to become self-sufficient.

Sometimes we become too dependent on things such as our parents. Then, when we graduate from high school, we realize how dependent we were on our parents. This catches us off-guard and it takes a while to adjust to our new life.

Governments also can become too dependent on one another. The United States Government is becoming dependent on other governments watching our backs and helping to make sure we are safe. If the United States values isolationism more highly they will have more freedom and they will have to become self-dependent and not depend on other countries. This is good because a nation is stronger when they are self-dependent.

An application of this is seen in the Cold War-era Soviet Union. Though cut off from the world, this union was made up of countries that depended on each other completely. In the end this dependency backfired and the Soviet Union collapsed, leaving its member countries without protection or provision. Therefore, as we have reasoned and seen through history, isolationism would increase the United States government’s freedom and force it to become self-sufficient.

Conclusion

We have seen throughout this case how isolationism will further freedom and while furthering freedom it will free our economy from pressures such as rising oil prices, it will maximize our military’s strength and it will force the United States to become dependent on ourselves and not other countries. It is for all of these reasons I stand resolved that the United States Government ought to more highly value isolationism.

Coach’s Commentary

Jonathan has crafted a simple, sturdy case here that gives us a clear articulation of the relationship among his value, the resolution and his criterion. The basic premise that isolationism increases freedom is a pragmatic argument, and will invite application-centered, pragmatic refutation.

There are a couple of interesting things about this presentation of ‘freedom’. First, the definition of freedom as “any exemption from constraint or control” leaves the case undefended against a charge that it advocates anarchy. Second, the case focuses on freedom for the government rather than on freedom for the people or on freedom from the government. A sharp Negative will challenge this characterization, questioning whether freedom for the government is really freedom.

Using Cold War Soviet Union as an example may prove to be more problematic than helpful. It is ingenious to use the Union as a model of interdependence. But the question arises: ‘Was the collapse of the Soviet Union caused more by the internal tensions and dependencies within the Union or by growing pressure from the larger world from which it was isolated?’ In other words, wasn’t it just as likely that the Soviet Union was brought down by isolationism as by interdependence?

A pragmatically-oriented case is susceptible to being finished off by shooting down an application, because the root argument is about the workability of an idea. If the idea can be shown to be unworkable, it falls.

In a pragmatic case, citations become more important. After all, the core arguments are strongly tied to the applications, which need to be easily accessible via the footnotes. In a pragmatic case, often all an opponent has to ask is: “Who says?” and the case crumbles, unless you have lots of sturdy footnotes. This case has only one citation, but really needs acknowledgments for all of its major ideas. All of your quotes and ideas need to be fully cited as footnotes in order to stand up to an official challenge.

Have a Nice Life

Negative Value Standard case

By Jonathan Seppo

“The care of human life, and not its destruction, is the first and only object of good government,” so said Thomas Jefferson[[72]](#footnote-72).This quote summarizes the negatives position in this debate round that the United States of America ought to not value isolationism more.

Value Analysis

Values are what Lincoln Douglas Debate is founded upon and therefore should be held in the utmost importance in today’s debate round. My value today will be quality of life. The quality of life is defined by the Infoplease dictionary[[73]](#footnote-73) as “Affecting the quality of urban life”. Quality of life is what everyone wants. We see an application of this by looking at all the people who want to come to the United States just to improve their quality of life. Since the government exists to serve the people, and since the people have such a desire for quality of life; quality of life should be a government’s first priority as well as today’s debate round’s most important value. Isolationism would harm the quality of life in America by decreasing our security and short-circuiting our economy. This statement will be explained further in the following contentions.

Contention 1: Isolationism would harm America’s security.

Security is an important aspect of quality of life. No quality could be achieved if the people were not safe. Isolationism advises countries to cut ties with other nations and focus on their own nation. However, doing this would have negative repercussions.

1. First, if America was attacked no one would help us because we isolated ourselves. Even though we are a superpower if we were to be attacked by multiple countries our country would sustain heavy damage, if not fall, without help.
2. Second, we could not go on the offensive if we had to because we know that our country would not be adequately protected.

Both of these reasons demonstrate how isolationism would harm security. And because security would decrease so would America’s quality of life.

Contention 2: Isolationism would harm our economy.

The economy has a direct effect on the quality of life for people in America. If the economy is not working, then the quality of life is sliding. Isolationism, if America valued it more, would harm our economy and thus our quality of life. How?

1. One reason is where America is located. Some countries, like Switzerland, can use isolationism and still have a strong economy because of their central location. The United States does not have that luxury. America borders just two countries with most of the world an ocean away. Our country needs imports and exports, which would be prohibited by isolationism, to operate, function, and survive. The United States census bureau conducted a study on imports and the impact they have on our economy. It found that the United States receives $173,645,800,000.00 in gross imports.[[74]](#footnote-74)
2. Which brings me to the second reason isolationism would harm our economy. The United States’ economy depends on other countries trading with us to make it work and grow. If isolationism was employed this necessary trading would cease and our economy would falter. The United States was founded to be the nation that most relies on trading, according to a study done by the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO.[[75]](#footnote-75)

Therefore the United States Government should not value isolationism, because it harms our economy and the value of quality of life.

Conclusion

Today we have seen, through this case, how valuing isolationism harms the security and economy of America and therefore how isolationism would harm America’s quality of life. Since quality of life should be the value of utmost importance in this debate round isolationism should not be valued more. It is for these reasons I do not think isolationism should be valued more by the United States of America. And I urge you to stand with me and negate the resolution.

Coaches’ Commentary

Jonathan uses his value, Quality of Life, as a standard of measure even though it is a good that we seek in itself; isolationism is the means to harm quality of life as embodied in our prosperity and our security. Jonathan doesn’t take up precious time on the negative side in simple definitions. He plunges right into his arguments. Notice Jonathan’s tactic of ending each argument with an impact statement tying that argument back to the resolution. This helps to keep his logic from taking a detour and makes an opponent’s possible linkage rebuttal very difficult.

This case tacitly depends upon a definition of isolationism which will probably be very rare among savvy Affirmatives. This case assumes that isolationism means a total break with other countries. No trade. No treaties. And certainly no military obligations. This definition would be difficult to defend from the Affirmative side, so if this case needs it, it will have to be introduced in the Negative case with a compelling reason to prefer the more extreme definition of isolationism.

Robin hood of the world

Affirmative Value Standard case

By Andrew Roblyer

Thesis Statement

Most children know the story of the brave outlaw Robin Hood. They know that he stole from the rich to give to the poor, and that he was quick, cunning, and courageous. However, his actions may cause others to pause. Who was he to decide whether the rich or the poor deserved money? It is because of this question that I stand Resolved: That the United States of America ought to more highly value Isolationism.

Let us begin this debate by outlining the boundaries with the following definitions:

Definitions

**United States of America:** While the technical definition of this term is commonly understood, the question remains as to whom within the geographical country the resolution is referring to. Due to the nature of our government, I will be addressing the United States as a body of people that includes (but is not limited to) the government.

**Ought:** “Is used to indicate advisability or prudence”—*American Heritage Dictionary*

**Value:** “To rate according to relative estimate of worth or desirability; evaluate”—*American Heritage Dictionary*

**Isolationism:** “A national policy of abstaining from political or economic relations with other countries.”—*American Heritage Dictionary*

Value Observation

Today I will be upholding the value standard of National Sovereignty, which is defined through a combined definition from the American Heritage Dictionary as “Total independence and self government of a nation.” Nation is further defined as “A community of people composed of one or more nationalities with its own territory and government.”[[76]](#footnote-76)

In order to truly understand the case I will be presenting today, we must first answer the question: What is a value standard? A standard is simply something that is used to measure one’s actions. It is not the finish line itself, but rather something to determine if you’re even on the right track, a moral imperative if you will. Because of this, my value is my criterion for the resolution. So now let us move to my four

Contentions

1. National Sovereignty is the supreme value in international relations

The countries of the world are like the rich and poor in the tale of Robin Hood. Each desires different things, yet all have a similar goal: to live a free life. Neither the rich nor the poor can feel free as long as they are controlled by, or depend upon, someone else. In the sphere of international relations, the goal of national sovereignty, or the ability of the citizens of a nation to rule themselves, is the ultimate goal. Some nations ignore this desire, and, like the great “Robin Hood”, step in to decide the fate of that nation on their own.[[77]](#footnote-77)

I believe that National Sovereignty is a moral imperative in the realm of international relations. This does not mean that I am disregarding values such as Life or Liberty. In fact, I hold those to be extremely important. However, unless intervention is absolutely necessary to secure such values, as in the case of Nazi Germany during World War II, I believe that National Sovereignty must be held above all else in today’s round.

1. Intervention does not always solve the problem

One of the best questions I have ever heard asked of the tale of Robin Hood is whether his exploits had any lasting benefits. What if the rich simply gained more money, or if the poor squandered it away? Would Robin still be willing to perform his services if he knew that either of those facts were true? While it is obviously impossible to know for sure, I believe he would have given it great consideration. Countries like the United States may have the best intentions, but there is no guarantee that their intervention solves anything. It is for this reason that I believe it should be a carefully considered and rarely used tactic.

1. Are our intentions even good?

In the article “Why Gun-Barrel Democracy doesn’t work”[[78]](#footnote-78) published by the Hoover Institute, authors Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George W Downs explain why the United States is so ineffective:

“In the typical cases, the United States—like other interveners—has been motivated less by a desire to establish democracy or reduce human suffering than to alter some aspect of the target state’s policy….Although democracy would no doubt be a nice by-product, it is rarely the most important goal.”

According to the National Security Strategy[[79]](#footnote-79) and both the current and former presidents, America views democracy, which, by common definition, is synonymous with National Sovereignty, as the answer to the world’s problems. However, we must be absolutely sure that this is our focus, or else we will continue down the path of failed interventions.

1. The people must be part of the process

It’s often been said that in order to learn something, you must actually want to learn it. Robin Hood stole from the rich, yet it did no permanent good, for they were just as unwilling to part with money as before. Likewise, unless the poor learned how to manage money, they would be very likely to misuse the gift Robin Hood had given them.

In the world today, the United States often attempts to force a way of life upon other nations. In Palestine, an attempt to force the nation to hold democratic elections by holding money over their heads led to the election of one of the most dangerous terrorist groups in the Middle East. In Iraq, our intervention has led to an all out civil war. Indeed, our overthrow of Saddam Hussein was a victory, yet that was not our original reason for entering the country. If we were so concerned about the people of Iraq, then why did we not intervene earlier? The atrocities Saddam Hussein committed were quite horrible. However, we must allow the people to fight for their sovereignty, or they will become like poor people who do not know how to budget, who are just given a large amount of money.

Conclusion

America is this world’s “Robin Hood,” attempting to change governments across the world. Yet their reasoning is often misguided, and they fail to see that true national sovereignty cannot come from without alone, but must also come from within.

If you check the affirmative box on your ballot, you will be standing up against this make-believe of Robin Hood. You will be telling our nation as a whole to take a step back and value isolationism more highly. I urge you to vote affirmative and better protect National Sovereignty of nations across the globe. Thank you.

Coach’s Commentary

Andrew’s use of an analogy in his grabber not only gives this case a cohesive and easily-grasped theme, but also gives his arguments a moral center. This case is less about what works and more about how we should live. Does American might equate with a right to intervene in other nations? Does it depend on how good our offerings are or simply on whose right it is to make decisions for citizens of other nations?

Andrew also took some pains to make sure that his claims about isolationism aren’t absolute. He says other values are important, but that in this context National Sovereignty should take precedence when there is a conflict, “unless intervention is absolutely necessary to secure such values, as in the case of Nazi Germany during World War II, I believe that National Sovereignty must be held above all else in today’s round.”

This case is probably a bit long for competition. It would benefit by collapsing Contentions 2 and 3. They are very similar. The speculation about what Robin Hood might have thought makes a weak argument.

Andrew has also used some non-standard footnotes to indicate extension arguments he wouldn’t have time to make in the constructive, but would plan to bring up in rebuttals. If you are having trouble deciding which case ideas to pursue, it is a good strategy to see which case idea generates the strongest extension argument ideas.

Liberating Liberalism

Negative Value System Case

By Joanna Griffith

Thesis Statement

Frederic Bastiat once wrote, “Life, liberty, and property do not exist because men have made laws. On the contrary, it was the fact that life, liberty, and property existed beforehand that caused men to make laws in the first place.”[[80]](#footnote-80) Throughout Western history countless philosophers, economists, and politicians have publicly advocated the official protection of individual liberties. And in these same pages of history we read the stories of countless people, institutions, and events that have fought against the expansion of those rights, and at times taken this fight beyond national boundaries. Today the United States finds itself in the middle of a continued international fight for individual rights, limited government, capitalism . . . in short, classical liberalism.

Value Analysis

Now, to most the word ‘liberalism’ instantly brings to mind left-wing American politics. But today we will consider the philosophic and historic sense of this term which is a theory advocating the protection of liberty through a limited government. Classical liberalism forms a firm basis for foreign, domestic, and economic policies in the 21st century. The United States is using its foreign policy to promote the ideals of Classical Liberalism. Open relations between nations advances dialogue and accountability; thus, as we will see today, it is the best way to expand Classical Liberalism. Because of this, I stand opposed to the resolution and affirm today that the United States of America ought ***not*** to value isolationism more highly.

Definitions

Before addressing this idea in detail, let’s clarify some key terms in the resolution.

**Isolationism** - A national policy of abstaining from political or economic relations with other countries. *(American Heritage Dictionary)*[[81]](#footnote-81)

**United States** - federal Government, its departments and agencies, individuals acting on behalf of the Federal Government, and parties to the extent they are represented by the United States. *(US Patent Office)*[[82]](#footnote-82)

This definition for the United States better fits this debate [than does the affirmative definition] because the actions of the federal government are the best uniform record of US policy and action that we can use to analyze isolationism.

Contentions

Let’s now move on to the look at the value of Classical liberalism in the first contention.

1. Classical Liberalism is Paramount

John Goodman, President of the National Center for Policy Analysis, summarized the bare essence of Classical Liberalism in saying that it “is the belief in liberty.”[[83]](#footnote-83)

But to fully understand this theory, let’s flesh it out in more detail. Political scientists John R. Oneal and Bruce M. Russett explain, "The classical liberals advocated policies to increase liberty and prosperity. They sought to empower the commercial class politically and to abolish royal charters, monopolies, and the protectionist policies of mercantilism so as to encourage entrepreneurship and increase productive efficiency. They also expected democracy and laissez-faire economics to diminish the frequency of war".[[84]](#footnote-84)

Clearly when we look at this idea in Western history, Classical Liberalism is not left-wing politics, but rather an ideal championing the protection of political, social, and economic liberty through a constitutionally limited government. Nowhere is this ideal so ingrained in governmental theory as in America. With a long heritage in the Classical Liberal tradition, the US has the basis to assist the spread of this ideal globally.

1. Open International Relations Assist Classical Liberalism’s Spread

The American government was structured around the acknowledgment that power corrupts and abuses of power must be checked. Accountability and competition are powerful checks and open international relations fuel both accountability and competition. In military actions and social policies open relations expose nations to the practices and laws of countries around them. Diplomacy, economic sanctions, and even military intervention, when needed, allow the United States and other like-minded nations to defend Classical Liberalism and assist in its advance. Economic competition expands consumer choice, promotes quality production, and curbs high-priced, low-quality monopolies. For example, as American auto makers including General Motors have slipped behind their Japanese counterparts, they are being forced to more closely match their products to the desires of the consumers. Foreign competition is providing consumers with a wider selection, encouraging quality production, and promoting competitive prices.

1. US Foreign Policy is Spreading Classical Liberalism

Through its rhetoric, public policy, financial aid, and global prominence the United States has the opportunity to exert significant influence today, particularly on developing nations. Of course, that means intervening in foreign affairs. And is that worth it?

At the end of World War 2, Japan was devastated by war. Though the nation lacked western traditions, the U.S. introduced the principles of Classical Liberalism in that country. Transformation from monarchy to open democracy did not happen overnight. But now Japan is a flourishing democracy, leading economic power, technological innovator, and strategic U.S. ally.

Today, the National Security Strategy, an articulation of American foreign policy, provides the framework to assist other nations in advancing human rights, quenching conflict, strengthening infrastructure and trade, and building free nations. Though struggles will arise in this pursuit the United States recognizes the value of the Classical Liberal tradition and participates in international affairs in order to spread these important ideals internationally.

Conclusion

Whether one looks at social or economic policy, the United States uses the Classical Liberal tradition to spread the ideals of liberty and limited government around the world. Placing greater influence on isolationism would curb those efforts and limit the spread of democracy, capitalism, limited government, and human rights. And what would replace it? History and current affairs show us that the absence of Classical Liberal ideas almost always results in tyranny and oppression. Thus, I hope you will join me today in affirming the ideals that have formed the United States and in supporting their advancement today as the United States takes an active role in international affairs.

Coach’s Commentary

Joanna takes a bit of a risk right from the start by championing a value system that may bring up negative connotations for many judges. She does an excellent job of short-circuiting potential problems by articulating the difference between Classical Liberalism and the modern variety. She also makes a wonderful argument advocating her alternative definition of “United States” rather than the affirmative’s definition. If you, as the negative want to substitute your definition for the one already presented, you’ll need a reason as good as this: “the actions of the federal government are the best uniform record of US policy and action that we can use to analyze isolationism.”

But this case fails to give us a strong moral imperative for spreading Classical Liberalism. Does America have a duty of some kind to spread it? Is it essential to our security or prosperity? Or are we just doing it because we didn’t have anything better to do?

Classical Liberalism could be a good standard for measuring the inadequacies of isolationism, but the argument isn’t framed that way. Contention 1 takes a bit of a bunny trail arguing that America is suited to spreading Classical Liberalism rather than that it essential to spread it to avoid the dangerous or immoral or impractical effects of isolationism.

Contentions 2 and 3 do establish that the US currently uses open relations to spread Classical Liberalism. But we can’t really go anywhere with those facts without a more clear and urgent reason to spread CL or a clearer articulation of how we should view the value system within the case: is it the goal? The criterion for evaluating the success of American foreign policy or the effectiveness of isolationism? A guiding light?

Virtuous Isolationism

Affirmative Unified Analysis Case

By Mark Nadal

Thomas Jefferson believed that we should have “*Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations;”* but yet remain isolated, as he paraphrased George Washington, “*entangling alliances with none*.” On the basis of this ideal, the Resolution, “*That the United States of America ought to more highly value isolationism*” is affirmed. Despite the United States being widely involved in worldly affairs, we can still remain in virtuous isolation.

Observations:

**Definition.** The American Heritage Dictionary defines isolationism as, “The doctrine that a nation should stay out of the disputes and affairs of other nations.”

**Historical Justification.** The Founding Fathers justified isolationism because they were escaping from the tyrannical grasp of Europe. America was a newborn infant and any oppressive pressure could have caused its collapse. The power that our nation exhibits today is solely attributed to that isolation; it nurtured America to strength, forcing it to be independent.

**Current Conviction.** However, since America is now a superpower it has abandoned its roots of isolationism and has become a crucial player on the global scale.

**Modern Justification.** Therefore, how can we accept the Resolution’s decree to more highly value isolationism? We can value this doctrine as principle rather than policy, as a mentality rather than a reality; as an ethical standard or code of conduct. America can be in the world, but does not have to be of it.

It is important to value isolationism as a virtue, therefore creating a Virtuous Isolationism.

Contentions:

1. Non-Interventionism.

The base ground for isolationism is maintenance of proper jurisdiction; America ought not to be involved in foreign affairs unless it interferes with America itself. The United States:

First, does not possess the authority or the responsibility to dictate or interfere in other sovereign nation’s affairs. America is 50 United States, the political power is limited to itself.

Second, intervening in foreign affairs comes at the cost of American lives, tax dollars, and time that rather should be invested in itself.

Intervention is therefore only necessary when America is at risk, but this does not violate isolationism as intervention is the intent of preserving American life, liberty, and property – to keep it isolated from violation.

1. Alliance Influence.

As Jefferson stated, we should rest at ease with peace, commerce and honest friendship with other nations. America was founded on a strong moral framework, and isolationism permitted it to flourish without being corrupted by imposing threats. When America opens itself up to an alliance, rather than a friendship, America then becomes of the world, rather than in it. For instance:

1. Application.

The *U.N.* is a growing one world system. An independent government only requires three things: Taxation, Judicial Power, and Sovereignty. The Associated Press mentioned the taxation on September 19th 2006, “*United Nations Leaders … launched a global initiative Tuesday for an airline tax*”. They can deal justice through their own courtroom, the International Criminal Court. Finally, they are slowly eroding national sovereignty in the name of humanitarian effort, as U.N Secretary General Kofi Annan subtly remarked,

“State sovereignty, in its most basic sense, is being redefined … it is clear that traditional notions of sovereignty alone are not the only obstacle to effective action in humanitarian crises … A new, broader definition of national interest is needed in the new century, which would induce states to find greater unity in the pursuit of common goals and values.”

The New York Post put it simply on September 24, 2002, “Denigration of state sovereignty: States should cede their powers to higher bodies, such as the European Union or the United Nations.”

The slow succumbing to a one-world power will inevitably end in the decapitation of sovereign states, the destruction of liberty and the enthronement of ultimate tyranny.

Conclusion

The Resolution is justified in two lights.

* 1. *On Principle.* Isolationism is a doctrine to limit unnecessary foreign intervention, and therefore reasonably ought to be valued higher.
  2. *On Virtue.* Being virtuously isolated from alliances maintains national integrity and thus ought be politically valued, yet it still permits necessary intervention.

Coach’s Commentary

Mark has done a nice job of articulating the common sense arguments for a balanced isolationism. His value analysis and theme statement are hidden in his ‘historical’, ’current’ and ‘modern justifications’. Don’t let idiosyncratic terminology throw you off stride. Listen for what is really being said so that you can deal with the root arguments regardless of their labels.

Mark has made an interesting attempt at justifying isolationism as a virtue in itself. The approach of advocating that a nation should “be in the world but not of it” is a bit unclear. The argument would be much more persuasive if it were defined or illustrated better. In fact, the lack of definitions could become a difficulty for this case, since an opponent would then be free to propose as many hostile definitions as he liked.

Contention 1 spikes many of the objections often raised on the negative side, trying to force isolationism into some kind of an absolute withdrawal from the world. However, “preserving American life, liberty, and property” has been used to justify all kinds of global intervention – even pre-emptive strikes. An alert Negative will surely explore that attack.

Contentions 2 and 3 begin to run into trouble over the distinction between alliance and friendship. This is very fuzzy. How is America’s relationship with the UN so subversive? Why is it different from a treaty with another sovereign nation or ‘independent government’? And where did that quote from Kofi Annan come from anyway?

Isolated Obsolescence

Negative Unified Analysis

By Mark Nadal

“Isolationism and protectionism now cuts across left and right boundaries. They are easy tunes to play but pointless in anything other than the very short-term.”[[85]](#footnote-85) In agreement with Prime Minister Tony Blair, the worth of isolationism is too insignificant to justify the Resolution “Resolved that the United States of America ought to more highly value isolationism”

Definition

The American Heritage Dictionary defines **isolationism** as, “A national policy of abstaining from political or economic relations with other countries.”[[86]](#footnote-86)

Thesis Statement

***Retirement of Isolationism.*** Isolationism was an important component that shaped our nation, however in the wake of modern global communication, rapid intercontinental transportation, humanitarian efforts, economic free trade and political influence it is a true relic. Isolationism has served its use for the short term of our country’s growth, but it is now obsolete.

Contentions[[87]](#footnote-87)

1. Isolation is Impossible.

The foremost problem with the resolution is that any form of isolationism is simply unattainable. Significant advancements in technology render us unable to become remote or distant from any nation. If civilians can navigate earth from their desks and connect to any nation in the world; our government, a superpower, is certainly unable to remain disconnected. The world is wired, farewell isolation.

1. Isolationism is Insignificant.

Even if we were to foster the notion of disconnecting political and economic relations, any slight benefit of being completely autonomous would be counteracted by the fact that the world is literally full of opportunities. America could be independent, but losing touch with the world is significantly more detrimental to any of the benefits that being isolated could atone for. Political intervention in World War II stimulated the otherwise suffering American economy during the Great Depression.

1. Politically Vital.

We also face the fact that the world isn’t perfect, even if America is content within itself, international political forces, corruption, terrorism and tyranny pressure us to safeguard ourselves from infringement. Problems will arise, and the Government will be forced to take a position: either stand on our values and combat eminent threats or succumb to the tides of war and lose the liberty we have so dearly fought for. Actively engage terrorism, or let it conquer us. As it is remarked, “*All that is necessary for the forces of evil to win in the world is for enough good men to do nothing.*”[[88]](#footnote-88)

1. Economic Isolationism is Monetary Suicide.

The West and East prospered through intercontinental trade via the Silk Road. Human cultures are rich and diverse; isolation in trade primarily restricts education and taste of foreign culture. Earth is varied; freeing economic transaction from the bounds of isolation empowers people to thrive off the necessities or luxuries the world has to offer. The ability to import valuable materials permits societies to build and survive. Economic isolation is regressive[[89]](#footnote-89) and unjustified.

1. Humanitarian Effort.

America is blessed; it is the land of the brave and free. As citizens of the United States we are responsible for not only our nation but for our world. Isolating our bounty is a selfish and inhumane reaction, lending a helping hand to the struggling and impoverished world is one of the greatest gifts we can give. Isolation in this context, is not even worthy of any value at all.

Conclusion

Omitting the impossibility of isolationism, accepting the resolution would be vitally damaging politically and economically. Negating the resolution becomes a necessity when affirming it is ethically hazardous and selfishly inhumane.

Coach’s Commentary

Mark’s case features a good unifying thesis: Isolationism is obsolete. One of the dangers of a unified analysis case model is that the arguments tend to be choppy and unfocused. Mark has given the judge an organizing principle for all of the arguments which might follow. Mark could improve on this strategy by spending a few seconds to educate the judge about the unified analysis strategy and by finishing each argument with a reference to this obsolescence theme.

The next challenge the unified analysis debater faces is focusing on values not just workability. The tendency is to devolve to a policy-format list of disadvantages or solvency objections. This case has rather fallen into this swamp. Of the five arguments presented, only one is an ethical or philosophical challenge. All the rest are merely practical objections.

Actually, Contention 3 could be, should be an ethical argument if only it were formulated slightly differently: “The duty of government is to protect its citizens. The greatest threat to US citizens is terrorism, a threat which cannot be resisted simply from within our borders. The government has a moral duty to actively engage terrorists, rather than to allow them to outflank and overwhelm us…” Appealing to duty takes the argument out of the merely pragmatic.

A word to the wise: most experienced judges in the NCFCA frown upon critiquing the resolution per se, as Contention 1 does. It is thought by many that the resolution should be taken as the given that everyone must work with. Merely saying that you don’t like the resolution is not the same as saying that the resolution should not be affirmed. Still this is a matter of judge preference which you would be wise to explore before advancing a ‘kritik’.

Coaches’ Appendix

Judging & Coaching

Coaching Value Debate

This book is designed to aid home-schooling parents and students in building debate skills. If you and your students are new to coaching, simply use each chapter in order, using the Safari Guides for your classroom time.

Novice Club Training Schedule

After the initial training (6-8 weeks) use the following schedule for further practice and preparation.

Week 9 - Resistive Cross-Ex Development

Start by having a volunteer read their Affirmative Case. Have the class flow the case, while you flow it on a board at the front of the room. Move down the flow, trying to think of arguments against each point of the case. Ask the students to develop lines of questioning that would set up those opposing arguments in cross-ex. Do as many cases as you can in 1 hour.

Take a short break, and run a complete debate. If you have more than 6 students, break into two groups so that four students get a chance to debate. Have a parent monitor the debate you can’t watch. Make sure the spectators flow the debate and are prepared to give comments at the end.

Week 10 - Supportive Cross-Ex Development

Start by having a volunteer read their Negative Case. Have the class flow the case, while you flow it on a board at the front of the room. Move down the flow, trying to think of arguments against each point of the case. Ask the students to develop lines of questioning that would “spike” (anticipate and de-fang) those opposing arguments in cross-ex. Also try developing lines of questioning that would supportively set up the Negative argument in cross-ex. Do as many cases as you can in 1 hour.

Take a short break and run a complete debate as you did last week. Mix up the pairings and have students take the side they did NOT debate last week. Make sure the spectators flow the debate and are prepared to give comments at the end.

Week 11 - Rebuttal Summaries Development

Have a student read the main contentions in his Affirmative and/or Negative case. Time him. Ask him to summarize his main points in half of his original time. Continue to cut down his summaries until he can articulate his main points in 10 seconds. Do this for as many cases as you can in one hour.

Take a short break, and run a complete debate as you did last week. Mix up the pairings and have students take the side they did NOT debate last week. Make sure the spectators flow the debate and are prepared to give comments at the end.

Week 12 -Voters Development

Have a student read his Affirmative or Negative case. Ask him to summarize the strongest 3 points in his case as reasons for the judge to vote for his case. These summaries are called “voters”. Shorten the summaries until the student can present them in 10-15 seconds. *(Students will want to develop voters that have specific reference to the clashes that arise in each debate as well, and not rely solely on three canned voters developed here.)* Again, try to get through as many cases as possible.

Take a short break and run a complete debate as you did last week. Mix up the pairings and have students take the side they did NOT debate last week. Make sure the spectators flow the debate and are prepared to give comments at the end.

Week 13 - Scrimmage

Run or attend a round robin or scrimmage. This means you will be inviting debaters from outside your club to debate with you. Run as many debates as you have room for. Use NCFCA ballots, and allow parent/judges to give comments orally to the students at the end of the debates, as well as filling out a ballot. You should be able to get in two rounds of debate with a short break between them in the normal class time (2 -2 ½ hours).

Have students use tournament dress standards to normalize that for them. Have students save their flows for next week.

Week 14 - Ballot Party

Discuss the comments on the ballots given to the students last week. Direct the students to look for trends in the comments, in order to target their practice in the future. Laugh at the off-the wall ballots.

Next, open up the flows from last week’s debates. Have a student read the notes from an opponent’s case she met last week. Flow it on the board. Ask the students to think of rebuttals to use when they meet this case or one like it in the future. List those in a column next to the arguments in the case. This is called a “brief”. Assign the students to write briefs against every case they met, and to make enough copies of them to share with their teammates.

Week 15 and following

This schedule should take you about to Christmas. The tournament season officially begins in January. During that time, continue to take 30 minutes to 1 hour per week to focus on a particular skill as a group, and then run a debate. The students should continue to revise and improve their cases. Attend and/or run as many scrimmages as you can, making sure to evaluate the ballots and to brief the cases you meet.

Advanced Club Training Schedule

But perhaps this is your second or third season of debate. If most of your students don’t need a full course of debate theory, take a couple of weeks to review the theory contained in chapters 1-6, as it applies to this year's resolution. Then follow this schedule of study:

Weeks 3-4 - Topic Research

Have your students read widely on the philosophy of government. What should government do? What is government’s sphere? What is or should be forbidden to government? What alternatives to democracy are there? Are democracies abroad different from our government? Do International Treaty Organizations interfere with democracy or promote it? Clip news articles. Gather books. Share resources. Discuss the implications of your findings for this resolution.

Week 5 - Topic Research

Have the students read about specific ideas of democracy in America. What does our government do in the name of democracy? Are we a democracy? Have ideas about democracy changed over the years in America? Again, share and discuss your findings.

This may seem like a lot of research time, but if you start with a thorough understanding of the topic, your students will have no trouble coming up with ideas for cases and applications. Skimp here, and your students' cases will limp all season.

Week 6 - Draft Affirmative Constructives

In a group setting, take turns reading the cases aloud. As a group find the holes in each case, and brainstorm repairs. ("Piranha Pack") Refer to Chapter 2 & 3 for ideas.

Week 7-8 - Draft Negative Constructives

In a group setting, take turns reading the cases aloud. As a group find the holes in each case, and brainstorm repairs. ("Piranha Pack") Refer to Chapter 4 for ideas.

Week 9 - Cross-ex Intensive

Practice giving constructives and giving/taking cross-examination. Then during the week, revise the cases and prepare lines of questioning for cross-ex. Use Chapters 5 & 6 to lay out cross-ex and rebuttal strategies.

Weeks 10-12 - Round Robin Debates

Use your cases in actual debates. Try to let each debater debate on both sides of the case in each week's club meeting. Be sure to discuss the round, noting what went well, and what could improve, before moving to the next debate. During the week, hone cases. Refine rebuttal strategies, especially scripting closing remarks.

Week 13 - Host a Round Robin with another club

The best way to prepare for competition is to debate as many different cases as you can. So it is greatly to your advantage to host and attend round robins with other clubs. These need not be complicated affairs. In fact, maybe you can hold them in your basement or church. Station a parent in each room with a stack of ballots. Rotate students through the rooms. You can even let the students pair themselves, by asking them to alternate affirmative and negative, and not to debate anyone twice on the same side of the resolution.[[90]](#footnote-90)

Mixed Club Training Schedule

If you have a good number of experienced debaters as well as a good number of novices, rejoice! This is the best of all possible worlds. More advanced debaters hone their skills not only by debating, but by assisting you to teach the novices.

Follow the Novice Club Training Schedule, but have the experienced debaters take a section each week to teach or assist by demonstrating or facilitating the drills. In our club, second year debaters are allowed to demonstrate and facilitate discussions or breakout activities. Third years are asked to lead the drills at the beginning of class, and fourth year debaters are asked to teach sections of the new material each week.

To ensure that our experienced debaters don’t feel neglected, during the 8 week initial learning phase, we give the advanced students an hour before the regular club meeting to brainstorm and try out their own cases, and to plan what they will do during the whole-club meeting. Then when we begin the sparring section, advanced students help with critiquing novice cases as well as debating themselves.

Developing a Culture of Debate

As parents and coaches, we have the opportunity to define and to develop the entire culture that will dominate our clubs. The league can only enforce a minimum standard for competition, and rightly so. But individual clubs can and should train parents and students to adhere to the high standards that we as Christian communicators desire, while taking into account regional challenges and opportunities.

This does take hard work – mostly in the hearts of parents and coaches. We have to constantly remind ourselves why we are doing this. It isn’t primarily because we want our children to win trophies, or because we want our club to be the largest or most decorated in the state. It is because we want our children to have a peer group of passionate, humble, iron-sharpening-iron comrades, who will work together throughout their lives. It is because we want our children to be able to persuade minds, melt hearts and capture imaginations. It is because we want our children to be able “dictate the terms of Christ’s peace to His enemies”.

It is actually easier to get students to take up these attitudes than it is to get parents to do so. But everyone needs the ideals out in the open and everyone needs reminders. Here in Colorado, senior coaches have developed these general principles and have committed themselves to upholding them in order to cultivate an ardently supportive community. We offer them as suggestions to help you form your own ideals.

**Commitment to Community:** These guidelines have helped us to focus on building the larger community. Our clubs work together more like a close-knit cell group than a set of competitive companies.

**No spy networks.** We encourage evidence sharing. We have found that keeping secret evidence and stealth cases takes the focus off of developing better arguments and places it on espionage. Who can uncover whose case?

We encourage teams to share briefs and flows within clubs. We even encourage this during tournaments, because when a team that has just been eliminated starts looking for ways to make his advancing teammate successful by sharing flows, he stays involved in the tournament. He still has a stake in it and a part in the victory of his teammate. It also keeps the advancing competitor humble, for it is a poignant reminder to her that she has not arrived in the winners’ circle without help.

That said, we also discourage students from sharing what isn’t theirs. If a case has been run at a scrimmage or round robin, it is in the public domain and is share-able. If a friend from another club privately asked for help in developing a case, and hasn’t yet run it in public, it isn’t yours to share.

**No parasites.** Every club takes initiative to make opportunities for everyone. Some examples of these sorts of community opportunities include: hosting scrimmages and round robins, inviting topic experts to address debaters, developing programs for junior competitors, and taking major leadership roles in tournaments. If some clubs don’t notice this and join in, we mention it and offer them partnerships in taking up ownership of the speech community.

We discourage clubless competitors in areas where clubs exist, and student-led clubs without strong adult supervision. We have found that these students expect to be able to use the resources of the community without giving anything back. That is an attitude we cannot afford to foster in bright, articulate young Christians.

**No glory-hogs.** We train our competitors in what used to be called “Noblesse Oblige”. If you win as individuals, clubs or states, your ***responsibilities & opportunities*** increase; not your privileges. When you walk off the podium with a medal, your obligation to invest in those who helped you get there just multiplied.

We will allow inter-club partnerships, but urge that we no longer announce club affiliations at award ceremonies. We find that it is difficult to acknowledge everyone who had a hand in some students’ successes – especially if those students are members of more than one club or have a duo partner in another club. We also find that coaches who contribute to the success of the community by helping students outside their clubs are understandably hurt when one club claims all the credit at awards ceremonies.

**Commitment to Character:** These guidelines help us to focus our students on the long-term benefits we want for them rather than only on today’s trophies.

**No flirting/romances.** We ask our students openly to forego pursuing exclusive and romantic relationships in this setting. This frees students to be friends with all, to work with all. It eliminates petty rivalries, manipulations, distractions, hurt feelings, and ruined reputations. Students actually welcome having this expectation articulated clearly. Sometimes they break out in applause when it is read aloud on the first day of class.

Students are reliable as mentors and advisors if there are no romantic entanglements. In fact, I do not offer leadership opportunities to young people who won’t abide by this rule.

**Minimize fluff** when choosing scripts and debate positions**.** Train for the real thing by DOING the real thing. Practice saying what needs to be said, what needs to be heard, not merely what will probably win competitions. You’ll probably end up winning a lot of competitions anyway, but you will have learned to say difficult things in winsome ways. Why waste your time? Life is too short to do only one thing at a time.

(Take note. Sometimes a script that might otherwise be fluff can be made into a thought-provoking piece by the student’s introduction. I heard a purely and simply hilarious piece introduced by a swift reflection on the healing power of laughter that lifted the piece entirely out of the fluffy realms.)

**Insist on courtesy.** This really manifests itself in so many ways on and off the podium. We do our best to see to it that the bullying, intimidation and rudeness that plague other leagues don’t succeed here. Courtesy is best kept as a general watchword, but here are some things our coaches have considered discourteous at least ON the podium.

**Speed & spread.** That is, speaking too quickly to be understood by an average person during a debate round. The object is to communicate, not to snow your judge and intimidate your opponent.

**Machine-gun Cross-examination.** This is the C-X style that features *incessant* interruptions and lots of insistence upon one word answers. I’m not talking about the occasional, “thank you” to stop a run-on answer. I’m talking about continual interruptions that don’t allow a real explanation of answers. Again, we want our debates to be about a real exchange of ideas, not about our skill in intimidation.

**Ad hominems.** These are comments that denigrate ones opponent personally. Debate is about a clash of *ideas*. That clash should be passionate, but it should never become personal. We teach our debaters to debate in such a manner that they never have anything to apologize for at the end of a round.

**Bible-bashing.** The use of the Bible in debate cases is controversial. On the one hand, debaters do need to learn to articulate Biblical principles in daily discourse, whether or not they actually quote the underlying text. On the other, debaters need to learn to fight fair with their brothers in Christ, realizing that there may be several orthodox interpretations of a given Bible text. It is never appropriate to back a brother in a corner with arguments like, “If you vote against my case, you’re voting against the Bible,” or “Because I quoted the Bible, you can’t argue against this point,” and other such mean-spirited foolishness.

**Reward service on the same level as competition.** Colorado tournaments have developed a service award that students apply for when they register for the tournament. These awards are often the most glitzy trophies and always come with a scholarship to some debate-related event. And the winners’ names and accomplishments are publicized to the local news media, etc. To see details about our service awards, visit the display website at <http://communityspirit.tk>.

Our club has also developed a system to reward service and club participation apart from competitive wins and losses. It is similar to an athletic letter program, but the students earn a crest patch to sew onto their debate suit jackets. This helps to recognize faithful participation and investment in the team and de-emphasizes the trophy lust.

Find & create opportunities for more resume-development than competition provides. Our students have tutored elementary school students in speech, taken their interpretations to local libraries, developed competitions for younger students, developed online debate communities for remote rural homeschoolers, participated in lobbying for abstinence programs in the schools, advocated for restorative justice in local Teen Court systems, provided abstinence-based education to public and private schools, interned for state legislators, and on and on. These articulate students are homeschooling’s best ambassadors to the larger community. DO the REAL thing!

Judging Value Debate

Our league’s aim is to produce students who are able to speak winsomely and persuasively to real people in the real world. Therefore, the league puts a premium on using both trained (parents & coaches) and untrained (members of the community) judges. The ideal balance for a tournament is 50% judges who are familiar with NCFCA style debate and 50% who aren’t. The idea is that if students have to communicate to both kinds of judges, they will not get into bad habits of relying on the buzz-words and jargon of competitive debate, but will actually be forced to persuade average people.

You should help the parents in your clubs to become very familiar with the material in this book as a background to judging and evaluating students at club, round robins and tournaments. The league regards parents and coaches as the guardians of the high standards of Christian character and excellent communication, which judges from the community might not recognize. Fill your parents up with the best teaching on debate that you can give them and turn them loose with ballots every week. They, along with the league alumni, are our experts.

Community judges bring their own perspectives and criteria to judging. They may have a lot of familiarity with debate or they may have none. The point is that they represent the sort of people our students will have to persuade in the real world – quirky, unpredictable, insightful, wise, clueless – the whole gamut.

Realistically, you won’t have very much time to orient or train judges, perhaps 20 -30 minutes at the most. Your goal in getting judges ready to evaluate a round, is to talk them through the mechanics of taking notes, filling out a ballot, and checking the ballot in. A very general description comparing and contrasting policy and value debate styles fills out the training. Avoid giving involved training in the debate theory that you love: stock issues, voting issues, resolutional critiques, etc. Just lay out the actual rules: things like who speaks first, where the debaters look in cross-ex, how long is each speech, etc. Then ask the judge to decide what theory and technique he believes is most persuasive.

League experience over the years has shown that when we try to give the judges a crash course in debate theory, the judges can’t assimilate it and feel intimidated by the whole exercise. Further, whatever point of theory a novice judge *does* hear (notice, I said “point” – singular), tends to become for her the *one and only* standard for evaluating whatever she hears. The point of the debate game anyway, is for the students to persuade average people as well as people who understand all the nuances of what they are seeing.

The League is developing a standard tool for training judges. Find the NCFCA perspective on judges and the judge training PowerPoint presentation at the league website, [www.ncfca.org](http://www.ncfca.org).

Bibliography

Topic Resources

See targeted bibliographies in the Treasure Maps Topic Resources section.

Other LD Resources

It is rather odd to see a plug for other LD textbooks in one of their competitors’ books. But at Training Minds Ministries, we hold service to our customers in the service of Christ as our paramount value. So here’s the recommendation:

We think our textbook is the most comprehensive, user-friendly, versatile and timely source book out there. It is the only resource that addresses the current topic, debate theory and classroom/club strategy for novices and advanced debaters in one economical package. But you need to know what your competitors are reading and thinking. How will you be able to anticipate every argument or attitude or predisposition you might encounter? By reading what they read.

Do you want to be really competitive? Read everything! Someone else has been reading those other books (great resources as well). If you read the Red Book and then read everything else written for this league, you will have a definite advantage over the competitor who has only read one text and thinks it is all he needs.

Crowson, Anna. *LD Exercises and Drills, 2005* and *Debate Research (student workbook & teachers’ manual)* ($25 each including shipping from: Anna Crowson, 7261 Egerton Lane, Germantown, TN 38138).

These books have more ideas for exercises, games and drills than you’ll ever use! Anna uses her Communicators for Christ intern experience as a springboard to help you overcome every conceivable debate skill deficit. You’ll be mining these for fresh approaches to your club’s difficulties for years to come.

In fact, you’ll want to see Anna’s entire line of speech and debate resources at File Makers website: <http://www.filemakersolutions.com/books.htm> Anna’s other works include:

* The Extemporaneous Handbook
* Value Debate Research: Parent/Coach Manual
* Value Debate Research: Student Workbook
* Policy Debate Research: Parent/Coach Manual
* Policy Debate Research: Student Workbook
* F.O.C.U.S. Problem Solving in Policy Debate

Rachel Welch and Bittany McGehee. *Lincoln Douglas Value Debate, 2005.* (Teachers’ edition $35, Students’ edition $25 without shipping from: Hear and See Communications, PO Box 2431, Covington, LA 70434 or [www.hearandseeonline.com](http://www.hearandseeonline.com) )

These former NCFCA competitors from Louisiana get help from Mrs. Moon to construct this debate theory curriculum filled with fun down-home examples and chapter study guides. Emphasizes a stock-issue theory of LD with lots of stress on criteria. (Includes case samples based on the 2003-2004 topic).

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88. Interestingly enough, this quote is attributed to Edmund Burke; however this is only a paraphrase of something else he stated. People abroad have traced it back through translation to a Russian soviet film based on the book War and Peace. For more information on this fascinating subject, try <http://www.tartarus.org/~martin/essays/burkequote.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Asia is a crucial location to see the impact of economic trade. The Silk Road flourished for some time during the early centuries proceeding Christ. The decline of the route, and thus economic isolation, was the cause of regression. “The intermediate cities in Central Asia literally bit the dust when the reasons for and sources of their very existence disappeared at both ends of the Silk Road had that connected them.” Professor Frank, Andre Gunder. “TOWARD HUMANO- AND ECO-CENTRISM: UNITY IN DIVERSITY, NOT CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS” UNU Conference. 31 July – 3 August 2001. <http://www.rrojasdatabank.org/agfrank/dialog_civ.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. See *How to Run Your Tournament* by Chris Jeub and Robbie Blum at [www.speechsupplies.com](http://www.speechsupplies.com). [↑](#footnote-ref-90)