All Y’all Should: A Kritik  
Negative Case by Mark Csoros



This Kritik (pronounced “critique”, debaters like Greek things and “K” is a cool abbreviation) is built on the logical syllogism in the contentions. The definitions and resolutional analysis are important aspects of the case, but they’re there for set-up purposes and as a defense in later speeches.

The basic flow of the case is this: fair trade corrects unfairness, government intervention (read: unfree trade) creates unfairness, so governments shouldn’t support unfree trade, so there’s no conflict. The point is that the entire conflict scenario of the resolution is wholly artificial, so we should reject the resolution as a whole.

Before you read this next part, you should read the case and the OPP notes at the bottom. Once you’ve done that, come back and we’ll discuss how you can defend this perspective. Ready? Most Affs will be slightly confused by the concept of a RezK, and so they’ll start at the most obvious weakness: RezA point 1. Your response is rooted in simplicity and gets real complicated real fast. The response is “but the resolution says governments plural”. That’s the easy part. The hard part is explaining why this allows you to assume that every nation is suddenly going to start abiding by international trade laws and adopting laissez-faire economic policy. The way you go about that is by saying that all governments should resist the urge to meddle (make unfree) international trade. China shouldn’t subsidize steel, the U.S. shouldn’t impose protectionist tariffs, and the U.S. won’t have to impose tariffs if China isn’t meddling.

The second point of attack will likely be RezA 2, and the likely line of argumentation is this: while conflict is necessary, there is conflict every single day, when governments have to decide whether their policies should favor free or fair trade. Your response here depends on how you well you sold the judge on your perspective of fairness in Contention 2. If they buy it, you shouldn’t have any trouble, because you can argue that free and fair trade can both be upheld, simultaneously, if the government just keeps their grubby hands out of trade. If the judge takes a more expansive view of fairness, like the view presented in the OPP notes, you may have a more difficult time. If you let Aff persuade that judge that China’s labor laws give manufacturers there an unfair advantage, you’ve pretty much lost the round. Stand strong on what fairness means, and you should be all right.

Finally, be prepared to defend the fact that you’re running a RezK, and don’t run it when there’s a low probability of success. A first-time community judge will likely be confused by a K, alumni will probably have fun with it, and parent judges who have the judging philosophy of “clarity and straightforward debate” will absolutely hate it. So pick your battles, and understand that being the debater who always runs a RezK is less fun than being the debater who usually wins.

All Y’all Should

# It’s unwise to affirm statements that contain errors. Because this resolution makes an unwarranted assumption that deeply affects today’s debate, I stand opposed to the resolution.

# Definitions

To start off, let’s define the key terms we’ll use throughout this round.

**Free Trade**

**The Encyclopedia Britannica nicely defines free trade by writing:**

**“Free trade**, also called**laissez-faire**, a policy by which a government does not discriminate against [imports](https://www.britannica.com/topic/import) or interfere with [exports](https://www.britannica.com/topic/export) by applying tariffs (to imports) or subsidies (to exports).”[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Fair Trade**

Fair Trade is operationally defined as

“Trade regulations, often tariffs or subsidies, that seek to level the playing field and promote equal trading opportunities.”

## Should

Finally, “should” is best defined by Oxford Dictionaries as

1. Indicating a desirable or expected state.
2. Used to give or ask advice or suggestions.
3. Used to give advice.[[2]](#footnote-2)

With these definitions in mind, let’s move to analyze the resolution in…

# Resolutional Analysis

# Rez A 1: Governments (plural) are the actors

This is a pretty straightforward point of analysis, but one that can easily slip by us. The wording of the resolution asks us to debate what governments should do. It isn’t referring to a specific government, otherwise the resolution would contain the phrase “when in conflict, *a government* should value free trade over fair trade”. Because this resolution specifically refers to governments in the plural, we’re debating about what governments plural should do.

# Rez A 2: When in Conflict

This resolution, by using the words “when in conflict”, requires there to be instances where free and fair trade clash. If there are no instances of conflict, then we can’t debate the resolution, because the resolution specifies that we’re only discussing cases where free and fair trade present themselves as opposing options, and we have to choose one over the other.

**Contention 1: Fair Trade Corrects Imbalance**

As defined earlier, free trade is a correction that governments use to “even the playing field” of international trade. A nation might impose tariffs, quotas, or other restrictions to give their businesses a fair shot at international competition. And that, in and of itself, is fine, but it’s only necessary when another country isn’t playing by the rules.

**Contention 2: Imbalance Comes from Government Intervention**

Let’s think for a second about what fairness actually is. Fairness isn’t equality of outcome, but it is equality of opportunity. Maybe the best way to describe this is with an example:

**Application 1: Olympic Track**

In track, some athletes are going to win and some are going to lose. It’s in the nature of racing that only one person can be the fastest. We wouldn’t say that track is unfair because fast athletes win, in fact we say that a race is fair when the best athlete is victorious. That’s why we ban performance enhancing drugs, and don’t let athletes take shortcuts in the marathon. When athletes are caught cheating, we ban them from competition, to keep the playing field even.

How does this apply to international trade? Well, some nations are better at producing some goods, just like some athletes are better at running races. Italy makes a lot of great pasta and art, and America makes a lot of great apple pies and guns. It’s not unfair for Italy to be better at making pasta, it’s just their specialty. What would be unfair? If Italy’s government somehow rigged the pasta trade, giving an unfair “performance enhancer” to Italy’s pasta trade. This is obviously an over-simplified example, so let’s look at our second application, to see what this looks like in the real world.

**Application 2: Chinese Steel Subsidies**

Bloomberg Business reported in February of 2019:

*Beijing has long turned to large-scale subsidies when the manufacturing sector hit rough patches. In 2013, handouts to industrial and materials companies totaled about 8 billion yuan as producer prices slumped; by 2015, that had more than doubled. Excluding state-owned energy behemoths China Petroleum & Chemical Corp., or Sinopec, and PetroChina Co., materials and industrial firms took in at least 60 billion yuan of such government assistance between 2013 and 2017, amounting to almost 45 percent of Beijing’s total outlays, according to analysts at CLSA Ltd. On average, this aid accounted for at least 4 percent to 10 percent of gross profits between 2013 and 2017. These firms likely received even more help from local governments and other benefits from Beijing.[[3]](#footnote-3)*

If it seems like the government of China is interfering in the free market and trying to unfairly influence trade, that’s because it’s exactly what’s happening. Because subsidies reduce freedom by increasing government interference, trade is made less fair.

**Contention 3: Governments Shouldn’t Interfere**

Intervention in the free markets creates unfairness, which governments intervene to fix, but the whole problem could have been avoided if governments respected the power of the market. It’s just like Olympic track: if every race was free of intervention, so that the truly fastest runner wins, we would never have an unfair race. In the same way, we never need to fix unfairness when markets are free, and we never have violations of freedom in those perfectly fair markets.

**Contention 4: No Conflict**

There is no conflict in this resolution, because government intervention is the only thing that creates unfair trade practices. If governments did as they ought, we achieve both free and fair trade. Because there’s no conflict, and this resolution presupposes conflict, I’d ask that you vote negative. We shouldn’t affirm a resolution that presupposes an error, so let’s negate this one.

Opposing This Case

To start, you can’t let Affirmative get away with their “all governments” resolutional analysis. There are a couple of arguments you can use here, and the first is that the Aff shouldn’t just be able to fiat all world governments. Fiat, by the way, is a Team Policy term that lets the Aff team pass their plan. In this context, it means that it’s unreasonable for the Aff to assume that they can make 100% of all governments play by the rules and keep trade free. If even one government starts asubsidy program, we’re faced with conflict, and we have to decide whether the other governments should do nothing and promote free trade, or try to level the playing field with a fair trade policy.

Second, there’s a lot of anti-RezK sentiment in the NCFCA. This usually stems from the mistaken belief that Kritiks aren’t a reasonable way to oppose the resolution, and I don’t support that you blindly criticize the Neg for running a Kritik. However, I do think that it’s fair to point out that the Neg debater will debate on affirmative, and so he surely can’t truly believe that the resolution is a fallacy. Further, the negative isn’t actually valuing anything in a value-based debate format, which tends to irk some judges.

Finally, you can point out that unfairness is more than just government intervention. There is an argument to be made that matching a preschooler against Usain Bolt (Olympic track athlete and the current fastest man in the world) would make for an unfair race. Even if Bolt wasn’t taking steroids, his years of training and post-preschool age put him at a serious advantage. In the same way, it seems unfair to expect African farmers lacking tools, infrastructure, modern farming techniques, and water to compete with American farmers. It seems reasonable that African countries can assist their farmers with subsidies or protective tariffs, because they’re already fighting an uphill battle. In the same way, it doesn’t seem fair to match American manufacturers against Chinese manufacturers, because China’s cheap labor, permissive environmental regulations, and lax labor laws mean that manufacturing in China is easier. Setting this up in cross examination will help you drive the point home.

1. The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Free Trade.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 17 Jan. 2014, [www.britannica.com/topic/free-trade](http://www.britannica.com/topic/free-trade). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Oxford Living Dictionaries. “Should” https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/should [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Bloomberg Business Feb 24, 2019. “China's Borrowers Have an $890 Billion Problems”; Bloomberg Reporter Anjani Trivedi https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-02-24/china-s-pullback-on-subsidies-tests-debt-laden-industrial-sector [↑](#footnote-ref-3)