



POLICY DEBATE INTRODUCTION

National Federation of State
High School Associations



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A very brief introduction to policy debate, using some examples from the the Arms Sales Topic, by Rich Edwards, Baylor University

THE FORMAT FOR POLICY DEBATE

- Constructive Speeches
 - 1AC: 8 Minutes
 - Cross-Examined by 2NC: 3 Minutes
 - 1NC: 8 Minutes
 - Cross-Examined by 1AC: 3 Minutes
 - 2AC: 8 Minutes
 - Cross-Examined by 1NC: 3 Minutes
 - 2NC: 8 Minutes
 - Cross-Examined by 2AC: 3 Minutes
- Rebuttal Speeches
 - 1NR: 5 Minutes
 - 1AR: 5 Minutes
 - 2NR: 5 Minutes
 - 2AR: 5 Minutes





THE STOCK ISSUES

- **Topicality:** Is it germane?
- **Harm:** Is there a significant problem?
- **Inherency:** What is causing the problem?
- **Solvency:** Can the problem be solved?
- **Disadvantage:** Will the solution create more serious problems than the ones it resolves?





CONSTRUCTIVE SPEAKER RESPONSIBILITIES

- **1AC:** Present a “Prima Facie” Case
 - Harm, Inherency, Solvency, Plan
- **1NC:** Present the Negative Attack
 - Traditionally attacked the 1AC
 - More recently: The “front-line” of all negative positions (Topicality, Disadvantages, Counterplans, Kritiks) then answer the Case arguments
- **2AC:** Re-Defends Against 1NC
 - Follows 1NC point-by-point (Answer whatever the 1NC wanted to talk about)
- **2NC:** Answer selected parts of the 2AC positions, leaving the rest for 1NR
 - Divide positions with the 1NR (division of labor)





REBUTTAL SPEAKER RESPONSIBILITIES

- No new arguments in rebuttal (new evidence OK)
- 1NR: Answer remaining 2AC arguments
- 1AR: Answer all 2NC & 1NR arguments
- 2NR: Extend winning negative arguments
- 2AR: Answer all remaining negative arguments & claim all affirmative positions that are no longer contested





CROSS EXAMINATION

- The speaker completing the constructive speech remains at the podium for questions
- Both questioner and respondent face the judge
- The questioner controls the cross examination period
- What to ask?
 - Set up arguments for later speeches
 - Use all of your time (it's prep time for your partner)



KEEPING A FLOW SHEET

I. The U.S. should cut off arms sales to Saudi Arabia

A. The Saudis are using U.S. arms to kill civilians in Yemen

B. Saudi Arabia has an anti-democratic, authoritarian system of government.

C. U.S. foreign policy ought not provide support for authoritarian rulers in the Middle East

1. The U.S. is helping to train Saudi pilots to be more precise in bombing attacks.

2. Many more civilians in Yemen are killed by the Houthi rebels who will take over if the war is abandoned.

The new Saudi Crown Prince is bringing numerous reforms to Saudi Society and providing more opportunity for women.

The pro-democracy push know as the "Arab Spring" has brought only chaos to the region

Despite this training, the attacks on civilians are continuing, including use of cluster munitions.

The U.S. ought not allow its arms to kill civilians, regardless of whether others are doing so.

It was the new Saudi Crown Prince who ordered the brutal murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Turkey's Saudi embassy

While there have been some disappointments with the Arab Spring, the U.S. must continue to support democracy; suppression of human rights is wrong.





FLOW SHEET TIPS

- Use abbreviations appropriate to the topic (SA=Saudi Arabia, BMD=ballistic missile defense, A=Arms Sales, etc.)
- Use symbols for common claims: (up arrow for increasing, down arrow for decreasing, right arrow for “causes” or “results in”, etc.)
- Establish priorities: 1. Contention labels first priority, 2. Supoints second priority, 3. Evidence reference third priority (Borjas ‘16), 4. Key words of evidence fourth priority.
- Ask for missed points (in CX or prep time).
- Use lots of paper (separate sheets for plan arguments and for case arguments; each big argument should have its own sheet).
- Line up flowsheet paper with debaters’ “road-maps”

