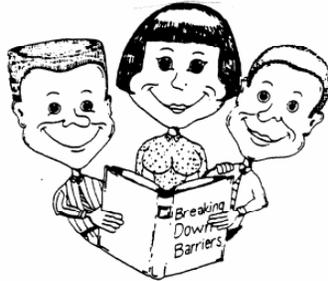


Breaking Down Barriers: How to Debate



SAMPLE OF THE LINCOLN- DOUGLAS BASICS AND ADVANCED SECTIONS

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**Breaking Down Barriers:
How to Debate**

**SAMPLE OF THE LD BASICS AND
ADVANCED SECTIONS**

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LD Chapter 1

Issues in Value Debate



Martin Luther King Jr. argued for the value of equality. What will you argue for in your value debates?

Quiz Yourself

See if you can identify the value object and the criteria phrase in each of the following topics. Then, identify a value example for each topic.

1. Resolved: That U.S. military support of non-democratic governments is unjustified.
2. Resolved: That drug testing is warranted.
3. Resolved: That capitalism causes poverty.
4. Resolved: That, when in conflict, privacy is a more important right than liberty.

ANSWERS:

VALUE OBJECTS: 1) U.S. military support of non-democratic governments; 2) Drug testing; 3) Capitalism; 4) Privacy.

CRITERIA PHRASES: 1) is unjustified; 2) is warranted; 3) causes poverty; 4) is a more important right than liberty (when in conflict with privacy).

VALUE EXAMPLES: (There are many potential answers. Just be sure your value example is an example of the value object.) 1) Military support to El Salvador; 2) Drug testing in hazardous industries; 3) Differences in wages; 4) Privacy in the workplace.

Quiz Yourself

Suppose you were in a group discussion arguing whether pacifism is right or wrong. Some in the group argue that people need to defend themselves against evil forces. Others in the group argue that violence is never justified and that when people attack others, even in self-defense, they act just like their “evil” enemies. Which side would you argue for? Discussions like this pacifism one occur in Lincoln-Douglas value debates. In this chapter, I will discuss the basic issues you need to address when you debate a value topic including the value object, criteria phrase, value examples, value support, value objection, topicality, and relevancy.

THE VALUE OBJECT, THE CRITERIA PHRASE, AND VALUE EXAMPLES

Each value resolution that you debate in Lincoln-Douglas debate has a value object and a criteria phrase. You need to identify the value object and the criteria phrase so that you know which positions to support. **THE VALUE OBJECT** is **THE SUBJECT OF THE RESOLUTION**. If you discuss the topic, “Abortion is immoral,” abortion is the value object because it is the subject of that topic. **THE CRITERIA PHRASE** is **THE WORD OR PHRASE THAT DESCRIBES HOW TO EVALUATE THE VALUE OBJECT**. The criteria phrase of the abortion topic is “is immoral” because that is how the value object “abortion” will be evaluated. The debate will center on whether abortion is immoral or not. Here are more examples:

RESOLVED: That liberty is more important than equality.
(value object) (the criteria phrase)

RESOLVED: That the president has excessive power.
(value object) (the criteria phrase)

THE AFFIRMATIVE ARGUES THAT THE VALUE OBJECT MEETS THE CRITERIA PHRASE. For example, the affirmative would argue that the president’s power is excessive for the second topic listed above. To argue this, the affirmative need not show that all of the president’s powers are excessive. They can argue a value example. A **VALUE EXAMPLE** is **THE AFFIRMATIVE EXAMPLE OF THE VALUE OBJECT**. The affirmative could support the value example that the president’s power over congress is excessive or they could show that the president’s power to wage war is excessive. The examples should be sure to be tied to the resolution so that judges can follow the debater’s line of thinking and how it is relevant to the topic at hand.

VALUE SUPPORT—AFFIRMATIVE CASE

Affirmatives try to convince their judges to vote for the resolution. To do this, they will present value support. **VALUE SUPPORT** shows that **THE VALUE OBJECT OR VALUE EXAMPLE SUPPORTS THE CRITERIA PHRASE**. So, if the resolution is, “Resolved: That the Death Penalty is immoral,” what value support might an affirmative provide? They might argue that the death penalty is immoral because the death penalty kills human beings (some of

Offer value support for the following resolutions:

1. Resolved: That feeding all of the poor is justified.
2. Resolved: That feminism has, on balance, helped women.
3. Resolved: That economic growth creates too much pollution.

ANSWERS: There can be many. Just make sure that you show the value object supports the criteria phrase. 1) Feeding all the poor will decrease deaths and give the poor hope (so it is justified); 2) Feminism has increased women's wages; feminism has empowered women; feminism has increased rights for women; 3) Economic growth means more businesses belching out air, water, and land pollutants killing animals and even humans (so it creates too much pollution). Economic growth in the chemical industry (a value example) is creating dangerous toxic wastes, thereby creating too much pollution.

Quiz Yourself

Respond to each of the following cases:

1. Foreign Policy based on human rights sends a message of our help for oppressed people.

2. Appointing conservative justices is good because conservative justices rule against criminals more often.

3. American democracy is the most important value because it assures everyone a voice in decisions.

ANSWERS: There are many, just be sure to directly respond to the case.

- 1) Human rights policies send conflicting messages; human rights policies backfire and cause more repression; 2)

- Conservative justices don't always rule against criminals; Conservative justices rule against white collar criminals less frequently; 3) American democracy excludes the poor—they cannot get on television with ads—so they don't have a voice.

Quiz Yourself:

Make a value objection against each of the following affirmative cases.

whom are innocent), and that it is immoral because it kills a disproportionate number of men and racial minorities. These arguments show that the value object, "the death penalty," supports the criteria phrase that it "is immoral." Here are more examples:

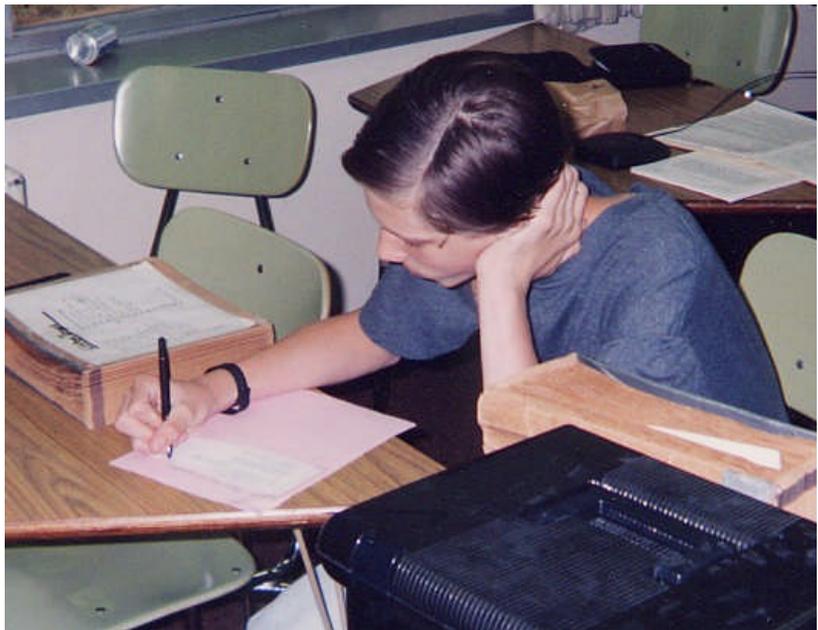
TOPIC: Resolved: That the attorney-client privilege is unjustified.

VALUE SUPPORT: The attorney-client privilege is unjustified because it often hides guilty clients and allows murderers to go free.

TOPIC: Resolved: Airport security checks violate civil liberties.

VALUE SUPPORT: Airport security checks violate civil liberties by humiliating people with personal items in their baggage and people with artificial limbs who make the alarm go off.

Negative debaters will not take affirmative arguments sitting down. They will stand up and respond. Against the death penalty case, they might argue that the people on death row have failed to act like human beings, nearly all who are killed are guilty, and that the death penalty is not disproportionately given to men or to racial minorities. The negative can argue that the death penalty is not immoral. When you debate on the negative, you should do the same.



This debater prepares the value support in his case.

VALUE OBJECTION—THE NEGATIVE CASE

If you are negative you need more responses against a death penalty case besides the argument that it does not kill people unfairly. If I were for the death penalty, I would object to the resolution, "Resolved: That the death penalty is immoral." I would argue that the death penalty is moral by presenting a value objection. A VALUE OBJECTION shows THAT THE VALUE OBJECT OR VALUE EXAMPLE REJECTS THE CRITERIA PHRASE. I would argue that the death penalty deters murders. This would show that the value object "the death penalty" rejects the criteria phrase "is immoral" because it shows that the death penalty is moral.

Value objections are very important. They give the negative a chance to make their case for the value object. If someone said that "ambulances are bad because they get into accidents," I would disagree and for more reasons than just that ambulances don't get into that many accidents. I would also argue a value objection that ambulances are good

1. TOPIC: Resolved: That animal research is wrong.

CASE: Animal research injures, kills, and cruelly treats animals.

2. TOPIC: Resolved: That military support to non-democratic governments is justified.

CASE: Military support to South Korea assures them that they do not need to turn to nuclear weapons.

ANSWERS: There can be many. Make sure, though, that your value objection shows the opposite of the affirmative case—especially on question 2 since the case uses a value example. 1) Animal research helps find cures to terrible diseases (so it is right—not wrong); 2) Military support to South Korea increases the chance that they will go to war with their neighbors.

Why debate values?

Good question. Some people believe that values are like feelings and that since feelings are subjective, they cannot be argued “logically.” Other people believe that values are set rules which people must believe to be the “right kind of people” and since there isn’t any reason to argue about rules—discussions will not change the rules—value debate is worthless. I disagree with both views. Values are not subjective “feelings” and they are not objective “rules.” Instead, values are standards that human beings believe in and act upon. Do you agree that people should have freedom of choice? In all cases? What about the freedom to choose to murder? Why do you believe that? Value debates ask similar questions. You can discuss these issues, just like you can discuss policy issues. Indeed, are you willing to discuss whether the United States should give everyone a minimum income? Your opinion on this subject will include your values like your opinion of the work ethic, of what government’s role is in society, and what you think of taxes. You can discuss such value issues with arguments rather than just “feelings” and “rules.” And if you think about it, you can discuss nearly any value issue, even tough ones like morality, abortion, euthanasia, and gay rights. What’s your opinion? Not your “feeling,” not your “rule.” What is your belief? Your answer is the beginning of a value debate.

Quiz Yourself:

If appropriate, make resolutionality or relevancy arguments against the following affirmative cases on the topic, “Resolved: That protecting U.S.

because they save people’s lives by getting them to the hospital.

To make a value objection on your topic you need an argument that says the value object does the exact opposite of what the resolution says it does. If the topic is, “Resolved: That the sanctity of life is more important than the quality of life,” you need to show that the quality of life is more important than the sanctity of life. If the resolution is, “Resolved: That United States restrictions on Latin American immigration are not justified,” you need to show that rejection of these immigrants is not justified. Take a look at the following examples:

TOPIC: Resolved: That drug testing harms civil liberties.

VALUE OBJECTION: Drug testing helps civil liberties by protecting the rights of workers from dangerous mishaps created by drug abusers on the job.

TOPIC: Resolved: That third parties are unfairly excluded from elections.

VALUE OBJECTION: Third parties are not unfairly excluded. They should be excluded because they present crazy ideas dangerous to America. For example, Nazi ballot access would increase racial tension.

In this last example, the affirmative might not argue that all third parties are excluded unfairly. They might argue that the Libertarian and Ross Perot parties are excluded unfairly. These are probably legitimate affirmative value examples of third parties that are excluded. The negative value objections would need to deal with these specific value examples. So, the argument that the Nazis would increase racial tension would not apply to this Libertarian/Ross Perot case. The negative would need to argue a value objection that showed the Libertarian and Ross Perot parties are not excluded unfairly.

Of course affirmatives will respond to negative value objections. If you were the affirmative on the death penalty is immoral topic and the negative argued a value objection that the death penalty deterred murder wouldn’t you respond? I’d argue that the death penalty has never been proven to deter crime, and in some studies, the death penalty actually increased murder, especially against minorities.

RESOLUTIONALITY AND RELEVANCY

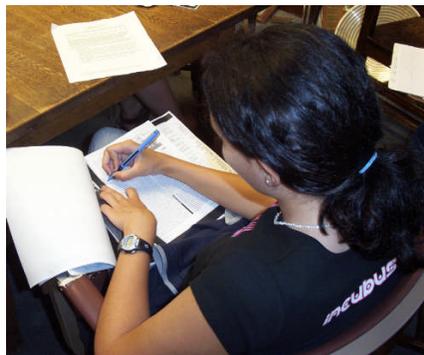
The third argument that the negative can make is a procedural one. Throughout this chapter we have looked at cases where the affirmative supported the value object directly or with a value example that supported the value object. What would happen if the affirmative did not support the value object? What would happen if the affirmative argued that drug testing has been overemphasized on a topic that said, “Resolved: That freedom of the press has been overemphasized?” I hope you would argue that this case does not support the resolution. Amazingly, debaters sometimes present cases that do not support the topic. Yet, you still need to argue against these cases. A strong argument against cases that do not support the topic is a topicality argument. A RESOLUTIONALITY ARGUMENT shows that THE AFFIRMATIVE VALUE EXAMPLE DOES NOT SUPPORT THE VALUE OBJECT. If the affirmative argued that being in the United Way does not help the United States on the topic, “Resolved: That membership in the United Nations is no longer beneficial to the United States,” the negative should make a resolutionality argument. The negative should argue that the affirmative case does not support the resolution because the United Way is not the United Nations.

businesses from foreign competition is good for the American economy.”

1. Supporting free trade with Central American countries is good for the United States economy.
2. Protecting the state of Georgia’s wood products from competition with Washington state wood is good for the American economy.
3. Protecting Argentine rain forests from foreign businesses is good for the American economy.
4. Protecting textile industries from foreign textile products is good for the American economy.
5. Protecting U.S. business from foreign competition will help the world environment.

ANSWERS:

- 1) Not resolitional. Supporting free trade is the opposite of protecting U.S. businesses from foreign competition.
- 2) Not esolutional. Protecting Georgia’s wood from Washington state’s businesses is protection from state competition not foreign competition.
- 3) Not esolutional. Protecting Argentine rain forests is not protecting U.S. businesses.
- 4) Depends. It probably is resolitional—protecting textile industries is a value example of protecting U.S. businesses. However, you could argue that protecting U.S. businesses is more than just protecting textile industries. So, the value example does not support all of the value object.
- 5) Not relevant. Helping the world environment is not help for the American economy. The case, therefore, does not justify the resolution.



This LD debater researches to prepare her value cases.

Presumption in value debate

Presumption favors one side at the beginning of a debate. It does not mean that the favored side will win, or that the favored side is necessarily the better side.



Teri is shocked by value cases that do not support the resolution.

Other cases correctly support the value object, but they do not support the topic. For example, on the resolution, “Resolved: That capitalism harms the environment,” the affirmative supports a case that argues capitalist industries harm the poor and lower middle class by paying low wages. I hope you notice that something is wrong. The affirmative uses a good value example. Capitalist industries are a solid example of capitalism. However, harm to the poor and the lower middle class is not a harm to the environment. The negative should make a relevancy argument against this case. A RELEVANCY ARGUMENT SHOWS THAT THE AFFIRMATIVE VALUE SUPPORT DOES NOT SUPPORT THE CRITERIA PHRASE or that THE NEGATIVE VALUE OBJECTION DOES NOT REJECT THE CRITERIA PHRASE. If the negative presented a value objection on this capitalism resolution that, “capitalism makes the world more peaceful,” they would not have an argument relevant to the resolution. “Making the world more peaceful” is not relevant to showing that capitalism does not harm the environment. This is an irrelevant argument. If you feel your opponent’s argument is not relevant, say so.

Topicality is an essential issue in debate. It would be unfair to the negative if affirmatives could argue any case they wanted and the affirmative would not have fulfilled their duties. Relevancy is an essential issue for the same reasons. If the affirmative case does not support the resolution, then there is no reason to vote affirmative, who, by definition must support the resolution. In the same way, if negative value objections do not relate to the resolution, then there is no reason to vote negative, who by definition, must reject the resolution.

It just means that opponents of the side with presumption must meet their burden of proof (they have the obligation to prove their case). In addition, if the debate ends dead even, the side with presumption will probably win. Who sets presumption in favor of one side? The judge. Which side does the judge favor? The judge can set presumption in value debate in any of the following four ways. First, some judges set a "traditional" presumption in favor of prevailing values. This means that if society believes something, for example, that capital punishment is good, then the side supporting capital punishment gets presumption. The side against capital punishment, or against any prevailing opinion, has the burden of proof. Second, a judge can assign a "risk" presumption against uncertainty. If a value presents risky consequences, for example support for violent revolutions, the judge assigns presumption against the risky value. If a value appears to reduce risks, for example, support for social justice, the judge will assign presumption in favor of that value. Proponents of risky values and opponents of non-risky values have the burden of proof, whereas opponents of risky values and proponents of non-risky values have presumption. Third, a judge can assign a "hypothesis testing" presumption against the resolution or any claim. The negative is always given presumption in this approach. However, debaters must still prove any claim they make whether they are negative or affirmative. Fourth, judges can set a "psychological" presumption in favor of any argument or position with which they agree. If the judge agrees with the resolution or the affirmative value, then presumption is with the affirmative. If the judge is against the resolution or the affirmative value, then presumption is with the negative.



This debater presents her case.

CONCLUSION

You are ready to debate values if you discuss the right issues. You need to identify the value object (the subject) and the criteria phrase (how the subject is evaluated) in the resolution. In the resolution, "Resolved: That desegregation is good," the value object is "desegregation" and the criteria phrase is "is good." The affirmative may choose to support the whole value object or an appropriate value example, an example of the value object. So, an affirmative might support busing, a value example of desegregation. The judge will vote for the affirmative if the value example or value object more supports than rejects the criteria phrase. The judge will vote for the negative if the value objection more rejects than supports the criteria phrase. If you have a good grasp of the key value issues, then you are prepared to debate effectively. Whether it be in a group discussion on the merits of pacifism or in an academic debate on the values of social justice, you now know the issues to argue value propositions effectively.

LD Chapter 5

Affirmative LD Strategies



These two debaters discuss ways to improve their affirmative case and strategy so that they can win.

Back at Watertown High School Franky walks into Coach’s office disillusioned and sad about his affirmative record. He complains to Coach that “the negative gets a six minutes rebuttal and I just don’t have time to answer all my opponents arguments in just three minutes. Being affirmative is impossible Coach.” Coach replies “Franky there are small things we can do to make you a better affirmative debater, I will work with you on your speaking style, organization and evidence in your case.”

In this chapter, we will discuss how to be strategic with your affirmative case and how to respond to negative arguments.

WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR AFFIRMATIVE CASE

There are a number of good ways to put the negative on the defensive with your affirmative case. The first thing to do is to choose the right structure for your case.

1. Write your case so that the arguments give reasons rather than just claims.

Many cases are organized as follows:

- I. Security assures a democratic society**
 - A. Security is linked with democracy (evidence)**
 - B. Security helps democracy (evidence)**
 - C. Security is tied to democracy (evidence)**

Notice that none of the tags give any reasons why security assures a democratic society. The judge must carefully discern the reasons from the evidence and analysis that something is not that likely to occur. You want your judge to know your reasons so that you can win. To do this, you need to use tags that provide the reasons. So, rewrite your tags after carefully looking at the evidence in your case. Here is how the revised version of the case supporting the value of security might look:

- I. Security assures a democratic society**
 - A. 3 examples show security is linked with democracy (evidence)**
 - B. Security helps provide stability needed for democracy (evidence)**
 - C. Security prevents attacks against democracy (evidence)**

Notice in the revised version, subpoints A through C give reasons why security assures democracy. That’s how your case should look.

2. Develop the importance of your value support.

If you can demonstrate that the value support for your case is very important, you make it very difficult for negatives to win because they will need to prove their arguments are even more important. In order to do this, you need to show that the value in your case is important. In a value case, develop your criterion. Show that the value support you

Develop value impact

A good way to develop the importance of your value case is to show the importance of the value you support. So, explain why your value is important. For example:

1. PEACE IS NECESSARY FOR HUMAN GROWTH
2. HUMAN GROWTH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT VALUE

What makes a winning case?

You need to be prepared to defeat all negative arguments.

Be ready for a wide variety of strategies—especially ones that highlight the weakest part of your case.

You need to have arguments that your opponents just cannot answer effectively.

My case is not doing well

It can be very frustrating when your affirmative is not doing well. The key is to fix your case, improve your debating or write a new one.

To FIX YOUR CASE, I have three suggestions. First, what arguments are you losing in your debates? Sit down and write out responses to those arguments. Be sure your responses are good. Have your coach or someone else review your arguments to see if they use sound reasoning and if they are appealing. If they are not, fix them (see Advanced Chapter 1 and 2 on having clear, well supported and appealing arguments and this chapter on backup briefs). Second, if you hear the same arguments every debate, consider preempting them in your affirmative case. For example, if you feel that negatives will argue that your position harms important resources, consider including an advantage or value support in your affirmative case that says your position saves resources. If you feel that you are losing because of how you debate, it is time to IMPROVE YOUR DEBATING by reviewing the Advanced. Do you make clear arguments with concise, accurate and persuasive tags? Do you do rebuttals the right way, with good reasons for why you should win the debate? Review how to do these important debate skills and then practice them over and over. In fact, a good suggestion is to practice debating on the affirmative in front of your coach or in front of other debaters. Ask them for suggestions and then act on them. If you are not doing well, someone else has a better idea of what to do. So, do it! If these suggestions do not help because your case is fatally flawed in some way, then CHANGE YOUR CASE! Pick a new case.

You will improve only if you change and adapt in the right ways. So, consider the comments of others and make changes as best as you can.

offer is comparatively the most important issue/value. If you can do this, then you can lose value objections and still win the debate because your value support will outweigh. When the judge compares the value objections to your value supports, you will win because your arguments are more important.

3. Tips for the stock issues in your case.

IMPROVE YOUR EVALUATION OBSERVATION

- Include definitions and explanations that exclude arguments you believe are irrelevant to proving or disproving the topic.
- Show that your value is more important than values you expect the negative to present.

IMPROVE YOUR CONTENTIONS

- Explain why the value object meets your value.
- Get rid of examples and analogies that the negative can use against you.
- Explain how intensely and extensively the value object meets your value.

4. Expand a case argument or include more arguments.

One way to put the negative on the defensive is to design your case arguments strategically. There are two ways you can do this. You can expand one idea in your case or you can develop multiple ideas in your cases. If you use an affirmative case that expands one idea, you can put the debate on your ground and force negatives to have well prepared positions against the one idea you have chosen. In order to take this approach, you need to research thoroughly the points in your case. Ask yourself the question: Is there an argument that there is virtually no negative evidence against? Or is there an argument that has more affirmative ground? When you discover that you can take a position in your debates that makes it difficult for the negative to respond, go for it! That way, negatives will have a very difficult time responding directly to your case.

The alternate approach to expanding one idea in your affirmative case is to present many positions in the first affirmative constructive. Point out as many value supports to your value example as you possibly can. By doing this, you make it very difficult for the negative to respond to all of your arguments. As a result, you can just emphasize any one advantage or value support to win the debate. Be careful with this approach. Negatives may turn your case contentions and judges may react negatively when you drop one of your original main points. Even after improving the arguments in your case, you should consider how to rework it strategically. Here are some good tips for doing this:

5. Reword your case to avoid resolutionality arguments.

Think about the resolutionality arguments against your case. Go through your case and get rid of evidence that might support resolutionality or relevancy arguments. If the topic is about the “law” put a piece of evidence in your case talks about legislator attitudes—that isn’t relevant nor resolutional. Take it out. If one of your arguments is that “community action harms individual rights,” you should not include this argument in your case. Community action is not “law” and hence isn’t what you should be discussing.

6. Cut out anything that might give the negative a link to their arguments.

If the negative keeps arguing that your value of civil liberties harms safety because one of the points in your case argues “civil liberties often

Avoid Treating Values Absolutely

Have you ever debated an opponent who claimed that anything less than total support of their value would collapse everything? Most likely, this person was treating their value absolutely – either it exists perfectly or it is completely obliterated. Does one violation of someone’s civil rights mean that civil rights don’t exist at all? Of course not! You should avoid making absolute claims about values, whether the value is your own or your opponent’s. Values are said to come in degrees, so that’s also how you should measure and compare them. One degree less does not mean that the value doesn’t exist at all. Instead, try to figure out the specific circumstance in which the value exists and then draw out the implications of that. For example, if your value is freedom, you will never be able to prove that your case supports freedom for everyone to do anything in any circumstance imaginable. This would be treating freedom absolutely. Instead, you should outline specific parameters where freedom should be supported. You could say that people should have the freedom to criticize the government without reprimand, as long as they don’t put anyone’s life in danger. This would not be treating values as absolutes. Remember to treat values in degrees when you are refuting your opponent’s value. If your opponent states their value as an absolute, point out that they will never be able to prove their case. And if your opponent already treats values as degrees, then you should make sure to refute it in the same manner. After all, it won’t do you any good to argue that absolutely no part of their value is valuable.

comes into conflict with efforts to protect the public,” then you need to change that evidence. Get a piece of evidence that says that civil liberties can actually enhance protection of public safety.

- Get rid of cards that debaters can use to support a different value.
- Get rid of cards that show x causes the problem when your position does not address x.
- Get rid of cards that say “if x happens, then . . .” if you cannot prove that x will happen.

7. Take no positions on non-critical issues to increase your flexibility.

If you expect the negative to argue either that you increase or decrease individual rights, and you have great evidence responding to both, then don’t give that away in the first affirmative speech. Indeed, in cross-examination, if your opponent asked, “Do you support individual rights?” I would say “I haven’t taken a position on that. If your opponent says, “come on, what do you really think,” say “I don’t make an argument about that in the 1AC. Present your argument and I will respond.”

8. “Sandbag” part of your case.

If you expect the negative to argue that states are better than the federal government, you might want to leave any evidence about this out of your affirmative case. Instead, make it appear you have no evidence on this issue. The negative will be more likely to present their arguments and then you can refute their arguments with analysis and evidence stating why the federal government is superior.

9. Consider using preempts in your Case.

It can also be a good idea to use preempts in your first affirmative case. **PREEMPTS ARE ARGUMENTS THAT RESPOND TO OPPONENT ARGUMENTS BEFORE THEY EVEN MAKE THOSE ARGUMENTS.** For example, if you think that the negative is going to run an economic argument, then respond to that argument in your affirmative case. You might include a point in your case that says, “My value helps the economy.” Be careful with pre-empts, however. They may be used as links to value objections. For example, a debater could just argue “I agree. Your position does help the economy, and helping the economy is bad because it harms the environment.” So, before you use preempts, consider them carefully.

Improve your Backup Briefs

Sit down and write out a list of every argument that teams could run against your case. That includes topicality arguments, value objections, case specific responses, etc. Forget that you don’t think that the argument applies. Think how they could apply the argument. Then, make sure you have strong response briefs to answer each and every one of these arguments. To help you do this, here are key tips:

1. Really research your case; know all the negative cards against your case.

Spend time going through all the books, magazine articles, government documents, etc., that have any evidence related to your case. Take note of every argument, affirmative and negative, on your case. Be thinking, how they could argue against your case.



This LD debater is having his coach review his case.

2. Have other debaters argue against your case and then adapt and adjust your argumentation.

Have practice debates and drills against other debaters on your squad. Learn from their arguments and be ready to respond to them.

3. Go for offense against counter resolutional claims.

If you know negatives will run certain present certain against you that are offensive, then think about just presenting offensive arguments against the counter resolutional claims. Skip all arguments that show the negatives arguments is unrealistic, has no impact, etc. Instead, show that your position will not cause the harm and then put together all your offense and use it against the negative's argument.

Tip for your rebuttals

Affirmative speakers should prepare to respond effectively to the negative. I have three hints to make your affirmative rebuttals more effective. First, don't panic. If you look rushed, your judge will think you are behind in the debate and will be less likely to vote for you. In addition, you may get so flustered that you will make mistakes and take even more time. Relax, be in control, and deliver at a controlled pace that will allow you to present the needed arguments. Second, group arguments. Don't expect to hit every specific negative argument. Just hit the main gist of the negative's arguments. Finally, third, begin your speech with an issue that you are winning, not on an issue that you are losing. The judge has just heard a slew of arguments on why you should lose. When you start your rebuttal you need to take control of your speech and argumentation. Right from the start of your speech, make the judge see you are still winning, not losing, the debate. So, start off with a powerful introduction and begin on an issue that you feel you are winning. For example, an argument about saving lives might be a strong issue for you. So, you might start your speech with, "The affirmative value supports the lives of over 50,000 people. That is a much more important than any of the negative arguments."

Conclusion

After some rigorous practice drills and a massive reorganization of his case Franky won all of his affirmative debates at a local tournament and was in finals! The core essentials to becoming a better LD debater revolve around researching your affirmative case and possible negative arguments to your case thoroughly and then organizing your arguments in a manner that provides warrants and claims. Lastly, some of the most successful LD debaters do rebuttal redos and take advantage of their coaches and team-mates resources and knowledge.