

DEBATING POLICIES IN KARL POPPER FORMAT

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Introduction

a. Karl Popper format

Karl Popper (KP) debate format was developed by the Open Society Institute - New York for the Eastern European Debate Program in 1994 using US policy debate as a platform. Compared to the real policy format, KP is a simplified version. However, the main feature of policy debate was not changed, which means that KP debate is also very much an evidence based format. Every argument brought forward in KP debate must also be provided with evidence.

KP debate is first and foremost about team play, where the importance of co-operation both before and during the debate is hard to underestimate. The resolution, usually value-related, is announced a week prior to the debate, in case of tournaments often as long as a month or even more before the tournament.

In order to creating argumentation, debaters also have to search through a wide variety of sources of information, both written and digital to come up with sufficient amount of evidence needed to prove their case.

In the debate round there are two teams, each consisting of three members. One of the teams is on the affirmative side, the other on the negative. The debate has a certain structure, which all participants must follow. This structure ensures, that every debater gets a chance to speak and either ask or answer questions (or do both). This structure is the following:

- 1. First affirmative speech (6 minutes)**
- 2. Third negative cross-examines first affirmative (3 minutes)**
- 3. First negative speech (6 minutes)**
- 4. Third affirmative cross-examines first negative (3 minutes)**
- 5. Second affirmative speech (5 minutes)**
- 6. First negative cross-examine second affirmative (3 minutes)**
- 7. Second negative speech (5 minutes)**
- 8. First affirmative cross- examines second negative (3 minutes)**
- 9. Third affirmative speech (5 minutes)**
- 10. Third negative speech (5 minutes)**

During the cross-examination rounds the examining debater has 3 minutes to ask questions from the answering debater. This time cannot be used for delivering a speech by either debater. Questions and answers are usually short and to the point. To achieve this, questions are often asked in if-format.

During a debate round, both teams have a maximum of 8 minutes to use for preparation. How the team divides that time, is their decision. No prep time can be taken in the middle of a speech and the time does not have to be used up, if the team does not need it.

The winner in a Karl Popper debate is always decided by a panel of judges. Time limits have to be followed very carefully, time is kept and the remaining time shown to the debaters by a timekeeper, who can be a specially assigned person or one of the judges.

b. Policy debate format

Policy Debate is a style of debating where two teams advocate or oppose a plan derived from a resolution that usually calls for a change in policy by a government. Teams normally alternate going "affirmative" or "negative". In most forms of the activity, there is a fixed topic for an entire year or another set period. In comparison to parliamentary debate, policy debate relies more on researched evidence and tends to have a larger sphere of what is considered legitimate argument, including counterplans, critical theory, and debate about the theoretical standards of the activity itself.

While rhetoric is important and reflected in the "speaker points" given to each debater, each round is usually decided based on who has "won" the argument according to the evidence and logic presented. Sometimes decisions can take a substantial amount of time with judges reviewing the textual evidence.

Additionally, in certain segments of the activity, debaters may speak very rapidly, called "spreading," in order to present as much evidence and information as possible and counter the other side. If the opposing side is not able to respond to their arguments quickly enough, then they are said to have "lost" the argument.

Policy Debate is mostly practiced in the United States (where it is often referred to as Cross-Examination, or CX debate), although it has been attempted in Europe and Japan and has certainly influenced other forms of debate. Its evolution toward what some see as a more esoteric, albeit sophisticated, style has arguably challenged its domestic dominance and its international acceptance.

Introducing policies into KP format

At the last IDEA debate Forum, debaters from IDEA member countries got acquainted with a new concept in the well known and respected Karl Popper Format – policy. For many coaches, debaters and judges the concept itself and its practical application in debates were a novelty and thus a challenge. The whole process of teaching policy to the debaters prior to and during the Forum was an experiment undertaken with certain caution and an element of uncertainty. The results of the evaluation of the Forum show that the IDEA debating community has taken well to debating policies. There is still a lot to be learnt about the element of policy in debates and definitely a lot of room for improvement.

During the national team tournament this summer, the debaters will debate on the topic from the last year's Forum – "Resolved that the UN should expend the protection of the cultural rights" This is a resolution, which requires narrowing of the topic to a particular problem and searching for solutions. In order to debate this topic successfully the teams will have to carefully examine concrete problems related to cultural rights and think about plausible ways in which UN could solve them. All debates require research and factual accuracy; however, the policy element makes factual accuracy indispensable.

When researching and presenting a specific problem the affirmative team must make sure that the information supplied by them is correct. Narrowing of the scope of debate to a particular problem and preparing the specific case gives the affirmative team a certain advantage over the negative team. This is why the affirmative must make sure that there are fair to their opponents in that the case they present is based on facts. The below text is intended as an introduction to the policy format in Karl Popper.

Debates in the real world

If you perceive debate as a social phenomenon, and not only as an educational activity, the best place to find examples of real- life debates would be in the realm of politics. If you switch on your television, you will find many examples of debates on a variety of issues, demonstrating myriad of styles and involving a different number of debaters. These debates will often have unclear rules and the speakers will rarely take notice of each other's speaking time.

Many of these debates will concern questions of values, especially in the societies, which rest on the belief that citizens of the state can shape their own destinies by participating in public debates and democratic process and thus influence the legislature in order to uphold the values which are important to them. For example, most societies nowadays share the belief that education is a value and it is the duty of the government to provide conditions, which would enable the greatest access to, and the quality of education. In the same way, societies uphold other values – for example equality of all citizens, social justice, safety of citizens, the rule of law, etc.

The process of determining what actually constitutes a particular example of the shared values is long and it involves deliberation. Never do members of a give society unanimously agree on what constitutes for example equality, justice, freedom, rights, etc. That is why very often societies are polarized over issues of abortion, capital punishment, social welfare, legalization of soft drugs, euthanasia, etc.

Once, however, a society reaches a difficult consensus on what constitutes its system of values, it aims at developing the ways in which these values can be reflected in its laws and policies. It is a natural consequence – if members of a given society believe that something is right or beneficial, they will strive to achieve this state by adopting laws and policies, which would bring about the desired outcome. The debate on value precedes the debate on policy (in other words it is pre-policy in nature).

Once a given vision, a certain ideal has been adopted, the debates focus on the question of particular policies, specific actions that the government should take in order to achieve desired results. Politicians, experts, and ordinary citizens will get involved in debates which will focus on specific problems and various ways to solve them, particular actions to be taken in order to change the undesirable trends and to achieve the desired outcomes.

For example once the society decides that it should allow consumption of soft drugs, it should produce a system of policies through which soft drugs will be legalized.

The government must decide on who will be allowed to produce drugs, who will be allowed to purchase them, and where they will be sold, how the quality control will be imposed and who will control the price. These are not easy questions to answer and often the goal of

achieving a just, safe and good society in which citizens' rights are protected will depend on what policies will be adopted in a particular case.

Very often, however, the debates we have a chance to observe on TV, political rallies and conventions lack specific content and the reasoning employed often belongs to the sphere of wishful thinking rather than substantiated arguments. Politicians often use demagoguery and populism in order to achieve their political goals and are often confused and uncertain when it comes to answering specific questions regarding the achievement of specific results, like: *who, when, how* and ... *how much*.

Value vs. policy in academic debates

Academic debate should teach students a number of skills, among them the ability to think in terms of solutions to the problems afflicting their communities. That is why IDEA has decided to introduce an element of policy debate into its teaching of public advocacy

This shift towards policy creates some challenges for the Karl Popper debate format. If we look at the format and debates that we have held in it so far, it is clear that the shift towards policy is an important change and it does alter some of the rules which have been put in created earlier. This is, however, no revolution and the changes do not affect the most important thing in debate which is reasoning and the quality of arguments which are presented. Introduction of policy into debate should follow the rules of logic and these are the most important rules that the debaters should adhere to. It is important, however, to understand the nature of the proposed change with regard to resolutions which will naturally lead debaters to debating about policies rather than values.

Karl Popper debate format, the way it has been debated so far is closer to the value debate than policy debate.

First of all the types of resolutions we have debated, even though, some of them lend themselves to policy debate, have been debated primarily as if they were value resolutions. Value resolutions focus on what is desirable, what is better, justified, moral.

Thus, we have debated topics like: "the state should support the poor", "censorship is justified", "civil disobedience is justified", and "soft drugs should be legalized". Even in the case of resolutions which required some kind of implementation of policy ("Open societies require open borders", "we should limit economic development for the sake of environmental protection") students debated these topics focusing on the element of value – showing that a certain state is better than the alternative (for example showing that censorship of some forms of expression is more beneficial to the society). When they centered on the need for a change they debated whether adopting the alternative suggested by the resolution is a good idea in general.

Thus they would claim that open borders are generally a good idea and thus should be promoted because they contribute to the development of open societies or that in a long run scientific progress is beneficial to the preservation of the environment and that is why we should not limit it.

Since value debates support a certain value which is sometimes vague and abstract, debaters tend to use arguments which are not supported by a lot of specific evidence (which does not

mean that they should not have a thorough knowledge of the debated topic!) . For example when debating capital punishment one can argue that capital punishment does not deter crime by providing detailed statistics but this argument can be made irrelevant when one argues that even if it doesn't deter crime we still should have capital punishment because there is something called justice (of course the debate from now on would focus on what justice is).

Most of the value debates focus on the analysis of concepts and ideals and the job of debaters is to prove that the vision of the reality which they are advocating by upholding these ideals is more valuable, desired and beneficial.

In a value debate both sides share more or less equal burdens. The affirmative side is asked to prove that the resolution is generally true, it should justify the resolution as an accurate claim (“yes, we should censor artistic expression !”) while the negative side should prove that the resolution is generally untrue (“no, we should not censor artistic expression !”). Therefore both teams should prepare constructive cases advocating a particular vision, goal, ideal or value. In the example presented above this vision would be a society in which the government exercises certain control over artistic expression (for example to protect its citizens from obscenity) and the one in which artists are free to present what they want (and citizens chose for themselves which forms of art are worthy of their appreciation).

When the debaters are required to debate about policies the philosophy of debate changes.

First of all they must debate about a policy - a particular way of solving a certain problem.

Once the affirmative team has identified a particular problem it is asked to present a particular solution.

The negative team then is no longer expected to debate a resolution – it should focus its attention on the plan presented by the affirmative.

In this way, due to the policy element, the entire debate shifts from “this situation is better than the other one” to “this way of achieving a desired outcome is a better one”.

In a value debate, the affirmative could discard a question from the negative regarding the way in which the change will be brought about (“We are not discussing how this situation will be changed – we are talking about whether it should be changed”). In a value debate the affirmative is not required to demonstrate a plan to solve a problem, however when debating policies the affirmative must defend a particular plan of action.

Since the affirmative is now longer supporting a general resolution but a concrete plan, the team must select a certain area within which it will advocate a change and defend a policy.

Thus in the debate on the environment (we should limit economic development for the sake of environmental protection) the affirmative must select an area in which it will advocate particular change (for example emission of CO₂). It is only rational since it is impossible to create one coherent policy which would solve all the problems afflicting our environment.

Debating about policies asks both teams to rely on a lot of evidence. While debating about values, debaters, though still required to be knowledgeable about a number of issues, will use specific examples sparingly. When advocating a specific policy the debaters will have to use a lot of specific examples to show how what they are proposing will affect the present state.

It is important to bear in mind that both in real life and in the world of academia policy debate is a natural extension of a value debate – it is the next step the debaters would like to take after they have debated about the need for a better alternative. Just like in real life, in educational debate, values and policies are connected.

There is one more aspect that value and policy debate share in common, regardless of the differences in their approach to a topic, and it is the quality of reasoning and argumentation which are required of the debaters to win. The changes in the format logically follow from the expectations, which are set for the debaters who are asked to debate about policies. The tips presented below should be seen as guidelines and set a framework for good debates, rather than constitute a rigid set of rules to be followed. There is no need in policy debate for extensive use of jargon, strict reliance on the form – policy debates just like value debates should be reflective of the debates that take place around us, they should deal with real problems which affect our life in society, both at the level of local community as well as on the international forum, rather than with idiosyncrasies of the form.

Contrary to many political debates that we can observe around us, educational debate should not make use of demagoguery but rely on good reasoning and carefully researched evidence.

WHAT SHOULD THE AFFIRMATIVE DO WHEN DEBATING POLICIES?

A good way to answer this question is to perhaps go back to the real life again and ask ourselves what is involved when policies are discussed. Again if you switch on your television you will hear your country's cabinet proposing things like: increasing your country's exports, decreasing unemployment, providing better medical care, creating a better educational system, etc. As you can see from these examples, every policy entails at least two elements: the agent who proposes a policy (e.g. government) and a certain change – the change from what is now to what is seen as a desired outcome in the future. Since changes are usually costly and people generally are wary of them, there must be a good reason for a change. The reason is usually a serious problem which exists in the present and which should be solved.

When approaching any problem it is logical to ask ourselves what causes the problem, whether the existing policies are unable to take care of the problem and whether the problem can be solved by new policies.

The next step would be to find the solution to the problem – see what the government can do to augment the existing situation. When thinking about solutions to problems we think in terms of who (what existing or potential agent would best solve the existing problem), what (What specific actions will be taken in order to solve the problem), how (how will the actions be enforced) and finally, how much the whole operation will cost. Since we do not live in a perfect world, the agent preparing to carry out a given plan of action may want to see if the costs (not only financial – social, political, etc.) will not outweigh the potential benefits. In other words, the agent introducing certain policies should demonstrate the advantage of the plan over the present policies (or lack of them).

This is what policies involve in the real world. The strategies involved in introducing policies into academic debate are reflective of what we experience in the real world – the affirmative

team can see itself as a government or an international institution trying to solve a certain problem by introducing specific policies and weighing their advantages against disadvantages. The formal structure which is present in academic debate is there to provide consistence and coherence to the debaters experience – it is not there for its own sake. When following the structure provided below think of it as of a useful tool, which should support you in achieving your goals rather than hinder your performance.

There is a need for change

Identifying a problem

When debating what is better for society and concentrating on a specific value, the affirmative team focuses on the truth of the resolution, (in most cases, it is a value judgment of some kind – for example, *censorship of artistic expression is beneficial for society*). The affirmative's task in this debate would be to present the negative with their understanding of the term *censorship* and *artistic expression*, probably limiting it to the instances where certain forms of artistic expression might be harmful to the society and the reasons why certain forms of limiting it are beneficial to the society.

When debating policies, however, under a resolution the affirmative has greater latitude for choosing the scope of debate. The first thing the affirmative should do is to show that there is a problem which causes harm and therefore there is a need for change in the way things are done at the moment (status quo).What is important is that the problem identified by the affirmative is representative of the resolution.

For example when debating the following topic: *resolved that the government should improve the system of education*, the affirmative should choose a particular problem under the resolution. Therefore, the affirmative could concentrate on one of the following problems (the list presented here is by no means exhaustive): overloaded curricula, the lack of fair examination standards, low teachers' qualifications, etc. Talking about low pension plans for retired teachers under this resolution may not be a good idea since poor welfare system does not really impede the system of education, since it is more connected with retired teachers than in service teachers. The affirmative should also avoid choosing too specific and obscure problems. For example, it would not be reasonable for the affirmative to narrow down the resolution to the problem of poor knowledge of English by Mr. Kowalski, a teacher in primary school No. 6 in Gdynia.

However, the lack of foreign language skills among Polish teachers (especially in the light of our aspirations to join the EC) is a legitimate narrowing of the resolution (since it affects a significant number of teachers).

There is a simple logic behind it – no government in the world introduces policies to affect one case in a country but it focuses on problems which affect a significant part of the population. In order to provide for a good debate, the affirmative should therefore choose a problem of proper significance.

However, simply stating what the problem is does not exhaust the affirmative's responsibilities. In order to be persuasive the affirmative must demonstrate with proper evidence that the problem REALLY exists and it is not imaginary. For example when advocating for the improvement of Polish system of education, having chosen the lack of fair

examination standards as the problem which needs remedying, the affirmative cannot simply say: “Exams are not fair”. They should demonstrate, using evidence (statistics, expert testimonies, etc.) why it is the case.

To be even more persuasive the affirmative should also demonstrate that the problem might have a negative impact on the society and thus show that a problem is significant. For example they may want to argue that as a result of bad selection process, young people do not develop to their full potential and instead memorize a mass of unnecessary knowledge in order to pass exams. This can lead to decreasing their chances when competing for jobs with better educated students from the EC when Poland joins the Union. Again they should provide evidence that the present exam system may lead to such negative consequences.

Identifying the cause

After identifying the problem, explaining its nature and showing significance, the affirmative team should present the cause of the problem. The affirmative should show that either the present policies cannot sufficiently solve the problem or that there is a lack of policies to tackle the problem. The first approach would call for the change in the present policies and the second one for the introduction of policies.

The affirmative should argue that unless new policies are employed the negative situation will persevere.

For example in the case of unfair exams in Polish secondary schools, the affirmative may argue that the lack of externally moderated exams causes the problem. As long as secondary school exams are internal, the system will not work well and it will continue having a bad impact on the system of education and the Polish society.

This part of the affirmatives case can be summarized as justifying the need for change.

In doing so the affirmative must show that there is a real problem in the status quo, that the problem is significant so that it justifies the spending of money and other resources; that the present situation will not solve the problem by itself and that unless something is done we will suffer from the negative consequences of the status quo.

Now there is time for the affirmative to present their plan to solve the problem.

Presenting a plan

The affirmative’s plan encompasses the method by which it wants to solve the problem.

One of the first questions that the affirmative may ask is how detailed the plan should be. The more complex the problem, the more complex the solution. It is important to bear in mind, however, that the first affirmative has only 6 minutes to present the entire case and that this time does not suffice for an elaborate presentation. The first affirmative should therefore present the outline of the plan (30 sec. to 1 min.) and be ready to answer specific questions during the cross-examination. The second affirmative should provide the details to defend the plan against the negative’s attack.

In other words the plan must be specific and well thought of but the affirmative must be aware of the time limits imposed upon the debaters by the rules of debate.

When thinking about the plan the affirmative should think about the following elements and may as themselves the following questions:

Who will implement the plan?

What will happen under the plan?

How will the plan be accomplished?

How will the plan be paid for?

Who

Sometimes the agent might be specified in the resolution, for example (the United Nations should expend the protection of cultural rights) but sometimes the affirmative will have to decide who will introduce the policies. The choice of an agent will be obviously connected with the identified problem. Usually, however the affirmative should choose the most powerful body capable of solving a given problem – therefore it will normally be an agent which is powerful enough to carry out a given plan. Thus, in most cases concerning a particular country, it will be the central government and in the case of international issues it will be the UN or other representative international institution.

When thinking about an agent, the affirmative may also identify a particular institution within the government or the UN, which would best qualify for the implementation of the plan – for example a ministry or an agency (WHO, High Commission For Refugees). The affirmative may also decide to create a new agent to implement the proposed plan. It is important, however, that the affirmative carefully research the issue before suggesting a new agent, since creating a new institution is costly in terms of funds and time (plus a new untested institution has a higher chance of failing) and it might be redundant – simple there might already exist agents who are capable of carrying out the plan (the only thing necessary might be to expend their mandate).

Having chosen a dysfunctional exam system in Poland as a problem impeding the education, the affirmative may want to suggest the creation of an independent Examination Board which will set up and administer exams in the country. On the other hand if the debate concerned poor health conditions in the developing countries, and affirmative proposed improving the quality of water in tropical areas of the world, the existing agent the World Health Organization may be sufficient to carry out the plan.

What

The affirmative may want to present the proposed change in steps, giving them a time framework. The steps, when presented by the first affirmative should have a form of headings – there will be no time for the speaker to expend on them in the first speech but she/ he should be ready to provide explanation if required during the cross-examination and the team should expand on the plan in the later speeches.

The affirmative proposing changes to the Polish exam system may suggest the following:

Step 1

The Ministry of Education will create a National Exam Board composed of top educators in the country with regional branches in all major cities (above 500.000 inhabitants).

Step 2

The Board with its regional subsidiaries will involve local teachers in creating a set of syllabi for each subject and a set of exam requirements (2 years)

Step 3

The Board will carry out a series of trainings for teachers and it will build a pool of examiners who will be monitoring the exams externally (3 years)

Step 4

The first externally moderated exams will take place in the year

How

It is not enough for the affirmative to state what it will do – they also must explain briefly how they are planning to accomplish the proposed plan. Since the affirmative functions in a present system, rather than an imaginary “never world”, they must show how they will cope with the status quo when implementing the changes. The plan must take into account the barriers and show how it will overtake them.

For example the implementation of the externally moderated exams will require the consent of teachers and parents. The Ministry of Education will have to find the way to motivate the best teachers to become examiners and insure that the procedures are fair and objective.

They will have to adopt or create new curricula and certain standards.

How much

And last but not least, the affirmative must remember about the costs associated with the change. That does not mean that the affirmative must present the budget with the plan. The affirmative needs to specify how the money is to be generated. The affirmative can be specific, and present one source of income or suggest several alternatives.

So for example, the Polish Ministry of Education may want to use the funds under the PHARE program in order to create a new system of exams.

They will have to research though, if the structure of the fund would allow this kind of spending.

Presenting the advantages

Finally the affirmative may want to spend some time explaining why the presented policies are better than the status quo. It is important to remember that there is a hidden cost to every change we undertake. It requires effort, administrations, funds; it also requires influencing people’s minds and attitudes and it carries with it a certain element of risk. In short – nobody introduces changes for their own sake. Having realized that the affirmative may want to emphasize towards the end of the speech that the proposed changes will bring more advantages than harm and that in a long run the society will benefit from it. Weighing advantages vs. the status quo or potential harms will certainly make the affirmative more persuasive. Of course the advantages accrued by the plan must be important; they should affect the status quo in a significant way and that they will have a big positive impact on the society, international community, etc.

For example at present, there are no objective standards of testing students knowledge in Poland at the end of secondary school so worse students may have the same grades as good students and that may diminish the chances of the latter with their admission to universities.

Also the present system makes better universities employ an entrance test which is sometimes little related to what is studied at a secondary school. If the affirmatives plan is introduced there will be only one exam and it will be objective.

Of course the affirmative may want to present other advantages as well.

From the above presentation, it looks like the affirmative has a lot of work to do and very little time to do it (6 min – first affirmative, 5 min the two other speakers). That is why the team must come with a strategy of how to present all the information in order to be coherent and persuasive. The first affirmative should only present the outline of the policy and she or he does not need to present a mass of evidence and the details of the plan.

This can be done by the second affirmative and when the opposite team requests particular information during the cross-examination.

What is crucial however is that the affirmative is knowledgeable about the issues related to the plan. This knowledge should be related to all the elements of the policy presented above (Problem, cause, plan, advantage). Even if they cannot fully demonstrate this knowledge during their constructive speeches, they must be ready to do so in rebuttals and cross-examination by responding to their opponents counter arguments and questions.

WHAT SHOULD THE NEGATIVE DO WHEN DEBATING POLICIES?

When debating in the Karl Popper format both teams share identical burdens: both teams must offer cases with reasons for affirmation and negation of the resolution respectively. The negative team in the Karl Popper format is requested to present a constructive case against the resolution. It is only logical when you think about the nature of propositions debated so far.

If we are debating censorship of artistic expression, for example both teams can think about general arguments why censorship of artistic expression is good or bad. Both teams prepare their arguments in advance and think about possible ways to refute the arguments of the opponents. Thus the whole debate can be summarized as a presentation of the teams' cases, refutation of each other's arguments and rebuilding of their respective lines of argumentation.

When we introduce the element of policy into the debate, the roles of the teams change. It is the affirmative who must show that there is a problem with the status quo, that the problem is significant and that unless we introduce the proposed changes the harmful situation will remain. If you think about the choice of problem by the affirmative, they can select one example, as long as it is general enough to justify the change and is representative of the resolution.

The negative team therefore does not know exactly what problem the affirmative will choose, and what particular policy they will advocate. Recall the example of the resolution concerning the system of education in Poland (*the government should improve the system of education*).

The negative does not know until the very moment the debate starts what problem the affirmative has identified – it can be unfair exam system, overloaded curricula, low teachers' salaries, and lack of teachers' qualifications or too many students in the classrooms.

Later on the negative may also be surprised by the choice of solution presented by the affirmative. At this stage one can say that the negative have an almost impossible task to perform. One may even say that there is no way the negative can prepare for the debate – they cannot really prepare their own arguments and should wait for what the affirmative will

offer and then improvise. There is nothing more wrong about the negative's role in policy debate than this superficial perception.

The key to success both for the affirmative and the negative lies in research and diligent preparation for the debate. Because the debate is focused on specific problems, both teams will require preparation. Both the negative and the affirmative will have to identify a number of problems related to the area under the resolution. Thus in the preparation phase before the debate, the negative should think about the potential problem that the affirmative might want to concentrate on and think in terms of the solutions that the affirmative might want to employ.

Then the negative team should think about possible refutation of the affirmative's case. In doing so they may want to employ the logical structure presented by their opponents: the problem, the cause, the plan with its elements (who, what, how, how much) and finally the advantage.

In order to win the debate the negative must only win one on ONE of the elements of the policy. It is again a logical consequence of the nature of debating about policies.

The below presentation of possible strategies by the negative may help to understand this consequence better.

There is no need for change

The problem does not exist

One of the strategies that the negative may try to adopt is the fact that the problem presented by the affirmative does not really exist or is not as serious as the affirmative have claimed.

Very rarely in the case of most debated issues is the evidence so one – sided that the evidence presented by one team cannot be contradicted. As you very well known experts in the academic and professional fields disagree with one another and conscientious researchers will almost certainly find some opinions, statistic, data which will allow them to challenge the existence or the gravity of the problem presented by the affirmative. Therefore if the negative manages to convince the audience that there is no need for a change, the case prepared by the affirmative will fall. There is no point in presenting a plan and implementing it (which means spending time, effort, money, taking unnecessary risk) if the problem does not exist or is insignificant (does not affect many people or its repercussions are not serious).

The status quo will solve the problem

The negative can also argue (and support it with evidence) that although there is still a problem, it is improving under the present system and if a sufficient time is given, the problem will be solved. It also is a good justification for not adopting a new plan and proving the affirmative wrong. Why should the government spend money on new solutions if the old ones are in place and given enough time will bring the expected enough.

Here the negative can argue that most complex phenomena (economic, social, international) require a proper period and their success cannot be judged based upon a limited period.

The affirmative have identified a wrong cause

The negative can also argue that their opponents have identified a wrong cause of the problem and therefore their solution will not work. This part is a bit more difficult and the negative will have to be careful with placing their line of attack on the cause for the problem, because it is possible for the affirmative to identify the wrong cause of the problem, yet still manage to come up with a good solution to it.

The negative should therefore try to identify the cause of the problem, which is not related to the present policies. For example, it is reasonable for one to argue that a growing divorce rate in many countries is a result of people's choices, changing cultural and social trends than any government's faulty policies. This, however, may not work well for the

Attacking the plan

The negative can of course attack the plan presented by the affirmative and can do so at a variety of levels. What the negative should basically do is to demonstrate that the plan presented by the affirmative will not work.

This can happen because the agent chosen to carry out the plan will not be able to implement it, or because the steps suggested by the affirmative are unrealistic, the plan is too expensive and there are no funds to finance it, that the affirmative's plan will be met with resistance based on the previous experience. When attacking the plan, just like when questioning the existence of the problem, the negative should support their claims with proper evidence.

Finally, the negative may argue that even if the plan works it will not achieve the advantages forecast by the affirmative so it is not worth the trouble.

A more effective strategy still, if the negative is capable of showing it, would be to demonstrate that the plan presented by the affirmative will accrue disadvantages – in other words, it would cause more harm than good. Just like in the case of the affirmative presenting the significance of the advantages gained by the plan, when demonstrating the disadvantages, the negative should show that the harm produced by the presented plan will be significant and it will have a negative impact.

Presenting a counter plan

So far the negative strategies have focused on the refutation of the plan proposed by the affirmative team. However, the negative team may agree with the affirmative in that there is a problem in the status quo, which needs to be changed. What the negative does not agree with, however, is the method with which the affirmative would like to change the system. They can argue that the plan suggested by their opponents is not the best proposal to solve the problem and present their own.

It is important, that the plan presented by the negative is significantly different from the plan proposed by the affirmative – it should not be a minor improvement in the plan.

For example it would not be reasonable of the negative to attack the plan concerning the change in the exam system in Poland by saying that the subsidiaries of the National Exam Board should also be created in the towns with the population of 200.000.

A different approach taken to the issue of the counter plan requires that the counter plan compete with the plan presented by the affirmative. In other words, the negative must present

a plan, which cannot be adopted if we agree upon the affirmative's proposal. This can be because they are logically exclusive. For example if a country decides to move its capital from one city to another the negative can either claim that the status quo is better or acknowledge the problem with the present capital and suggest a city different than the one proposed by the affirmative. In this case, the two plans are logically exclusive since a country cannot have two capitals.

However, the proposal of making the Polish secondary school curriculum less loaded is not logically exclusive with the proposal of introducing externally moderated exams.

We can have both plans and in fact, they can work well together.

If the affirmative decide to introduce a counter plan into their case, they must do so in the first affirmative speech, in order to provide the affirmative team with the possibility to effectively respond to it.

Final words on evidence

The importance of using evidence has been already emphasized throughout this article and this should serve only as a final reminder of how important it is.

No good debate, regardless of whether it focuses on a certain value or policy can be a good debate if the debaters are not knowledgeable about the topic under discussion.

No rhetorical or stylistic devices, no use of humor can compensate for the lack of solid bases of debate. Good debaters know it very well and that is why the process of diligent research and study in order to understand the problems involved in the debated resolution are often far more important for them than the debate itself.

Value debates test values and therefore may use fewer specific evidence (which does not mean that debating value resolutions should not be accompanied by research!).

Since the policy debate takes place at a level of a specific example identified by the affirmative team, both teams must prepare very specific evidence, which means a lot of research. Both teams need to research thoroughly the all-possible affirmative arguments so that they can present the best affirmative case and respond to it critically.

This research should encompass the problems under the resolution, present policies which exist, the reasons for their lack of success, the nature and mandate of the agent (be it the government or the international institution), the laws by which it is bound, etc.

Debating policies surely constitutes a challenge but it is a worthy one. Policy debate, being a logical extension of the value debate brings the students to another level of debate.

It develops similar skills, like argumentation and reasoning but also demonstrates the need for finding solutions to the problems existing in a civil society.

It teaches students that the art of debating policies is not only limited to politicians and the government, but it is opened to all citizens. Whoever does it, however, should remember that reliance on facts and knowledge is the duty of any debater.

SUMMARY. FAQ.

Djordje from Yugoslavia asked a few policy-debate oriented questions a few days ago. One thing that I want to emphasize before giving my own perspective is that we should not bind ourselves to strict rules on this -- remember we are discussing logical ideas, not performing a dance or conjugating Latin verbs. Reasons, not rules, and good sense are the best guide.

But here are my thoughts:

1. Is it necessary for affirmative to have any plan-independent argumentation?

The affirmative is saying yes to the resolution by proposing the plan. They are saying that the UN should protect rights, by showing the rights and the method of protection. In this case, I think that the answer is 'no.' The affirmative proves the resolution, logically, by proving that their plan is a good plan and they don't really need to prove anything else. If the resolution was "we should see a movie" then I have affirmed the resolution by arguing "we should see the movie Chocolat." There is no reason why I would have to argue for the benefits of other movies. They aren't the ones I want to see.

2. Does the affirmative need criteria (or just a clear definition of the problem they are solving)?

'Criteria' are standards of judgment, so if we are saying something like "George Bush is incompetent at foreign policy (just hypothetically :) then I would need a criterion for exactly what is 'competent' in foreign policy (e.g., competence means accurately reading international intentions, understanding multilateralism, knowing the difference between Slovakia and Slovenia, and knowing that the Greek are not called "Grecians"... but I digress...).

Value topics like that need criteria because they are vague and subjective. The criterion makes it clearer. Policy questions however are already pretty clear --- Should we do policy x? Well, if the benefits outweigh the costs, then we should do policy x. That, you could say, is the criterion for just about any policy question. For that reason, I don't believe that it is necessary to introduce a criterion on a policy question. If it is better to do the plan than to not do the plan, then the affirmative has met its burden and nothing else is needed. Death to the criterion (I hear a small cheer).

3. What type of narrowing of the resolution is allowed?

To be fair the affirmative has to be topical. That is, the plan has to be an example of the United Nations expanding its protection of cultural rights. If it isn't, it isn't on the topic, and it is not fair. To be educational, however, affirmatives should choose plans that lead to good debate -- That is, plans on which there are both affirmative and negative arguments. It is tough to look good if your opponents have nothing to say, so I think it is a good idea to choose fairly broad predictable plans, and I would use the research packet as a guide. It is always better to win by having better arguments than the other side, not by surprising them.

4. Is a counterplan needed?

A counterplan is just an alternative which competes with the affirmative's plan. If my plan was to see the movie "Chocolat" then your counterplan might be to see the movie "Gladiator." That kind of answer is always logically possible. If the affirmative proposes that the United Nations should protect cultural rights, and then the negative could propose that some other body should protect rights instead - it is a logical answer. One consideration though, the alternative has to logically compete. That is, it has to be a situation where we couldn't, or wouldn't want to, do both. So to use the earlier example, I could respond by saying "we've got time, lets see both movies." It is only a logically competitive counterplan if for some reason we have to choose -- e.g., we don't have enough time or money or maybe seeing all the blood and gore in "Chocolat" would put us in a bad mood so that we wouldn't be able to enjoy the sublime acting and romance of Gladiator... or something like that.

5. How is it possible to avoid universal negative arguments?

An assumption behind this question is that it would be desirable to avoid universal negative arguments. A "universal" argument (sometimes called a 'generic' argument) is one that would apply to just about any affirmative, not matter what the plan is. For example saying that "the United Nations is incompetent, they could not plan a bar mitzvah let alone an international program to protect culture" is an argument that would apply to anyone who used the United Nations, which on this topic would be everyone. My view is that this kind of argument is good:

- 1.) It forces the affirmative to defend a major value premise in the resolution (the worth of the United Nations) and
- 2.) It provides a kind of insurance to the negative ("we don't know what your plan is, but we know that we have at least one good argument.").

That leads to better debates. However, if one does want to avoid this kind of argument when one is affirmative, then there are some smart ways to do it. For example by anticipating and building in your response -- 'you are right the UN is incompetent, because they have been doing other plans, not ours! Ha!' etc. However, those strategies will depend on good research.

6. How are policy debates judged?

Really the same way any debate is judged. There are no special criteria. At the end of the debate, the judge is asking "who did the better job of debating?" and they may consider proof, refutation, organization, evidence, speaking effectiveness, and small bribes. One issue that may be a little different for the judge though, relates back to question #2, criteria. Instead of applying some complicated formulae for figuring out if the affirmative has met their burden, the judge asks at the end of the debate, "Is it better to adopt the plan, or to not adopt the plan?" If it is better to adopt the plan, vote for the Affirmative. If not, vote negative. In many ways, that is much clearer than in value debate.

7. How do we present this change to teachers and students who are unfamiliar with this kind of debate?

By providing and discussing emails like this one. But also, we need to emphasize that it is just good logic. Affirmatives need to defend a change; negatives need to oppose a chance. We should proceed from that assumption based on a need for both sides to present good reasons. We shouldn't assume that there is a settled rule-book for all policy questions that we

need to consult. Discussions like this are good, so thank you Djordje for your questions. We should all ask and answer more, because Noel is right, it will be a little different this year and the more prepared we are the better.

One of the goals of the idea summer camp is to introduce new ideas into our network. The topic chosen for this year's summer camp reflects this thinking. For years we have discussed how debate topics can be roughly divided into three categories: fact, value, and Policy. While in general our topics have focused on questions of value, some topics, such as the resolution that "open societies require open borders," have broached questions that are policy oriented in nature. While many previous topics have included a policy dimension, the topic we will use at the coming idea, summer camp represents perhaps our most direct embrace of a question of policy. Though still raising difficult questions of value, this topic also directly asks a question of policy. In what follows, I would like to discuss what this means for teams debating this topic.

To begin with, instead of simply asking whether the protection of cultural rights should be expanded, this topic asks specifically whether the United Nations' protection of cultural rights ought to expand. Put another way, this topic presents the United Nations as an "agent of action." This means, among other things, that it not sufficient for the affirmative team to present a case that tries to prove that cultural rights merit better protection than they currently receive. The affirmative must be prepared to:

1. Show that cultural rights merit protection
2. Prove that the level of protection they are currently receiving from the United Nations is inadequate; and
3. Propose a change in current United Nations policy that would expand the protection of cultural rights.

Now, this does not mean that in the six minutes of the first affirmative constructive the first affirmative has to do all of this. Much will depend on what strategy the negative teams adopt in response to the plan that the affirmative team presents in the first affirmative speech. For instance, a first affirmative may decide not to focus on proving that cultural rights merit protection and, instead, leave it to the second affirmative to refute a negative claim that they are not. Much will depend on the nature of the plan that the affirmative presents and which specific cultural rights the affirmative is looking to protect. The less controversial the right in question, the less necessary it will be for the affirmative to spend time arguing for its value.

The affirmative team has to be prepared for those negative teams that may focus less on the specific proposal the affirmative makes than on broader issues. For instance, a negative team may decide, in advance of the debate, that they will question the very idea that the United Nations be the body that protects cultural rights. Against almost anything the affirmative proposes, the negative team may be prepared to question the efficacy of having the United Nations be the agent of action. Of course, with this in mind, a good affirmative team should be prepared to show why it is they are proposing that the United Nations act in the way they wish. In order to do this, they should probably consider what, in policy debate, are termed the "stock issues": ill, blame, cure, and cost.

III - The affirmative team should identify a problem that currently exists. For example, the affirmative team may look at the problems facing linguistic minorities in some part of the world. The affirmative could easily argue that culture is often closely tied to language and that

a threat to a community's ability to preserve its language is a threat to the community's culture. What's important is that the affirmative clearly identifies some specific problem existing in the world around us. It is not necessary that the affirmative give an exhaustive list of cultural rights that are being threatened. In the example given of a linguistic minority, all the affirmative has to show is that a right to education in a culture's mother tongue is a cultural right. When thinking of what plan to present, the affirmative team should keep in mind that its burden is not to identify any and all problems relating to cultural rights.

Blame -What is the cause? How are current policies to blame in causing or maintaining those problems? Here the affirmative team needs to keep in mind that the United Nations need not be to blame for the problem that the affirmative team plans to solve. The threat to a culture need not come from anything done by the United Nations. What is important, however, is to show that there is some policy or lack of policy out there that is currently causing the problem. For instance, to return to the example of linguistic minorities, the policy threatening them may be one put in place by local governments intent on having all students learn only the majority language. It might also be argued by the affirmative that the threat to culture is globalization. In this case, it would be hard to lay blame on any particular entity, since the agent is a social phenomenon. Nonetheless, it would be legitimate for the affirmative team to suggest that the United Nations should do something to protect cultural rights against the effects of globalization.

Cure - What should be done? Here is where the affirmative team needs to be pretty specific. It's not enough for the affirmative team to have shown simply that cultural rights exist, that they are a good thing that deserve protection, and that they're being threatened. The affirmative team must propose a solution to some part of the problem. What is important, however, is that the affirmative team not feels obligated to present a plan for how the United Nations can protect every cultural right from any threats. Instead, what the affirmative must do is look at the current policies that the United Nations has and suggests a change or addition to them. The plan presented need only address one cultural right or a limited set of them. All that is necessary is that the affirmative be able to show that if the United Nations were to adopt this policy that the protection of cultural rights would be expanded.

Cost -Would the benefits of these actions outweigh potential harms of the actions? It is important that the affirmative look at both the costs and benefits of the plan that they are presenting. After all, the negative team can agree that the plan might work but argue that it would be too costly to implement. The affirmative team should be prepared to meet the negative's challenges that attempt to show the disadvantages of implementing their plan.

Clearly, the affirmative has a lot to do, so it will be important for the affirmative teams to consider carefully when they want to present the material they prepare. It would be foolish, for instance, to spend too much time in the first affirmative presenting evidence in support of the arguments since that would take away time during the only speech in which affirmative teams will be able to present constructive arguments. The second affirmative speaker can present the bulk of the evidence. At the same time, there are arguments that the affirmative may want to save for their rebuttals. Most notably, the affirmative may want to wait to hear what disadvantages to adopting their plan that the negative brings up before addressing them. A good affirmative will anticipate and prepare for the most likely set of disadvantages that adopting their plan might bring about, but there's no reason to start on the defensive.

So, what should go into this plan that the affirmative will present? The plan must be for a specific policy change. In the first affirmative constructive, the first speaker will describe the plan of action that the United Nations should take, when they should do it, how it will be paid for, and how it will be enforced. Though the United Nations will be the agents of action in this topic, the affirmative might also want to make clear which arm of the United Nations will be taking action (e.g. the Security Council, the General Assembly, UNESCO, Peacekeeping Troops, etc.). The affirmative must be able to answer who does what, when, and how. However, a plan does not need to be a detailed piece of legislation and should only take about thirty seconds for a team to present. A team can clarify what it intends in cross-examination or later speeches.

Given how specific the plan needs to be, it may appear that there is no way for the negative team to prepare for the debate. The topics we've used in the past have usually presented basic questions of value for which each side can easily prepare arguments in advance. This is one of the reasons why, in a policy debate, certain assumptions are commonly made. First, there is a presumption that the affirmative has to give us a reason to alter the status quo. That is to say, the judge is to presume that we ought not to change for the sake of change but, rather, that we need some good reason to change. Second, the negative need only win one of the stock issues described above. This, when you think about it, is rather logical.

Consider each of the issues one by one. In terms of the "ill," if the negative can show either that there is no such thing as cultural rights or that whatever threat the affirmative identified to these rights does not exist, and then there would be no reason to have the United Nations expand its protection of cultural rights. With "blame," things are a little trickier. It is conceivable that affirmative teams can mistake the cause of the problem they describe but still have a reasonably good solution to it. However; suppose the negative were able to show that globalization is something that takes place not on account of any given policy but because people are simply choosing to abandon their unique cultures for a more attractive cosmopolitan world view. If this is true, the case for the United Nations intervening is more difficult to make. The more the negative can show that the problem the affirmative has identified is not the result of a policy but is instead a part of the status quo, the less compelling the case is for a policy change. As for the "cure," the negatives should obviously win the debate if they are able to show that the plan presented by the affirmative would not, in the end, protect cultural rights. Similarly, if the "costs" of the plan are too high, if the disadvantages associated with adopting it outweigh the advantages of doing so, it would not make sense for a judge to vote with the affirmative.

Still, all of this said, there are some things that negative team can prepare before the debate. To begin with, the negative should be thoroughly familiar with existing policies that the United Nation has. At the very least, both affirmative and negative should be thoroughly versed in the United Nations documents published in this issue of idebate. Moreover, the negative can also prepare to question the very notion that cultural rights need protection. A sophisticated negative approach might even be to present what I have termed an "even if" negative case. That is, a negative could begin by questioning the importance or even the very existence of cultural rights but then go on to argue that even if the judges accept that there are cultural rights, that they are important rights, and that they are under attack, that the United Nations is not the proper agent to support them. The negative can point to past failures of the United Nations or to structural problems with the United Nations that make it an unlikely agent to protect cultural rights.

In some cases, the negative may want to respond to the affirmative team by presenting a plan of their own. This "counter-plan" could be one that specifies an agent of action different than the United Nations. What's important, however; is that the counter-plan clash with the affirmative's and not be just a small adjustment to it or utterly unrelated to it.

Teaching Resources: Glossary

Below is a glossary of frequently used debating terms. This is a helpful resource which can be used both as a reference or a teaching tool, since the definitions to each term are thorough and can facilitate discussion and teaching of a particular debate-related skill or topic.

A

Advantages

The part of the affirmative case about policies that demonstrates the positive effects of the affirmative's plan.

Ambiguity

A fallacy of language that occurs when a word in an argument has two or more possible meanings and the listener has no means to determine adequately which meaning the arguer intends.

Analogy

An argument that supports associations between things based on their similarity or dissimilarity.

Appeal to fear

A fallacious argument that occurs when an arguer uses irrelevant appeals to fear to take the focus off the arguer's original argument.

Appeal to popularity

A fallacious argument that occurs when a debater uses the popularity of a person, product, or belief to justify a favorable conclusion about that person, product, or belief.

Appeal to tradition

A fallacious argument made when a debater argues in favor of a particular action on the grounds of tradition rather than on the basis of that action's merits.

Argument

A controversial statement, frequently called a claim, supported by evidence and a warrant. The standards of a logically good argument include acceptability, relevance, and sufficiency.

See also Standard of acceptability, Standard of relevance, standard of sufficiency.

Argumentation

The uniquely human use of reasoning to communicate.

Argument ad hominem

A fallacy that occurs when an arguer attacks a person's character or background, which is irrelevant to the claim.

Argument by example

An argument that supports an association between specific examples and a general rule.

Argument by incompatibility

An argument designed to reject something because it is incompatible with something else.

Argument by principle

An argument that supports a certain action based on the connection between that action and a general principle.

Argument sphere

A community within which arguments are made.

Argument structure

The way evidence and warrants are arranged to support a claim.

See also Convergent argument structure; Independent argument structure; Simple argument structure.

Arrangement

The organization of arguments in a speech.

Authority

An argument that supports a claim with the opinion of experts in the field.

B

Ballot

A document on which the judge records the decision, the reasons for the decision, and speaker points awarded to each debater.

Begging the question

A fallacy of acceptability that occurs when a debater introduces evidence that is the same as the claim.

C

Case

One or more arguments sufficient to support a proposition.

Causal argument

An argument that supports associations between causes and effects.
 See also **Contributory causal argument; Intervening and counteracting causal argument; Necessary causal argument; Sufficient causal argument.**

Cause-and-effect proposition

A proposition that asserts that one object causes a specific outcome.

Cause-and-effect reasoning

The type of reasoning that examines the reasons certain actions, events, or conditions (causes) create specific consequences (effects).

Claim

A controversial statement an arguer supports using reason. Claims are divided into four general categories: definitional descriptive, relational, and evaluative.

Comparative advantages case

A method used for developing a case about policies that advocates the adoption of the plan based on its advantages compared with the status quo or some other policy.

Comparative policy proposition

Compares two or more policies.

Comparative value proposition

Compares two or more objects with respect to some value.

Constructive speech

A speech that presents a debater's basic arguments for or against the resolution.

Contributory causal argument

An argument that states that the purported cause is one of several contributors to the effect.

Convergent argument structure

Two or more bits of evidence that, in combination with one another, support a claim.

Counterplan

A plan proposed by the negative team as an alternative to the affirmative plan.

Cross-examination

A period during the debate when a member of one team asks questions of a member of the opposing team.

D

Debate

The process of arguing about claims in situations where an adjudicator must decide the outcome.

Dissociation

An argument that creates new categories by dividing an old category into two new ones.

E**Equivocation**

A fallacy of language that occurs when a word is used in two different senses and the meaning of the word is shifted during the argument.

Evidence

Different types of information (facts, statistics, theories, opinions, or narratives) that are used to support arguments. Evidence can be divided into two categories: that relating to reality (facts, theories, and presumptions) and that relating to preference (values, value hierarchies, and value categories).

See also Facts; Presumption; Theory; Value; Value categories; Value hierarchy.

F**Facts (evidence)**

Observed or observable data.

Fallacy

An argument that fails to meet any one of the standards of acceptability, relevance, and sufficiency.

See also Argument ad hominem; Ambiguity; Appeal to fear; Appeal to popularity; Appeal to tradition; Begging the question; Equivocation; Fallacy of composition; Fallacy of division; Fallacy of incompatibility; Faulty analogy; Hasty conclusion; Improper appeal to practice; Loaded term; Poisoning the well; Post hoc fallacy; Problematic premise; Red herring; Slippery slope argument; Straw person fallacy; Two wrongs fallacy; Vagueness.

Fallacy of composition

A fallacious argument where the evidence is drawn from some part of a whole but the conclusion is about the whole.

Fallacy of division

An erroneous argument where the evidence is drawn from the whole, but the conclusion is made about the part.

Fallacy of incompatibility

Occurs when a debater makes a statement as evidence that is at odds with another statement made by the debater, or when a debater's argument is incompatible with some action she has performed or recommended elsewhere.

Faulty analogy

A fallacious argument that occurs when two cases are compared with each other but are not similar in terms of the relationship stated in the comparison.

G**Guilt by association**

A fallacious argument that occurs when a person's argument is attacked using that person's association with groups and people rather than using issues pertinent to the argument.

H**Hasty conclusion**

A fallacious argument that fails to meet the standard of sufficiency. It includes hasty generalization, irrelevant slippery slope arguments, fallacy of composition, fallacy of division, faulty analogy, improper appeal to practice, post hoc fallacy, and two wrongs.

Hasty generalization

A fallacy of reasoning by example that occurs when the examples selected to support the claim are either insufficient in number or in their representativeness. Improper appeal to practice A fallacious argument that occurs when a debater suggests doing something because it is a common practice, even if that practice clearly is wrong.

I**Independent argument structure**

Several pieces of evidence, any one of which can provide sufficient support for a claim.

International debating

Debating that occurs between representatives of different countries, nations, or cultures.

Intervening and counteracting causal argument

An argument that demonstrates a cause that prevents the completion of a cause-and-effect sequence.

Irrelevant reason

An argument that fails to meet the relevance criterion. It includes ad hominem argument, appeal to fear, appeal to popularity, appeal to tradition, guilt by association, poisoning the well, red herring, and straw person.

J**Judge**

An observer of a debate who has the responsibility of deciding which team has done a better job of debating.

K**Karl Popper debate format**

A debate format that matches two three-person teams against each other: one affirming the proposition and one opposing it. Each team has one constructive speech presenting its basic arguments for and against the proposition and two constructive speeches refuting the opposing team's arguments and summarizing its own.

L**Loaded term**

A fallacy of language that occurs when the arguer labels something with a word that includes an evaluation and that evaluation plays a role in supporting the conclusion.

M**Method of agreement**

A method of reasoning used in cause-and-effect analysis that examines more than one case where two elements are simultaneously present, concluding that one is the cause of the other.

Method of correlation

A method of reasoning used in cause-and-effect analysis that examines examples that demonstrate that as the amount of the cause increases (or decreases), the effect will also increase (or decrease).

Method of difference

A method of reasoning used in cause-and-effect analysis that examines examples wherein both the purported cause and the purported effect are absent, concluding that one is the cause of the other.

Minor repair

A strategy the negative uses to defend the present system with minor changes.

N

Necessary causal argument

An argument that states that without the suspected cause, the effect cannot occur, thus the cause is necessary to produce the effect.

Need

The part of the affirmative case about policies that identifies a certain problem in the status quo that the existing system cannot solve.

Need-plan-benefit case

A method used for developing a case about policies that involves the identification of a need, proposal of a plan, and a demonstration of the advantages of the plan.

P

Plan

A course of action proposed by the affirmative when debating a proposition of policy that proposes to solve the problems identified in the “need.”

Poisoning the well

A fallacious argument that attempts to discredit a person or a source in advance of that person’s argument.

Post hoc fallacy

Occurs when a debater assumes that because one thing predates another, the first must have caused the second.

Preparation time

The time allotted to each team for preparation during the debate (eight minutes in Karl Popper debate).

Presumption

The assumption that current policies will be maintained until someone makes a case that another policy is a better option.

Presumption (evidence)

A statement concerning what people ordinarily expect to happen in the course of normal events.

Problematic premise

A fallacious argument that fails to meet the acceptability criterion. It includes begging the question and the fallacy of incompatibility.

Proposition

A final claim made by a debater and supported by a combination of claims.

Proposition of definition

Asserts that a certain definition should be applied to a certain category of things.

Proposition of description

Asserts a proper way to describe an object or a number of objects.

Proposition of evaluation

Attaches a value to any object.

Proposition of relationship

Assert a certain relationship between objects.

Proposition of similarity

Asserts that two objects are similar to each other.

R**Reasoning**

The process used to connect evidence to the claim.

See also warrant.

Rebuttal speeches

The speeches in the debate that challenge and defend arguments introduced in the constructive speeches.

Red herring

A fallacious argument that shifts the focus from the original argument.

Refutation

The process of attacking and defending arguments.

Research

The process of locating and selecting evidence in preparation for debate.

Reservation

An exception made to a claim. A reservation usually involves a situation in which the arguer does not wish to maintain the claim.

S**Simple argument structure**

A single claim leading from a single piece of evidence following along a single warrant.

Simple policy proposition

A proposition that urges adoption of a certain policy.

Simple value proposition

Attaches a value to a single object.

Slippery slope argument

An argument that connects a series of events in a causal chain that ultimately leads to disaster or calamity. Slippery slope arguments are fallacies if the series of events is improperly connected.

Standard of acceptability

Determines whether the evidence is acceptable to those who judge the argument.

Standard of relevance

Determines whether the evidence is relevant to the claim it supports.

Standard of sufficiency

Determines whether all of the evidence taken as a whole is sufficient to support the claim.

Standards of a logically good argument

Standards are acceptability, relevance, and sufficiency.

Stasis

A system devised to determine the key issues of clash in a topic. These key issues can be used to develop a system of research.

Status quo

The course of action currently pursued (i.e., the present system).

Straw person fallacy

Occurs when an arguer, intentionally or unintentionally, misinterprets an opponent's argument, then proceeds to refute the misinterpreted argument as if it were the opponent's actual argument.

Style

The use of language, voice, and body language used by a debater.

Sufficient causal argument

An argument that states that the presence of a cause virtually guarantees (is sufficient for) the presence of the effect.

T

Theory

A statement that explains other facts or that predicts the occurrence of events.

Toulmin Model of argument

A model of argument developed by philosopher Stephen Toulmin. The basic model includes evidence, warrant, claim, and reservation.

Two wrongs fallacy

Occurs when a debater makes an argument urging the audience to accept, or condone, one thing that is wrong because another similar thing, also wrong, has been accepted and condoned.

V**Vagueness**

A fallacy of language that occurs when the meaning of some word or words in an argument is indeterminate and when such vagueness prevents listeners from assessing the argument.

Value

Evidence based on the audience's preferred value.

Value case

A case supporting a proposition of value. Three principal elements of such a case are describing, relating, and evaluating.

Value categories (evidence)

An arrangement of values into groups so that a group (category) can be used as evidence.

Value hierarchy (evidence)

Evidence based on how values are arranged in relation to each other.

W**Warrant**

Stated or unstated reasoning process that explains the relationship between the evidence and the claim.