

VOICES IN THE SKY:
Radio debates

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Alfred C. Snider

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Preface

One night in the summer of 1983 I broadcast my first radio program. Having taken a faculty position at the University of Vermont in 1981, I had learned about the university's radio station, WRUV-FM, which had a considerable listenership in the surrounding community. I had completed their simple training program, and then at 2 o'clock that night I presented a two-hour program of music and voice. I instantly became enthralled with the medium and with the idea that what I presented was going into the homes and cars of many people whom I could not see.

In the years that followed I did weekly radio programs of all sorts and also became the faculty advisor and sponsor of the station. I drew a considerable audience over time and became a well-known radio personality in my community. I presented music programs, sound essays, radio dramas, and experimental programs. My involvement in broadcasting allowed me to work with musicians, poets, drama groups, and political campaigns, not only on the radio but also in the community. I took the talk-radio concept to local television, and as of this writing, I have produced almost three hundred such television programs.

All this time I was also a teaching scholar focusing on debate, persuasion, argumentation, and the study of rhetoric. As my career bloomed, I had increased opportunities for international travel, writing, and debate competition. Eventually I had to limit the time I spent on my radio endeavors to concentrate on the many opportunities in my chosen field—debate and speech. Promoting debate as a method for critical thinking, conflict resolution, education, and creating truly democratic mindsets became an obsession. Thus, in January 2000 I presented my last regular radio broadcast. I regretted having to make this choice, but it was one I needed to make.

Little did I know that debate and radio would come together again when I was asked to write this volume. I suddenly realized how powerful the medium of radio could be in bringing intelligent and exciting debates to those who were not familiar with them. I was excited about using radio's ability to penetrate geography and social barriers as a channel for promoting debate. I am often the beneficiary of luck and circumstance, and the suggestion that I write this book was clearly another example of this.

I want to specifically thank Joan Smith, the Dean of Arts and Sciences at the university of Vermont, who has been a friend, a supporter, a critic and a cheerleader of my work for many years. She has recently passed away. She

once commented that students need to learn to marshal facts for their purpose and then communicate them effectively, which is why she supported debate. I pledge to remember her words and make them into realities.

I want to thank a number of people who have been very important to my ability to write this volume. I would like to thank Noel Selegzi of the International Debate Education Association for introducing me to this project. In terms of my radio experience there are a number of people I would like to thank. Katherine Fors stands out as someone whom I observed and studied in my early radio years, watching how she programmed and communicated with her audience. She taught me radio, and she is broadcasting today, thus surpassing me in both quality and longevity of programming. Anne Labrusciano introduced me to free-form radio and the creative possibilities of layering. Tod Warner, Jay Strausser, and Mike Bergeron (aka 655321) also served as valuable role models, and I admit that I stole shamelessly of their techniques. Lionel Palardy has been a radio inspiration and a source of professional support for my work.

My debate thanks are many and important. Specifically I want to thank Donn Parson and George Zeigelmuller, who have been inspirational mentors. My colleagues Robert Branham, Steve Woods, Kate Shuster, Melissa Wade, Jan Hovden, Jackie Massey, Eric Nelson, Bojana Skrt, Bill Shanahan, and Sam Nelson have taught me a lot. My students who have become professional debate scholars have taught me much, including John Meany, David Berube, Scott Harris, Gordie Miller, Paul Kerr, Lisa Heller, Maxwell Schnurer, Rae Schwartz, Jethro Hayman, Helen Morgan Parmett, Justin Morgan Parmett, Aaron Fishbone, Jillian Marty, and many more. I especially want to thank my daughter, Sarah Jane Snider, who is a constant inspiration to me and shows me in her work how I can do mine better. I want to thank others, and they know who they are.

Special thanks go to Eleanora von Dehsen, who did such a fine job in helping me put this text into its current form.

I want to thank the BBC for bringing back “Doctor Who” and restoring my sense of hope for the entire universe.

I also want to thank the Moody Blues for writing a song many years ago that came to me as I searched for a title to this volume, “Voices in the Sky.” Long may they sing.

Alfred C. Snider

Puertecitos, Baja California, Mexico. December 2004

Introduction: Debating As Open Society In Practice

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- ✦ Defining an “open society”
- ✦ Defining debate
- ✦ Debate an building open societies
- ✦ Debate as means
- ✦ Debate as education
- ✦ Debate as political participation

Increasingly the word *democracy* seems to have less and less concrete meaning. Just as almost any product can be advertised as “new” and “improved,” almost any social situation can be described as “democratic.” Absurdly fraudulent elections take place, powerful social forces impose systems and conditions on citizen victims, and many feel as if they are helpless, isolated, alienated, and powerless even though they live in what some call “democracy” and during a era that has been branded as an “information age.”

For some time, it has seemed clear to me that to be useful as a political system, “democracy” must also be an attitude, one that encourages citizens to debate issues. The basis of any democratic form of government is an informed, educated citizenry that participates in the political process. Debate is the essence of the connection between the informed and educated. People advocate for ideas, opponents test them, proposals and counterproposals are explored, and eventually anyone willing to listen makes up his or her own mind and then acts on it. A democratic society is empowered when democracy operates as state of mind. This realization has directed much of my work in many lands to promote a better future by encouraging open and respectful debate.

DEFINING THE PRACTICES THAT REPRESENT AN OPEN SOCIETY

I prefer to use the term *open society* as a goal instead of the more amorphous concept of *democracy*. Of course, an open society is a democracy, but the analysis of the processes of communication and free speech are more interlocked with the concept of an open society. Karl Popper (1902–94), a philosopher concerned with logic and social organization, has stated that an open society is one that ensures that political leaders and policies are changed peacefully. Popper reasoned that the real forces changing the human condition would be discoveries that cannot be foreseen. Thus, policies would have to be continually discussed, argued with, and adjusted. Freedom of expression leading to a manifestation of popular will should be able to change policies, leaders, or forms of government.

This understanding of democracy assumes that those participating in the process are interested in making the best possible decisions. Such a dedication is essential in avoiding situations where individuals defend their “side,” or that of their friends or bosses, instead of supporting policies of merit. Individuals must realize that they are fallible and that their current beliefs may be incorrect. Because conditions change, we may need to change our thinking. To do this, we must actively engage in the exchange and testing of ideas. We must be willing to join the debate.

George Soros, one of Popper’s followers, has spelled out the link between fallibility and the open society. Soros believes our ideas and social institutions can be fallible but that they can be tested and improved through a process of trial and error. The open society supports this process by encouraging freedom of expression and protecting the right to dissent. In this way it is similar to the scientific method and has possibilities that are similarly limitless. Unlike science, with its strict criteria for truth, facts in human affairs are not recognized by all. Yet, there should be some agreed on standards for judging this process of trial and error. All religions, philosophies, and cultures offer such standards, and the open society must be aware of them. An open society must regard shared values as a matter of choice and debate.

There is no one monolithic model for an open society. Processes, not specific social and political institutions, define such a society. For example, an open society can operate with or without a bicameral legislature. No society is totally open; all can improve. Debate can help create open societies in various cultural and social contexts. Ultimately, each society must discover how the debate process, so essential for the operation of an open society under the certainty of fallibility, can be integrated and used, just as each culture and tradition can explore how to create an open society that works for it.

DEFINING THE PRACTICES OF DEBATE

We can define debate as an equitably structured communication event about some topic of interest in which opposing advocates alternate before an opportunity is given for decision. This definition implies a number of principles. A debate should be equitably designed. All designated sides should be given an equal opportunity to present their views. A debate should be structured, with established communication periods and patterns, a beginning, and an end. This structure allows for preparation and strategy.

A debate is an oral or written communication event that serves as performance as well as a method of transmitting ideas and arguments. Every debate has a topic or issue focus, allowing the debate process to be more directed than a normal conversation. The topic itself should be of some import and interest to the participants and any audience that may observe the debate.

A debate is composed of two or more sides of an issue, with the advocacy positions identified in advance. For example, if the debate topic is the death penalty, one side would favor capital punishment (thus they may be called affirmative), and one side would oppose it (thus they may be called negative). This sense of opposing sides is critical to the probing analysis that is central to debate. Presentations in a debate should alternate between the sides, creating a pulse of critical communication in opposition to previous and subsequent pulses. During the debate the advocates will ask other participants and observers to agree with their point of view. At the end, a debate calls for observers to make either a public or private decision. This decision may change over time, as new information becomes available.

Debate involves four conceptual components: development, clash, extension, and perspective. Robert Branham, one of America's leading debate proponents, originated this distinction (Branham 22). He believed that debate was a process by which opinions are advanced, supported, disputed, and defended. He stated that every productive debate should contain the following elements of argument:

- Development, through which arguments are advanced and supported
- Clash, through which arguments are properly disputed
- Extension, through which arguments are defended against refutation
- Perspective, through which individual arguments are related to the larger question at hand

In a debate, the participants develop ideas and positions. This development involves description, explanation, and demonstration. For example, in a debate about nuclear disarmament, those supporting the proposition do not simply state that it is a good idea; they must explain why we need this policy, what the policy will be, and how it will operate successfully. In a debate, both sides must be specific about why they favor or oppose the topic.

Participants refute ideas during a debate. Each side analyzes their opponent's arguments to locate weaknesses, faults, and inconsistencies. In debate jargon we call this *clash*. Opposing advocates must not just disagree; they must present the specific reasons why they reject their opponent's ideas. In a useful debate, the ideas cannot be ignored; they must be critiqued.

Participants defend ideas during a debate. This is the process of extension. When an opponent offers arguments against an advocate's ideas, she answers these criticisms. This process creates a cycle of critical analysis, where ideas are presented, refuted, defended, refuted again, and then defended again until the debate has concluded. This process creates a rich interchange of ideas that audiences and participants find to be some of the most intellectually stimulating experiences of their lives.

Finally, each debate calls for a decision. This is the process of perspective. The decision is the sum of the arguments and ideas presented. Some ideas are more important than others, and ideas in a debate can relate in complex ways. Debaters help the audience or judge weighing the ideas and issues so that they can make a logical decision. While many discussions close by urging people to "consider further," a debate requires a decision, either about the issue at hand or about who did the better job of debating. The decision phase allows for closure and forces participants to stand in advocacy rather than remain noncommittal.

Not all debates contain all four elements, but they should. Your radio debates should include these components. They are the essence of how human beings learn from each other and grow through communication.

DEBATE AND BUILDING AN OPEN SOCIETY

The debate process can develop habits of mind that create a "democracy of mind," which promotes an open society. These changes of mindset can be important and profound. Austin Freeley, America's most popular debate textbook author, believed that the intellectual power represented by debate is vast (Freeley 30). It includes:

- ✦ Ability to engage in intellectual clash and the testing of ideas
- ✦ Ability to create an argument
- ✦ Ability to gather information to support arguments
- ✦ Ability to organize and understand different types of data
- ✦ Ability to understand the kinds of conclusions to which information may lead
- ✦ Ability to utilize the reasoning process
- ✦ Ability to recognize and critique various forms of reasoning
- ✦ Ability to understand how people use information to make decisions
- ✦ Ability to quickly process the arguments of opponents
- ✦ Ability to defend or adapt previous arguments

DEBATE AS MEANS

Debate is usually thought of as a process that is worthy in and of itself. It has educational benefits and encourages citizen involvement and participation that promotes further debate. Most of the debate-related work I have done is in the educational sector, where debate is used to teach people about specific subjects or as a “sport of the mind.”

This volume, on the other hand, uses debate as a means to an end rather than an educational process. By using radio to show individuals that an intelligent, respectful, and thoughtful exchange of ideas can take place, debate encourages the acceptance of open discussion and a democratic mindset that might ultimately contribute to the creation of an open society.

When we think of radio debate as a means to an end, a more open society, we must decide what ideas we are trying to inculcate in audiences and those involved in the broadcasts. While by no means exhaustive, here are some specific habits of mind that debate seeks to cultivate:

- ✦ There are many sides to issues, and some are supported by very strong arguments.
- ✦ It is worthwhile to listen to the points of view of those who disagree with us.
- ✦ Opponents on public issues have a lot to teach us about their ideas and also about our own.

- ✦ People can disagree about public issues without viewing opponents as either evil or a personal threat.
- ✦ Freedom of expression includes the right to criticize ideas we disagree with.
- ✦ Open and critical discussions help us determine the ideas that are worthy of our acceptance.
- ✦ Better ideas can emerge from political debate.
- ✦ Strong ideas gain followers and eventually become the basis of social action.

DEBATE AS EDUCATION

The goal of *Voices in the Sky* is to expose citizens to debates in order to encourage and educate them to become active citizens and thus promote a more open society. Remember that the direct benefits to the debater are more immediate and tangible than the indirect benefits to the audience, but both are very real.

At first, this limited, immediate effect on active and critical thinking from debate exposure might seem to be a valid argument against the radio debate proposals of this volume. However, the advantage of “debating” versus the advantage of “experiencing a debate as an audience member” depends on the situation. In the largely free but apathetic democracies, debate participation is the better approach than merely watching a lively back and forth discussion on a cable news channel. In a society where there is little recent tradition of open and active debate on public issues, however, using radio debate to reach an audience is probably superior. Radio debate can demonstrate to audiences that debates are useful and enjoyable, present role models of responsible advocates, and create awareness of different points of view. All of these elements are important for creating the “democratic” mindset.

Thus, the implementation of debate through radio broadcasts may not be the best way to achieve the opening of civic space, but this goal may be possible after a more general acceptance of open debate has been accomplished and good role models of “open society citizens” exist.

DEBATE AS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Very little separates listening to a debate on a public policy issue from political participation. They are linked. Political participation is nor-

mally thought of as voting or supporting a candidate, but this focus on voting may be misplaced. Even if 90 percent of the people in a country vote, we cannot be assured that they are making a wise decision. The theory of the open society is that the collective will can discover the best way of addressing problems. Voting alone cannot do that. Voters must use their ballots to express their personal choices and concerns, and the more they base their decisions on an open contest between ideas, the more likely their choices will be wise. Indeed, the debate between ideas and platforms must come *before* the voting. Any election must involve the thoughtful consideration of different points of view or the value of a free vote is suspect.

It is wise to focus on debating in an era when reason and sound argument do not dominate our communication channels. Political communication has become increasingly symbolic, source-oriented, and characterized by slogans carried out by huge multimedia campaigns. Democracy has spread laterally to new countries, but everywhere it is increasingly shallow in terms of real citizen awareness and participation. Increasingly the so-called “marketplace of ideas” rewards ideas that are stylish and hyped as opposed to logically valid. Debate trains citizens to combat this trend by using logic as the first tool of analysis.

Debating creates a far different communication environment. It requires information acquisition and management. Debaters must understand and investigate different aspects of an issue. They learn how to gather information and marshal it for their purposes. The process of debating is fluid and dynamic. Every day brings new ideas and new arguments. Every opponent uses some arguments that are expected and some that are not. Debaters must make connections between the arguments in every debate, as they search for ways to use their opponent’s arguments against them.

Debate calls to task simplistic public dialogue and promotes global critical thinking. By encouraging participants to look carefully at the root causes and implications of controversies and to analyze expert opinion and evidence thoroughly, it teaches critical questioning and learning that can help anyone who wants a deep understanding of issues.

When staged correctly, radio debates can expose huge audiences to this world of productive disagreement, where reason and evidence are used to discover the best solutions to common problems. Debate cannot guarantee, but it will spur progress toward a more open society.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✦ An open society is one in which change depends on the existence of free discussion that respects different points of view.
- ✦ A debate is an equitably structured communication event about some topic of interest between opposing advocates before an opportunity is given for decision on the topic.
- ✦ A productive debate should feature development of arguments, clash of opposing viewpoints, defense of presented ideas, and a perspective given to the arguments to enable a decision.
- ✦ Debate creates the practices that embody an open society.
- ✦ Debate is a means for promoting an open society.
- ✦ Debate is educational for the audience and the participants.
- ✦ Debate about important issues is a form of political participation.

PART I

RADIO DEBATE

Any radio program can consist of people merely gathering and “talking.” Radio debates, however, should be better organized and planned than the normal “talk show.” It is this difference in intensity and engagement that make a radio debate in many instances more powerful than a broadcast conversation. Part One will describe the careful planning, preparation, and implementation required to create a significant impact on a radio-debate audience.

Chapter I

RADIO AS A MEDIUM FOR DEBATING

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Availability of radio
- Acceptance of radio
- Channel characteristics of radio
- Implications of radio characteristics
- General guidelines for radio debate programming
- Country case studies

This chapter begins with an overview of the availability and acceptance of radio. It then focuses on the characteristics of radio as a medium and describes how to use these when designing radio debates. It concludes with case studies that provide suggestions on how radio might be used in Rwanda and Afghanistan to promote a more open society.

AVAILABILITY OF RADIO

Radio is the most pervasive of the electronic media, in large part because of its characteristics. It has fewer technological requirements than its electronic competitors. Its range is greater than conventional television and involves less equipment than satellite TV. As a result, it is accessible by the vast majority of the world's population.

Radio has the important power to penetrate barriers. In far too many parts of the globe, governments and other institutions limit information flow by controlling the media. Yet their control of radio is limited. Radio broadcasts originating from positions far away can penetrate deep within a country, spreading news and information governments want to restrict. During the Cold War

era, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty broadcast to communist countries. Today, such broadcast services as the BBC World Service reach many nations that do not have a free press. Attempts to restrict these broadcasts are ineffective. They usually block desired as well as undesired programs, and broadcasting on multiple frequencies and positioning broadcasts near domestic stations limit the effectiveness of jamming.

Radio penetrates geographical distance as well as topographical barriers, reaching audiences isolated by sheer distance as well as mountains, deserts, and jungles. Individuals may not be able to meet people from other regions of a country, nor are they able to travel there because of natural barriers and inadequate transportation opportunities. Instead of just “hearing about” people from other areas, they can actually “hear” their voices through radio.

The technology needed to receive radio is simple and easily available. Markets and bazaars in even the most isolated parts of the world sell small, inexpensive sets. People are familiar with the technology and find it easy to use. Radios can run on affordable batteries, and a number of inexpensive models with built-in hand cranks now permit listeners to supply their own power.

ACCEPTANCE OF RADIO

Radio is a highly accepted channel of communication. Most people have used it since they were very young and view it as a familiar source of information.

Listeners do not accept all radio messages. They discriminate between those with which they agree and those with which they disagree. Yet they will continue to listen to a station even if they disagree with the messages of some of its programs. Curiosity and a desire to understand others attracts people to different viewpoints and perspectives, even those of the “enemy” or the “foreigner.” People want information and so may tune into broadcasts with which they are not in total agreement. They will critically evaluate messages, separating those they agree with, those they disagree with, and those that deserve further consideration.

Radio audiences are not spontaneous. They develop listening habits. They regularly tune into a few favorite stations and programs. Although may not always agree with these programs’ messages, they are curious enough about them to return again and again.

CHANNEL CHARACTERISTICS OF RADIO

Radio differs from conversation, reading, contemplation, the Internet, or television as a means of receiving information. Consequently, you must understand radio's communication characteristics in order to properly design and implement your radio debates.

Communication occurs through communication channels. A communication channel is the means through which information is transmitted. You use different channels in your daily life. You talk to a neighbor and hear his voice while looking at him and observing his image. You speak to a friend over the telephone and focus on her voice, the audio signal she is sending. We write a letter to a family member and receive a reply, focusing on the written word. You observe two people communicating some distance away and infer much from watching their interaction even if you cannot hear what they are saying.

Radio broadcasts utilize a very specific communication channel. When developing radio debates, you must consider its five major characteristics:

1. The radio broadcast provides an audio signal only. What is heard and what is demonstrated through sound and voice is the entirety of the signal through which meaning is shared.
2. Radio is a very active communication channel. Because there is no video or image provided, listeners build a picture of what is taking place based on what they hear. The voice they hear may seem to be from a person who is young or old, large or small; they will construct that image through listening.
3. Radio is a scheduled communication. A particular program is sent at a specific time. Those who wish to receive that message must tune in to the appropriate station at the appropriate time. In contrast, the Internet offers unscheduled access with users selecting archived programs whenever they wish.
4. Radio listening is planned. People might accidentally find a radio program that interests them, but most often they make a conscious decision to listen to a specific program. They choose to tune in to as well as to continue listening because they are interested in the program.
5. Technology is required to receive radio signals. Users need a radio set, sufficient antenna capabilities to receive a station, and some form of electrical power to operate the radio. Without access to this technology radio communication is impossible.

IMPLICATIONS OF RADIO CHARACTERISTICS

When designing radio programming, you must keep the following implications of radio's channel characteristics in mind:

1. Sound is all-important. The setting or the appearance of the participants has little impact on the broadcast. In television and other visual media, a person's appearance is significant, while in radio an individual can be effective if she merely has a suitable voice. In fact, some in radio joke that they have a "radio face," meaning that they are not photogenic enough to be on television.
2. Radio listeners are not passive. They create a picture of the event as they listen. Producers help them construct appropriate images by using suitable voices, sound effects, and music.
3. Radio broadcasts cannot carry the nonverbal signals often thought essential for clear communication. Listeners will focus on other parts of the verbal message to make up for the lack of nonverbal signals. Consequently, manner and tone of voice are extremely important.
4. Radio programming must be planned for a specific audience. In order to attract and retain listeners, you must make sure that programming is interesting, contains new information, and is relevant to your listeners. Listeners need to plan for the program, and they will not do so unless they think the content is worth their time and energy.
5. Radio can provide a shared experience that may create later opportunities for discussion and conversation. Programs can be more than just a pleasant way to spend time; they can add ideas to a shared group experience that will be carried over into other parts of daily life.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR RADIO DEBATE PROGRAMMING

In light of radio's channel characteristics and their implications, keep the following in mind when developing your radio debates:

1. Debate participants must have clear and expressive voices. A topic expert may have useful information, but if she presents it without emphasis or clarity, the audience will be lost. The audience may also use these unfortunate deficiencies to paint an unflattering image of the speaker and the event while also replacing missing nonverbal signals with unfavorable verbal ones. When necessary, you must train debate participants in proper

voice techniques or, failing that, choose participants with these factors in mind.

2. You must capture voices with high-quality microphones that can accurately present a variety of vocal qualities and volumes.
3. Participants must present the central ideas of the debate presented directly and efficiently. Their presentations must be focused and highlight important points. Speakers must use economical language, avoiding excessive verbiage and rambling. They must remember that the audience is not listening to an artistic performance but to a debate in which the clear clash of ideas is paramount.
4. The program must be dynamic. It must have change, variety, and energy. The person speaking and the viewpoint should change, the tone and pace of the event should have considerable variety, and those speaking must sound enthusiastic and engaged.
5. The program must draw and hold an audience. You can do this by presenting topics of current interest or personal relevance to the listener. You can offer the audience new information or stage debates on controversial issues. Radio debates have no value unless they engage their listeners.

Many producers are tempted to simply stage and broadcast a debate, but to be successful the staging and presentation must take into consideration radio's characteristics.

COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

Two countries where radio debating might be used to stimulate a more open society are Afghanistan and Rwanda, both of which have been the scene of conflict in recent decades. Afghanistan is exploring the potential of radio to benefit the people. In Rwanda radio was used to spark ethnic hatred and violence. A series of radio debates in these countries could help further an open society because radio is widely available and influential.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan has been in turmoil for some time. For the last thirty years the mountainous nation has experienced Soviet satellite-state status, a long and protracted civil war against the Soviet-led government, a period of repressive rule by the Taliban regime, a civil war against the Taliban by the Northern

Alliance and other forces, and an invasion led by the United States to remove the Taliban. Now the country has a new government, led by Hamid Karzai, that is supported by the United States and the NATO nations with military force and promises of aid to rebuild and develop the nation.

Radio is one of the best ways to reach Afghans and can have real transformative effects. The mountainous country has a mostly rural, illiterate population (70 percent general illiteracy rate; 85 percent among women) (Girard 18). Decades of war have destroyed its physical infrastructure, but a recent survey indicated that radio reception is available to most Afghans, even in isolated rural areas (Girard 11). Radio receivers are common in Afghan homes, and people use radio as a source of news, information, and entertainment.

Yet not everyone who needs radio reception can get it. Among the population most at-risk, there is still a shortage of receivers. One recent survey interviewed the families of women between the ages of 15 and 49 who had died in the past four years and who lived in remote areas and found that only 30 percent of the people interviewed had access to a radio (Miller 3).

There is also a very serious gender barrier to radio reception. Women and children often find it difficult to access and use radio because radio listening is socially constructed as a male activity (Skuse 10). Traditionally, Afghanistan has made little investment in female education, and women are widely perceived to be less capable of understanding or less interested in economic or political issues. However, where women do have regular access to radio, they describe it as a window to the outside world or as a lifeline.

Because radio is widely available and accepted, radio debates over important issues could help encourage an open society. It is a low cost and effective way of contributing to medium and long-term efforts for reconstruction, development, democracy, and nation-building (Girard 18).

Rwanda

Rwanda experienced genocide in the mid-1990s when Hutu militia groups massacred more than 500,000 Tutsi. Radio was a particularly important element in that genocide because substantial evidence exists (and conviction bear out) that RTLM state radio was used to incite violence between ethnic groups.

Rwanda has a very active radio environment. In 1997 there were 601,000 working radio sets in Rwanda with a population of 7.9 million (Infoplease). Many, if not most, Rwandans have regular access to radio. The country has three FM stations: The government controls two, and the third is a BBC World Service repeater station. Irregular FM broadcasts from the BBC, the

Voice of America, and Deutshe Welle can be heard in the capital, Kigali.

The government justifies its control of the media by insisting that it must prevent the negative use of the media, such as occurred in the 1990s. Critics of the current government argue that the controls are merely attempts to protect the government from criticism (Dougherty A4) While it may be difficult to present a series of radio debates given government control, these debates would offer Rwandans a positive example of the transformative power of radio.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✦ Radio is widely available to audiences.
- ✦ Radio is widely accepted by audiences.
- ✦ Radio has unique communication characteristics.
- ✦ The implications of these characteristics need to be used in designing radio debates.
- ✦ Afghanistan and Rwanda are examples of where radio debates might be appropriate.

Chapter II

TOPICS FOR DEBATES

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Topic area selection
- Topic formulation and wording
- Types of topics
- Topic limits and boundaries

Most radio programs have different titles for individual episodes. This is the function that the topic has in your radio debate series. The program will have a familiar structure, but the content will change with each broadcast. If the topic provides a meaningful experience for the audience, the program will probably succeed. Poor topic selection can doom even the best-prepared debate.

Every debate is about something. Without a topic, debate becomes little more than a bickering session. Having a clear topic allows debaters to prepare their presentations and anticipate their opponent's arguments. A clear topic also informs the audience about what they should expect from the debate.

A poorly constructed topic can result in a debate that focuses on the peripheral elements of the issue. A radio debate on the topic "Our nation is in trouble," for example, may be too general to meet the expectations of the audience. A poorly constructed topic can also mislead listeners. For example, listeners would expect a topic that focuses on an upcoming election to feature the clashing positions of opposing candidates, if not the candidates themselves. Listeners who heard a debate about how the election should be conducted would be disappointed. If you are careful in your choice of topics you can avoid this problem.

TOPIC AREA SELECTION

Radio debate topics should attract and interest listeners. The topics may be general or quite specific. Choose your topics based on direct research within

your social or national setting. This research does not have to be formal to be useful. You could determine areas of possible topic interest through:

- ✦ Informal surveys: Go to public gathering places to hear what people are talking about
- ✦ Suggestions from listeners
- ✦ Examination of proposed government policies of interest to the audience
- ✦ Surveys of news media to determine issues of concern.

TOPIC FORMULATION AND WORDING

Once you have determined some general areas of interest, you need to craft specific topics. The topic will be the first information that potential and actual listeners encounter about the program. Likewise, the topic will be the starting point for the debaters who are preparing the debate.

The specific topics must reflect the concerns of the audience. Debates are most useful when they confront issues that are personally relevant to your listeners. If rising food prices have had an impact on many local families, a program with the topic “The government should act to reduce food prices in our nation” would be very attractive.

Topics for radio debates can often be framed to reflect societal disagreements and divisions. There is almost always a minority view on an issue, and these often make good debate topics. For example, you could debate: “The cultivation and processing of opium poppies should be legalized” or “Our nation’s central government should cede economic and agricultural policies to local governments.” The minority view often creates a good position for the affirmative team because it needs to question the conventional wisdom.

Topics should be interesting

Not every topic makes an interesting debate. Some are of little use because the audience is not interested in the outcome. While the topic “Oil drilling in the Alaskan National Wildlife Reserve should be allowed” is extremely debatable, it would be inappropriate for a radio debate in Afghanistan. The more personally relevant the topic is to your listeners, the more interesting it is likely to be.

Many historic debate topics now fail this basic test. The Scholastic philosophers of the European Middle Ages purportedly tried to determine how

many angels could stand on the point of a needle, but that is no longer an exciting issue. When developing and formulating topics, look for matters of immediate interest. Topics should be engaging, and engaging citizen interest is vital when designing topics.

Topics should be debatable

Not all topics are debatable. Some are truisms that are of little interest to the radio audience. For example, the topic “Improved police forces will reduce crime” seems to be self-evident and not susceptible to a useful debate. A topic that has almost all people in agreement with one side becomes either a pep rally or a session for condemning a highly unpopular view. For example, all people would oppose the topic “Our children do not need to be cared for.” You should also avoid topics that can never be proved, such as the existence of God.

The affirmative should support change from existing belief or policy

Having the affirmative support change makes the debate more interesting. The debate begins with the presentation of a different point of view and is likely to hold the attention of listeners who may not have heard this perspective. Thus, the debate begins with the affirmative introducing a controversy and their approach to that controversy. Permitting the affirmative to open the debate by introducing a case for change counterbalances the advantage that the negative may have in supporting existing policy and belief. By opening the debate with a case for change, the affirmative has what is called the “burden of proof” (in other words, they need to prove the claim made in the topic) and sets the stage for what is to come.

Topics should have one central idea

A radio debate program will not be long, perhaps twenty minutes to an hour. In order to provide a useful discussion in this time frame, the program must have a focus. While there will be a number of issues in any debate, there should be only one central idea. A topic with several ideas makes the preparation and examination of important issues difficult. Even if the ideas are related, a bifurcated topic makes the debate a more shallow. The topic “The death penalty is ineffective at preventing crime” is focused, while the topic “The death penalty and corporal punishment are ineffective at preventing crime” is not.

An exception to this rule would be a topic in which two concepts are being compared, such as “The right to privacy is more important than the public’s right to know.”

Topics should be simple and straightforward

Craft debate topics in a straightforward manner. Use the fewest words possible. The topic becomes more confusing when more terms are introduced. Most words have several meanings, so multiple terms make a topic much more difficult to understand, define, and debate.

The meanings of the words in the topic must also be clear. A properly worded health related topic would be “The government should create a program to inoculate all children against infectious diseases.” A poorly worded topic would be, “The government should find a way of giving needed inoculations to children who may need them to fight against infectious diseases.” The extra words in the second topic only confuse the central issues.

Avoid abstract terms whenever possible. All terms contain ambiguity, of course, but some terms are far more ambiguous than others. For example, students once debated the topic “The works of nature are more beautiful than those of human art.” The debate became weighed down by the need for each side to develop definitions of nature, art, and beauty in ways that benefited them (Branham 33). They spent so much time defining terms that the debate lacked clash. It did not achieve the goal of comparing the two concepts.

Topics should use neutral language

Frame a topic so that it is neutral to both sides. Loaded language will influence the way the debate takes place and is perceived by the audience. Loaded terms can slant the debate toward one side or another. For example, you could have a fruitful debate on the topic, “Pakistan should cooperate with the United States in its war on terrorism.” However, the topic “Pakistan should refuse to be the continued slave of the American imperialists in their murderous so-called war on terrorism” presents problems. The wording of this topic is not neutral, and the audience will be attracted to one side or the other based on their biases. In addition, the negative might focus exclusively on one of these non-neutral terms, such as *slave*. It might then argue that Pakistan is willingly cooperating because of economic and other incentives, and thus is not a slave. Negative advocates will often exploit inappropriately worded topics to make their jobs easier, with the result that they degrade the debate process.

Topics should not be too broad

Because a debate is of limited duration, its topic must focus on a limited set of issues. Every topic has many issues within it, and often the requirement that it focus on one central idea is not enough to narrow the issues that might be discussed. For example, the topics “conservatives are always right” and “people need to behave better” have one central idea but contain a vast array of issues. Often the national policy debate topic in the United States will be broad, but there will be thousands of debates on this topic, allowing for coverage of a broad spectrum of issues. The situation is somewhat different for radio debating, where a given topic will be debated usually only once.

Producers need to narrow topics for once-only radio debates. For example, the topic “The world should expand its exploration of outer space” is so broad as to warrant a series of debates about various forms of space exploration. On the other hand, a debate on the topic “The world should send human beings to Mars by 2015” has a much narrower set of issues that may result in a useful debate as a single event (Branham 34). Topics with more narrow issue sets are also preferable because they facilitate clash between the disputants, enabling each side to have a better idea of what the other will argue and to prepare accordingly. Such focused preparation will usually produce better debates and more informed decisions by the audience.

TYPES OF TOPICS

Now that we’ve considered the goals to keep in mind when constructing the topic, we focus on the types of topics available. You must understand the various types of topics and how they are constructed if your radio debate programs are to achieve their goals. Using the guidelines above, you should be able to select an issue for debate, locate it within these topic types, and then frame a proper topic.

Fact topics

Topics of fact invite debaters to argue about what is, was, or will be. Topics can explore our interpretation of the past (“Egypt was a greater civilization than Rome”), the present (“Agricultural subsidies in rich nations keep African agricultural goods out of world markets”), or the future (“The HIV-AIDS epidemic in Africa will preclude meaningful economic development for the

next twenty years”). While this description tells us where these claims occur in time, they are not the only examples of fact topics.

Robert Branham has described four different types of fact topics:

1. causality: X causes Y (“Tobacco smoking is extremely harmful to health”).
2. definition: A is or is not a part of category B (“One person’s terrorist is another person’s freedom fighter”).
3. conditions of the past: These may involve historical claims (“Vikings landed on North America before Columbus”) or prehistorical claims (“The impact of huge asteroid caused the mass extinction of dinosaurs”).
4. predictions: For example, “The Hutu-Tutsi genocide in Rwanda can never happen again.” Predictive claims generally use an understanding of the past and present to predict future events. In order to predict the possibility of another Rwanda genocide, one would examine Rwandan (or other nations’) responses to the past genocide (Branham 34).

In framing fact topics you must include the proper terminology associated with the specific type of fact topic. A topic concerned with causality should include terms, such as “causes,” “leads to,” or “significantly contributes to.” For example, “Increased penalties for government officials convicted of corruption will reduce government corruption.” A topic dealing with definition should include “belongs to,” “is one of,” or “should be defined as.” For example, “The United Nations has been a very successful international organization.” A topic concerning conditions of the past should use the past tense or include a statement of the time period involved. For example, “Britain’s recognition of India’s national independence was at least twenty years too late.” A topic concerning predictions should use the future tense, specify the particular condition or event predicted, and should include a statement of time frame so that the debate is not about the unlimited future. For example, “Continued global use of large amounts of oil and gas will cause harmful global warming.”

Fact topics can lead to very interesting debates. Our interpretation of facts changes through time and through the process of debate and discussion. Through debate, audiences can come to better understand what they have accepted as facts and how they came to do so.

Value topics

A value topic deals with the evaluations of persons, places, things, or events.

They focus on issues of right and wrong—sin and virtue, for example—as well as our judgment about what conditions are preferable to others. Often the value term applied is fairly abstract, dealing with such concepts as beauty, importance, equity, morality, and ethics, all of which are open to wide variations of interpretation. Nevertheless, topics of value are also regular parts of our own everyday lives. When we dispute the merits of a story that we have just heard or a new article of clothing that we are wearing, we are debating topics of value. When we hope to do what we feel is morally correct but are uncertain of what that is, we will probably discuss value topics with others in order to determine what we should do (Branham 36).

You can compose value topics easily. They usually contain a central value and then relate that value a certain area (“Legal guarantees of equal rights for all threaten the institution of the family”) or to another value (“Freedom of the press is more important than an individual right to privacy”).

We often assume that value topics must be resolved in an absolute way: Something is good or bad, ugly or beautiful. While this may be the case for some topics, such as “Murder is always immoral,” it is also true that we can debate values in comparison to one another, for example “The pursuit of economic prosperity is less important than the preservation of environmental quality.”

Policy topics

Policy topics concern social or individual action. They ask the question, “What should be done?” Examples of this would include debates between candidates for public office, in legislatures over pending bills, and on school boards about school policies.

Policy topics can operate at different levels. For example:

- international (“All nations should cease the killing of whales”)
- national (“The United States should permit the use of human fetal tissue for scientific research”)
- state or provincial (“Alabama should establish a state-run lottery” or “Quebec should secede from Canada”)
- local (“The city of Baghdad should adopt mandatory recycling procedures for all trash”)
- matters of personal decision and action (“We should support X for president of the nation”)

- ♦ matters of school policy (“The head scarf should not be required of all female students at this university”)

Keep the following guidelines in mind when crafting policy topics:

- ♦ An action or policy should be specified.
- ♦ The agent of that action should be specified.
- ♦ The word *should* (meaning ought to but not necessarily will) is useful for indicating the difference between a policy and fact topic.

Using these guidelines, you can build a topic by identifying an action (build additional orphanages) and an agent (government of India) and uniting them with the word *should* into “The government of India should build additional orphanages.”

Do not assume that the three types of topics (fact, value, and policy) are separate; they overlap in important ways. Facts and our previous experiences shape our values, so facts and actions are part of a debate on a value topic. A value topic will employ questions of fact (the way things are or were) as well as questions of value (the way things should be). Policy topics involve the determination of facts and the application of values in order to determine what should be done (the policy being debated). The type of topic states the major question to be answered by the debate but does not preclude value, fact, or policy arguments from being made within that debate.

TOPIC LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES

Not all societies are ready to debate all topics, and every society has some topic not suitable for debate. You must consider cultural context when developing a topic. For example, a western nation would grant women absolute social, political, and economic equality while a conservative Muslim country would not. In Afghanistan, for example, many women are not allowed to listen to the radio because issues in the news are “men’s business.” Thus, if you were choosing topics for radio debate in a conservative Muslim society, you would not select a general topic about absolute rights for women, which parts of the audience might identify as “one-sided” and “undebatable.” Instead, acknowledging cultural standards, you would select a more narrow topic, such as “Women should have the right to operate motor vehicles” (something not allowed in some Muslim societies). You have introduced the major issues of equality and the role of women but in a way that is more acceptable to your audience.

You also want to avoid topics that elevate extreme minority positions to levels of acceptability. In Japan, for example, apologists for Japanese military behavior during World War II wanted to fund debates to argue that the Japanese military had not carried out atrocities. The Japanese debate community refused to engage in them because they thought that given equal standing to this position would give it credibility it did not deserve given the strong historical evidence.

One of the major values of a radio debate is that after the debate is over listeners will continue the discussion among themselves. Therefore, you should select topics that have adherents of both sides among the listening audience. A debate where everyone in the listening audience agrees with one side before and after the debate probably has a faulty topic. The topic for a radio debate should promote additional debate after the broadcast is over.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✦ Good topic selection is essential for the success of a radio debate.
- ✦ Select topics based in audience interest and its relevance to them.
- ✦ Conduct research to determine audience interests.
- ✦ Topics should be interesting.
- ✦ Topics should be debatable.
- ✦ Topics should have one central idea.
- ✦ Topics should be simple and straightforward.
- ✦ Topics should use neutral language.
- ✦ Topics should not be too broad.
- ✦ Facts topics are about what was, is, or will be.
- ✦ Value topics are about morals and evaluations.
- ✦ Policy topics are about what should be done.
- ✦ Not everything makes for a good debate topic.

Chapter III

RECRUITING AND PREPARING DEBATERS

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- ✦ Selecting and recruiting debaters
- ✦ Training and preparing debaters

Radio debates are only as good as the debaters who are in them. Selecting and recruiting good debaters is vital to the success of your program, and once you have selected your debaters, you need to devote considerable time and effort to preparing them properly. There is always a temptation to set up the debate and just “let it happen,” but this does not yield the best result. Just because speakers are committed to issues does not mean they are ready to stage an excellent debate.

SELECTING AND RECRUITING DEBATERS

Characteristics of a good radio debater

Keep in mind the characteristics of any good debater when selecting and participants for your radio debates. First-class debaters:

- ✦ Give strong rhetorical reasons for the probative force of their arguments. They do not just make assertions; they support their arguments with evidence.
- ✦ Make the needs of and benefits to others the focus of the debate through their arguments.
- ✦ Have excellent voices and clear articulation.
- ✦ Argue through excellent evidence but always make argument, not evidence, the focus. Evidence supports and proves argumentative claims.

- ✦ Debate dynamically, with enthusiasm and commitment. They are good speakers who sound passionate about the issues.
- ✦ See the big picture. They are aware of how ideas influence one another and use these relationships to enhance analysis in the debate.
- ✦ Understand that there is no substitute for knowing the subject they are debating.
- ✦ Understand the need for organization in order to identify the critical tipping points in the debate.
- ✦ Project an image of an intelligent person who is seeking to understand and discover the truth rather than trying to win her side of the issue.
- ✦ Show respect for other debaters and other points of view, never using personal insults or slights, but always focusing on the arguments.

Selecting radio debaters

Many media outlets like to use celebrities, experts, or politicians as debaters. I advise against this practice. I recommend that you develop your own small group of debaters for a variety of reasons. First, you want to have trained debaters who are available for the entire debate series. Training becomes onerous when you have to start over again for each debate. Second, the debaters will improve the more they debate. Repetition builds skills that will enhance the series. Third, your regular debaters will become familiar with the audience, and some members of the audience will become fans of specific debaters. Fourth, celebrity or politician debaters will be more concerned with their image and popularity than with exploring the issues. In addition, they will not be available on a regular basis.

Your debaters should have strong speaking and reasoning skills and be well informed. These are the foremost—and obvious—qualities you seek. However, you should consider other factors as well. Select debaters who are representative of your listeners. Include both men and women who represent the ethnic and regional diversity of your audience. Use individuals who are not initially well known. They do not have an established history of public advocacy and so have flexibility in their performances. Their participation in the debate series will make them better known over time.

Make sure that your group is balanced in terms of general orientation to issues. Include debaters who represent conventional values and support the status quo as well as those who advocate for change. Be sure to maintain their general orientation on the issues throughout the debate series. Listeners will

become familiar with their voices and expect certain individuals to advocate certain positions. Having debaters change their general positions will confuse your audience. This continuity of roles might also induce audience members to “take sides” with certain debaters whom they favor, encouraging them to continue the debate among fellow listeners who identify with other debaters.

Recruiting radio debaters

You should include several other criteria when choosing your debaters. Participants should be available for the entire series. In addition, they should be geographically located so that they have easy access to the recording or broadcast facility. Before you proceed to recruitment, you must determine if you will use only volunteer debaters or if you will pay them. Offering compensation can greatly increase the pool of available applicants.

Make sure that potential debaters are aware of their responsibilities. Provide each with a written document indicating the length of involvement, training activities, and times required, number of broadcast debates, regular rehearsal and practice sessions, and related activities.

Recruitment involves outreach, audition, and selection. In the outreach portion of the process you must announce your need for radio debaters. Circulate this information among radio outlets, educational institutions, civic organizations, and social groupings. Make sure that you tailor your outreach efforts to the conventions and practices of your society.

In the audition phase, inform interested individuals of their responsibilities. Then ask each individual to engage in activities that will help you make your selection. While many such activities are possible, the following are extremely useful:

- ✦ Ask each applicant to read a difficult statement and record it.
- ✦ Have each applicant speak on a given topic and record her speech.
- ✦ Give each applicant thirty minutes to prepare a four-minute speech and record.

Have a panel review the resulting recordings and select the finalists. Then screen them to make your final determination. Select more debaters than you need so that you have sufficient personnel should some drop out of the program. Finally, keep a list of all finalists to call on as replacements or to invite them to a future audition.

DEVELOPING A CORE GROUP OF RADIO DEBATERS

You must have a core group of repeating debaters in order to provide the highest quality radio debates. There are several reasons why a small group of debaters should be used over and over again in a series of radio debates. First, as they engage in the debate process more and more, their skills will be refined and improved. Second, audiences will develop a familiarity with the individuals involved and will unavoidably identify some whom they prefer and others whom they do not. This personal involvement with the debaters increases listener enthusiasm for the program and makes it more likely that listeners will carry the ideas of the debate into discussions with their fellow citizens. Third, as the debaters develop identities as thinking individuals they can be better placed in future debates. With a group of eight debaters available, organizers of the programs might decide that certain debaters would perform better on different topics.

Using topic area experts as debaters

Many media “debates” feature a confrontation between experts. You may be tempted to include experts on your regular panels in order to make the debates appear more important and authoritative. Be aware that the use of experts can enhance the program, or it can create problems. First, because experts will only appear occasionally, they probably will not be trained effectively in formal debate. They may be well informed about the topic, but the quality of the debate will be compromised. Second, topic experts often are not accustomed to being challenged and so might exert their superior credentials rather than logic and reasoning to support an argument, thus defeating one of the main purposes of debate. Third, your listeners will gain the impression that only experts can participate in debates, again defeating the purpose of the your programs.

Experts do have useful roles in your debates. For example, they might ask the debaters questions during a question and answer period. They also might make brief statements before the last speeches to add perspective to the proceedings. If using experts, remember to include representatives from various sides of the issue to maintain the program’s balance.

Using politicians as debaters

Involve politicians in the debate series only in exceptional circumstances. Do not use them as regular participants. You will be tempted to utilize them

for the same reasons you might want to use topic experts. In addition you may hope to gain support for your program among those in power. Avoid the temptation. Not only do politicians create the same problems as experts, but they also are likely to use the debate as a platform for their political agenda, making the program appear biased. Your radio debates should be open expressions of ideas rather than platforms for political groups.

You can use politicians as debaters if you include representatives from opposing camps. In this case you have maintained a political balance, and the politicians are forced to debate the issues, something that is wholly within the goals of a radio debate program. Their lack of training and unfamiliarity with formal debate may create problems, but featuring two or three major candidates for public office might be useful in promoting a more open society.

You might also invite them to pose questions to the debaters, give brief statements, or offer commentary after the debate has concluded. Whenever possible include representatives from a broad spectrum of views. If you invite only one politician to a debate, schedule others advocating different points of view and alert the audience that they will be appearing in the future.

TRAINING AND PREPARING DEBATERS

The goal of your radio debates is to sow seeds of critical discourse, not to be a platform for specific individuals. In order to accomplish this goal, debaters need to be trained. This training involves practice and coaching.

Several years ago I organized a debate between two opposing groups: Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (a leading provider of abortion services) and Vermont Right to Life (a citizen action group opposed to abortion). In meetings with both sides, I discovered that they were so committed to their point of view that they had not considered the major arguments of the other side. They usually spoke to friendly audiences and rarely had to answer or defend the major arguments of the opposition. Our debate was ultimately successful because I was able to teach them how to address their opponent's arguments.

Setting up radio debate training sessions

Once you have selected your group of debaters and made them aware of their obligations, you can begin training. Training should take place for several hours each day over a number of days. The precise length of each session and the number of days will be based on the availability of the trainers and debat-

ers. If the sessions are long, provide appropriate meal breaks. Eating some meals together will increase the social bonding among the trainees. Set aside a minimum of fifty hours for instruction and activities. Distribute training materials, usually printed documents, at least one week before the initial session. Ask the trainees to read and familiarize themselves with the material before class begins.

You do not have to hold your training sessions in a radio studio until work begins on the first planned debate. Initially, all you need is a relatively quiet, well-lighted room with tables and chairs and microphones connected to headphones so that you can simulate the broadcast environment. The location should be convenient for the debaters.

Debating is a skill, and skills require practice to improve. Each session should include a significant period for drills and time for the trainer and debaters to discuss their progress and expectations.

Training radio debaters does not differ significantly from training other types of debaters. All debaters learn a basic set of skills and then refine them through drills and practices so that they can translate abstract concepts into behavior. Repetition is the key to effective training. You should periodically revisit drills and exercises so that your debaters maintain their skills.

Training for radio debaters

What follows is not a comprehensive training manual for debaters but an explanation of the seven basic phases of training. Part Two provides an introductory debate primer and a comprehensive list of available training resources.

Phase one of training involves acquainting the debaters with your expectations for the debate series and with the process of debate. They must understand what they will be involved in before they begin training. You should describe the goals of the program and discuss in depth what you will expect from them. Then, introduce the group to the basic structure of a formal debate (two sides with alternating speeches) and the broadcast format.

Phase two involves teaching speaking techniques. Because the debates will not have a visual element, the focus must be on the voice of the debater. Debaters must learn how to be dynamic speakers in order to retain audience attention. They must vary their delivery in terms of speed, volume, and voice tone in order to emphasize they key portions of their speech that they want the audi-

ence to remember. Yet speakers must remain within a natural vocal range so as to not seem strange to the audience. You must familiarize the debaters with the messages they send when voice tones change. For example, high pitch and rapid speech indicates anxiety and perhaps anger; slower and louder speech indicates importance and seriousness. Drills in phase two involve debaters presenting short sample speeches that are critiqued and repeated. The debaters will develop their radio debate voices based on these exercises.

You will need to train debaters how to orient themselves to the microphone to maximize vocal quality and how to speak when wearing headphones, which is quite common during recording and broadcast. For drills, tape sample speeches so that debaters can hear what they sound like to others.

Phase three involves instruction in reasoning and argumentation. Debaters should learn how to identify the different species of argument (including induction, deduction, and causation) as well as how to build and defend such arguments. They should also learn the common fallacies of argument so that they can identify them when opponents use them and can avoid them in their own arguments. You should teach debaters how to develop a single argument as well as how to outline groups of arguments properly. You can use four types of exercises in this phase:

1. Give your debaters a series of arguments and ask them to identify the type.
2. Have the trainees build arguments of various types.
3. Give your debaters a sample argument, ask them to identify its type, and tell them to analyze and criticize it using the reasoning associated with it.
4. Ask the debaters to organize a group of arguments into a logical outline. These exercises should include an oral component so that debaters know how to use what they are learning in an actual debate.

In **phase four**, the debaters learn how to gather information and prepare for a debate. They should use libraries and the Internet, when available, but they should also consult experts. Discussions with citizens also are extremely valuable because debaters can learn about exist attitudes and concerns and gauge how an audience might react to arguments. These conversations can provide anecdotal evidence that debaters can use to illustrate their arguments. Drills in this phase involve assigning debaters to investigate a topic and then discuss how this research could be incorporated into a debate.

Phase five teaches debaters to build a case. You should introduce the conceptual and organizational guidelines for building a case and describe how these guidelines differ for various forms of topics (fact, value, policy). In this phase you can give the group twenty or thirty minutes to produce an outline of a case on the topic of your choice. Then review and critique the outline. It is very important to repeat this exercise with a variety of topics.

Phase six trains debaters in attacking a case. You should present the guidelines for analyzing and refuting various types of cases and topics (fact, value, policy). As an exercise, give the debaters twenty or thirty minutes to refute a sample case and then review. Repeat with a variety of cases and types of topics.

Phase seven involves training debaters in how to ask and answer questions, if this element is included in your debate format. Debaters can add question and answer sessions to recent practice debates in order to hone their skills. You can then analyze the sessions and offer suggestions for improvement.

Practice debates are a vital part of training. Instruction in the various elements of a formal debate is essential, but your trainees can only understand the debate dynamic through practice. Often very intelligent and articulate people have difficulty translating theory into practice, so practice debates are essential. Schedule practice sessions regularly and be sure to leave time for discussion and analysis. You can conduct this analysis after each speech (highlighting strong and weak points) or after the practice debate is over. Make sure that the debaters are using the concepts they have learned. Always record these debates so that the debaters can review them.

Document the training program so that you can repeat it when new debaters enter the group or if you organize a new group of debaters, perhaps in a different region or city. Archive all text and related materials.

Training never ends. The broadcasts themselves are training opportunities, with each leading to an improved future performance. Consequently, having stable membership in the group is very important. Certainly some people will come and go, but retaining as many members as possible for as long as possible will enhance the quality of your debates.

Training topic area experts and politicians

Although topic experts and politicians will not be part of your core debate group, you will need to develop a short training program for the occasions in

which you use them. They may not be willing or able to commit to lengthy training, but their instruction should include:

- ✦ How to speaking into a microphone while wearing headphones.
- ✦ When to speak and when to remain silent.
- ✦ The exact format of the debate (give them a written chart that they can consult during the debate).
- ✦ How long they are expected to speak and how to consult a timer to make sure they stay within limits.
- ✦ The expectation that they will provide new information of importance that the debaters may have not presented.
- ✦ Knowledge of the basic requirements of debating:
 - Respect all sides in the process.
 - Remain objective about the two sides in the debate whenever possible.
 - Provide a balance of comments about each side (unless there is an oppositely affiliated topic area “expert” along with them).
 - Answer all questions.

If the debaters will be involved in the formal debate, you need to provide them with instruction about the debate process, including development of major arguments, addressing the major arguments of an opponent, defending their own major arguments and finally providing some perspective on the issues with an urging of the audience to agree with them. Finally, stress that they are welcome to join additional training and practice sessions they wish to attend.

Rights and clearances

In most countries, the participants in a broadcast sign a release giving the producers the rights to that broadcast. This allows the producers to broadcast, distribute, or syndicate the program as they see fit. You may be able to modify forms used by other radio programs for your debate series. Consult legal counsel about the practices in your country. Do not use participants who refuse to sign these releases.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✦ A good radio debate needs good debaters who are properly trained.
- ✦ Potential debaters should be well informed and possess substantial oral and cognitive skills.
- ✦ Debate organizers must use outreach appropriate to the culture to attract potential debaters.
- ✦ Potential debaters must understand their obligations and duties.
- ✦ Organizers should select their debate teams through auditions that demonstrate candidates' oral and cognitive skills.
- ✦ Organizers should use topic experts and politicians only in special circumstances.
- ✦ Training is a continuous process that involves skill development and practice.
- ✦ Training must include the basics of formal debate.
- ✦ Training and preparation is essential for topic experts and politicians.
- ✦ Every person appearing in a radio debate must sign the appropriate documents releasing their rights to the program.

Chapter IV

FORMATS FOR RADIO DEBATING

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- ✦ Debate components
- ✦ Adjusting classic debate formats for radio
- ✦ Short radio debate formats
- ✦ Intermediate radio debate formats
- ✦ Long debate formats
- ✦ Other debate formats

This chapter will discuss the basic components of a debate and how debates can be structured to fit various radio broadcast situations.

DEBATE COMPONENTS

It is important for us to understand the components that go into creating a specific debate format designed for radio. These components include:

- ✦ **Speakers:** debaters for (affirmative) and against (negative) the topic, observers, and commentators.
- ✦ **Observers:** members of the actual or listening audience who may be allowed to ask a question or make a statement.
- ✦ **Commentators:** special observers of the debate who are invited to make short statements, generally before the final two speeches of the debate.
- ✦ **Teams:** in short formats teams can consist of one debater, or debaters may debate in teams of two (or more) against another team of the same number.
- ✦ **Affirmative:** the side favoring the topic to be debated.
- ✦ **Negative:** the side opposing the topic to be debated.

- ✦ Introduction: a short period where a neutral party would introduce the topic, the format, and the debaters.
- ✦ Background: on novel or complex issues a neutral party could share factual and unbiased information about the topic to be debated.
- ✦ Speeches: times during which the speaker has the microphone.
- ✦ Constructive speeches: debaters present their basic case, introducing what they think are the important issues.
- ✦ Rebuttal speeches: debaters defend their ideas and summarize the debate before urging the audience to agree with them.
- ✦ Question: a question asked by someone of a debater.
- ✦ Cross-examination: questions asked by one side in the debate of the other, as in a court room.
- ✦ Time limits: all speakers must respect the time limits, pay attention to the clock while speaking, and finish promptly when time has expired.

ADJUSTING CLASSIC DEBATE FORMATS FOR RADIO

Radio is a unique communicative environment that requires modification of the traditional debate formats through manipulation of the components. The arrangement of these components dictates how successful the format will be. Components should be carefully considered for program design. Keep the following factors in mind:

1. The amount of time available dictates the number of participants. Short debates of less than twenty minutes should feature only two debaters, one on each side. Multiple-person teams can add variety to longer debates, but remember to emphasize quality, not quantity. Your debates should feature the best debaters available as opposed to more debaters of less skill. Also, keeping the number of debaters down allows the audience to become more familiar with the participants.
2. The length of the debate influences the complexity of the topic. Short programs are not the forums for large issues; the topics must be precisely focused.
3. Questions and cross-examination increase the exploration of issues and provide two-way communication that many audiences enjoy. They do take time away from other sections of the debate, however.

4. You may want to factor audience involvement into the format. Audience members can offer questions, either in their own voice or read by a neutral individual.
5. You may want to integrate experts or political figures into your series. As suggested previously, you should avoid using them on a regular basis, but they are useful as commentators. Typically they are scheduled before the last two speeches. Be sure to maintain series objectivity by presenting commentators from opposing points of view.
6. Whenever possible, the affirmative side should speak first and last in the debate since they have the heavier burden of supporting the topic (usually phrased in opposition to current policy or prevailing belief). If the broadcast is short, this may not be possible.
7. Fairness requires that you allocate the same amount of speech time to each side. Traditionally, a first negative speech will be longer than a first affirmative speech because the negative will be expected to refute what the affirmative has said and present their own issues, but the affirmative captures that time back with a longer final speech.
8. You can use all the time allocated for introduction at the beginning of the debate, or you can present a short statement at the beginning (introducing the topic and debaters) and at the conclusion (reminders to “tune in again” and contact information).
9. To avoid the problem of “up and down time,” begin the next speech time immediately after the previous speech time has elapsed. If your debate is staged and then edited for broadcast, you should not have this problem.
10. You can adjust or adapt the formats below for valid reasons. You can replace cross-examination with questions from an audience or from commentators. You can use a different individual for each speech, or one debater can deliver all the speeches for a side.

SHORT RADIO DEBATE FORMATS

Ten- or fifteen-minute one-on-one debate

Positive elements:

- ✦ Easy to organize and execute
- ✦ Easy to find a time slot for during the broadcast day
- ✦ Holds audience attention

- ✦ May create an interest in hearing more radio debates

Negative elements:

- ✦ Suitable only for relatively narrow issues
- ✦ Insufficient time for clash with opposing ideas and defense of ideas presented
- ✦ May not satisfy audiences interesting in learning more about the topic
- ✦ Lacks interactive elements such as cross-examination

TEN-MINUTE ONE-ON-ONE DEBATE

Event	Length In Minutes
Introduction	1
First affirmative speech	3
First negative speech	3
Second affirmative speech	1.5
Second negative speech	1.5

FIFTEEN-MINUTE ONE-ON-ONE DEBATE

Event	Length In Minutes
Introduction	1
First affirmative speech	5
First negative speech	5
Second affirmative speech	2
Second negative speech	2

Twenty-minute one-on-one debate with cross-examination, commentary, or questions

Positive elements:

- More time to investigate complex issues
- More opportunity for analysis and criticism of the opposing side
- Cross-examination, commentator, or questions adds dynamism to the listening experience

Negative elements:

- Twenty minute time slot may be difficult to find during broadcast day
- Difficult and complex issues may not be addressed in needed detail
- No time allocated for background information about the controversy

TWENTY-MINUTE ONE-ON-ONE DEBATE WITH CROSS-EXAMINATION

Event	Length In Minutes
First affirmative speech	5
Cross examination	2
First negative speech	5
Cross examination	2
Second affirmative speech	2.5
Second negative speech	2.5

TWENTY-MINUTE ONE-ON-ONE DEBATE WITH CROSS-EXAMINATION

Event	Length In Minutes
Introduction	1
First affirmative speech	5
First negative speech	5
Commentary or questions	4
Negative rebuttal	2.5
Affirmative rebuttal	2.5

INTERMEDIATE RADIO DEBATE FORMATS

Twenty-five minute two-on-two debate with cross-examination, questions, or commentary

Positive elements:

- ✦ Two speakers on each side increases dynamism and helps maintain audience attention
- ✦ Cross examination, questions, or commentary add dynamism to the listening experience
- ✦ Length fits easily into a thirty-minute time slot during the broadcast day
- ✦ Longer rebuttals add synthesis and a sense of closure to the debate
- ✦ Introduction orients the audience to what they will hear

Negative elements

- ✦ Not long enough for extremely complex issues
- ✦ May be too long to hold listener attention
- ✦ Cross examination, question, or commentary periods may be too short to be optimally productive

TWENTY-FIVE MINUTE TWO-ON-TWO DEBATE WITH CROSS-EXAMINATION

Event	Length In Minutes
Introduction	1
First affirmative speech	6
Cross examination	2
First negative speech	6
Cross examination	2
Negative rebuttal	4
Affirmative rebuttal	4

TWENTY-FIVE MINUTE TWO-ON-TWO DEBATE WITH QUESTIONS OR COMMENTARY

Event	Length In Minutes
Introduction	1
First affirmative speech	6
First negative speech	6
Questions or commentary	4
Negative rebuttal	4
Affirmative rebuttal	4

Thirty-minute two-on-two debate with audience involvement or cross-examination

Positive elements:

- ✦ Two speakers on each side increases dynamism and help maintain audience attention
- ✦ Cross examination or audience participation add dynamism to the listening experience
- ✦ Thirty-minute length fits easily into a time slot during the broadcast day
- ✦ Longer rebuttals add synthesis and a sense of closure to the debate
- ✦ Introduction orients the audience to what they will hear

Negative elements

- ✦ Still not long enough for extremely complex issues
- ✦ May be too long to hold listener attention
- ✦ Cross examination or audience involvement periods may be too short to be optimally productive

**THIRTY-MINUTE TWO-ON-TWO DEBATE
WITH AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT**

Event	Length In Minutes
Introduction	1
First affirmative speech	4
First negative speech	4.5
Second affirmative speech	4.5
Second negative speech	4.5
Questions or statements from audience	4
Negative rebuttal	3.5
Affirmative rebuttal	4

THIRTY-MINUTE TWO-ON-TWO DEBATE WITH CROSS-EXAMINATION

Event	Length In Minutes
Introduction	1
First affirmative speech	4
First negative speech	4.5
Second affirmative speech	4.5
Cross examination	2
Second negative speech	4.5
Cross examination	2
Negative rebuttal	3.5
Affirmative rebuttal	4

LONG DEBATE FORMATS

Forty-five- or forty-six-minute two-on-two debate with cross-examination or audience questions and commentary

Positive elements:

- ✦ Long enough to handle more complex topics
- ✦ Having two speakers on each side increases dynamism and helps maintain audience attention
- ✦ Longer first speeches help lay out the basic issues of the debate in some detail
- ✦ Second speeches by each team allow for increased clash between sides
- ✦ Cross-examination or questions from studio audience adds dynamism to the listening experience
- ✦ Studio audience questions make the listening audience feel more a part of the event.

Negative elements

- ✦ May become too complex for some members of the audience to follow
- ✦ Long speeches may cause audience to lose interest
- ✦ Forty-six minute format may be difficult to put into a proper time slot during the broadcast day
- ✦ Cross-examination periods may be too short to be optimally productive
- ✦ Studio audience questions may not be of desired quality

**FORTY-SIX MINUTE TWO-ON-TWO DEBATE WITH
CROSS-EXAMINATION**

Event	Length In Minutes
Introduction	1
First affirmative speech	7
Cross examination	2
First negative speech	8
Cross examination	2
Second affirmative speech	8
Second negative speech	9
Negative rebuttal	4
Affirmative rebuttal	5

**FORTY-FIVE MINUTE TWO-ON-TWO DEBATE
WITH AUDIENCE QUESTIONS AND COMMENTARY**

Event	Length In Minutes
Introduction	1
First affirmative speech	5
First negative speech	6
Second affirmative speech	6
Second negative speech	6
Questions from audience	8
Commentary	4
Negative rebuttal	4
Affirmative rebuttal	5

Sixty-minute two-on-two debate with cross-examination or audience questions and commentary

Positive elements:

- ✦ Long enough to handle complex topics
- ✦ Having two speakers on each side increases dynamism and helps maintain audience attention
- ✦ Longer first speeches help lay out the basic issues of the debate in some detail
- ✦ Second speeches by each team allow for increased clash between sides
- ✦ Longer rebuttals add synthesis and a sense of closure to the debate
- ✦ Longer cross-examination periods, audience question periods, or expert commentary increase dynamism and bring new elements into the debate
- ✦ Period for background information helps orient the audience to the debate
- ✦ Sixty-minute format easy to find a time slot for during the broadcast day

Negative elements

- ✦ May become too complex for some members of the audience to follow
- ✦ Long speeches may cause audience to lose interest

SIXTY-MINUTE TWO-ON-TWO DEBATE WITH CROSS EXAMINATION

Event	Length In Minutes
Introduction	1
Background	2
First affirmative speech	8
Cross examination	3
First negative speech	9
Cross examination	3
Second affirmative speech	9

Cross examination	3
Second negative speech	9
Cross examination	3
Negative rebuttal	5
Affirmative rebuttal	5

**SIXTY-MINUTE TWO-ON-TWO DEBATE WITH AUDIENCE QUESTIONS
AND/OR COMMENTARY**

Event	Length In Minutes
Introduction	1
Background	1
First affirmative speech	7
Cross examination	2
First negative speech	8
Cross examination	2
Second affirmative speech	8
Cross examination	2
Second negative speech	8
Cross examination	2
Audience questions or statements, commentator	10
Negative rebuttal	4
Affirmative rebuttal	5

OTHER DEBATE FORMATS

Public forum

Public forum debates mimic traditional assemblies in which people gather to discuss a controversy. In this format, a moderator introduces a topic and chooses members of the general body to speak on the issue. If using this format, you must determine how long participants may speak (one to three minutes is suggested) and whether participants may question the other speakers.

A suggested format for a 30-minute public forum format

Positive elements:

- ✦ Dynamic and easy for the audience to remain interested
- ✦ Background information orients the audience to the debate
- ✦ Offers variety in subjects and opinions
- ✦ Audience may find a speaker with which they can identify
- ✦ Easy to locate a time slot during the broadcast day

Negative elements

- ✦ Only as good as the people who speak, some of whom may lack training
- ✦ No sense of consistent development of issues
- ✦ Very little detailed clash between ideas
- ✦ No synthesis of ideas or closure brought to the discussion

Introduction	1 minute
Background Information	2 minutes
Speakers called on to speak for 2-3 minute	27 minutes

Mock trial debates

The mock trial debate replicates the format of a court trial, with several debaters playing the roles of counselors. This format gives the audience an understanding of legal proceedings and also helps listeners understand legal controversies.

The mock trial models itself on the proceedings of a country's trial courts. In the United States, it involves "attorneys" prosecuting and defending a legal case before a "judge" and "jury." Often a controversial case from the past forms the basis for the trial. Participants research the details of the case and then present their own arguments and "witnesses." A legal expert may serve as the judge, or in some situations, an actual judge may preside over the trial.

Sample U.S. mock trial

- 21 participants; 2 days, 50 minutes each day
- One accused (or perhaps a group)
- Two defense lawyers
- Two prosecuting lawyers
- One judge
- Twelve members of the jury
- 3 defense witnesses
- 3 prosecution witnesses
- One timekeeper
- Newspaper reporter
- Television reporter

DAY ONE: 50 minutes

Participant	Activity	Time
Judge	Read charges against the accused	3 minutes
Accused	Statement in own defense	2 minutes
Prosecutor #1	Case for the prosecution	7 minutes
Defense Lawyer #1	Case for the accused	7 minutes
Pros. Witness #1	Testimony with questioning by Prosecutor #2	2 minutes

Pros. Witness #1	Cross examined by Defense Lawyer #1	2 minutes
Pros. Witness #2	Testimony with questioning by Prosecutor #1	2 minutes
Pros. Witness #2	Cross examined by Defense Lawyer #2	2 minutes
Pros. Witness #3	Testimony with questioning by Prosecutor #2	2 minutes
Pros. Witness #3	Cross examined by Defense Lawyer #1	2 minutes
Def. Witness #1	Testimony with questioning by Defense Lawyer #2	2 minutes
Def. Witness #1	Cross examined by Prosecutor #1	2 minutes
Def. Witness #2	Testimony with questioning by Defense Lawyer #1	2 minutes
Def. Witness #2	Cross Examined by Prosecutor #2	2 minutes
Def. Witness #3	Testimony with questioning by Defense Lawyer #2	2 minutes
Def, Witness #3	Cross-examined by Prosecutor #1	2 minutes
Judge	Closes this session of trial	30 seconds

DAY TWO: 50 minutes

Participant	Activity	Time
Prosecutor #2	Closing arguments for the prosecution	6 minutes
Defense Lawyer #1	Closing arguments for the defense	6 minutes
Judge [Jury stays in studio, but they act as if in isolated deliberation]	Instructions for the Jury	2 minutes
Jurors' statements	Each juror makes a one minute statement	9 minutes
Jury deliberates	Open discussion among jurors	13 minutes
Jury votes	Each juror indicates guilty or not guilty	1 minute
Judge	Announces verdict and sentence if guilty	2 minutes
Congratulations and condolences		
Newspaper Reporter	Interviews losing side	3 minutes
Television Reporter	Interviews winning side	3 minutes
Newspaper Reporter	Interviews the accused	2 minutes

Possible Format Changes

- + Fewer witnesses
- + Make accuser and accused one of the witnesses

Positive elements:

- + Very dynamic and entertaining
- + Using many different speakers keeps audience interest
- + Introduces audience to legal decision making and the rule of law

- ✦ Audience can act as if they are a member of the jury and decide the case, increasing involvement

Negative elements

- ✦ Two different broadcasts may splinter audience: Some hear part two who did not hear part one
- ✦ Format requires more extensive training and rehearsal than a normal debate format
- ✦ Trial must be recorded in parts and then assembled
- ✦ Improper topic choice may cause audience to lose interest. It must be a topic of great interest. Because the trial is longer than most debate formats, it is important that the subject sustain audience interest.
- ✦ Cross-examination periods may be too short for a full examination of the information given.
- ✦ May oversimplify what can be a very complex process

Mock trials can be set in an historical era to educate the audience about a period as well as about the issues and the law. Never stage a trial of an unconvicted person. The program might wish to invite the audience to serve as jury, voting by mail, phone, or e-mail.

Multi-sided debate

Most debate issues are not black and white. In fact Deborah Tannen, in *The Argument Culture* (Tannen 8), takes issue with the cultural need to create these dualistic oppositions. She questions the assumption that everything is a matter of polarized opposites, the proverbial two sides of every question that some think embodies open-mindedness and expansive thinking. In fact, most debate questions can be best answered by range of possible solutions. Thus, multi-sided debates are very valuable

Consider a debate about what the United Nations' position should be on North Korea. One side might support a hard-line stance that advocates strict sanctions and a vigorous bombing campaign to convince the North Korean people to rebel against the regime. A second side might advocate humanitarian assistance to help rebuild the shattered infrastructure and feed starving children. Yet a third position might urge a "hands-off" approach, arguing that the U.N. should leave North Korea alone.

One of the values of debate is the quick thinking that comes from

imagining different worlds. When debaters conceptualize what the world would look like with some significant change, they develop critical thinking skills that are otherwise difficult to acquire. Multi-sided debates can not only initiate this kind of thinking but also help us avoid the simplistic black-and-white assumptions that many debates fall into. There is a value in comparing different hypothetical worlds.

You can adjust existing formats to allow more a multi-sided debate. In this type of debate, the topic is usually phrased as a question and the sides offer different answers.

**SIXTY-MINUTE THREE-SIDED DEBATE, ONE ON EACH SIDE, WITH
QUESTIONS AND COMMENTARY**

Event	Time
Introduction	2 minutes
Background	4 minutes
Side #1 constructive	6 minutes
Side #2 constructive	6 minutes
Side #3 constructive	6 minutes
Questions from audience or other sides	18 minutes
Commentary #1	3 minutes
Commentary #2	3 minutes
Side #1 rebuttal	4 minutes
Side #2 rebuttal	4 minutes
Side #3 rebuttal	4 minutes
Concluding remarks	1 minute

Positive elements:

- ✦ More than two sides adds detail and dynamism to the debate and increases audience interest
- ✦ Lengthy question period allows for development of new ideas and issues
- ✦ Sixty-minute format is easy to insert into a time slot during the broadcast day
- ✦ Lengthy background information orients the audience to the topic and the positions each side will advocate
- ✦ Rebuttals allow summary and a sense of closure
- ✦ Commentary adds issues debaters might be ignoring or neglecting

Negative elements

- ✦ Topic must be suited for three separate lines of advocacy
- ✦ Questions must be specific and relevant
- ✦ Audience questions may be of poor quality
- ✦ Debate may be confusing to some listeners because of the complexity of involving three sides

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✦ All debates have a topic, different sides, and alternating speeches
- ✦ You can manipulate basic debate components to fulfill the goals of a specific radio debate
- ✦ Radio debate formats can be long or short, simple or complex, interactive (questions, commentary) or more complex when using a trial or a multi-sided format.
- ✦ All radio debate formats have positive and negative elements

Chapter V

PRODUCTION OF RADIO DEBATES

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- ✦ Program design options
- ✦ Staged radio debates
- ✦ Live radio debates
- ✦ Studio production
- ✦ On-site production
- ✦ Timeline for production
- ✦ Publicity for radio programs

This chapter covers the elements involved in creating radio debate programs. Different radio programs have different goals, and the production should reflect these. Obviously, radio debates should, like all radio programs, be of technical high quality in order to serve the needs of the audience.

PROGRAM DESIGN OPTIONS

You must evaluate a number of program design options before deciding how to actually produce your radio debates. Once you have chosen the appropriate option or options, enacting them is relatively straightforward. The design options should be viewed as developmental stages rather than as either/or situations. They also have a high level of relevance to each other. They tend to be progressively more difficult to produce and progressively more rewarding for audiences and participants.

Staged vs. spontaneous debates

If you are trying to establish a debate series or are using debaters with little experience, you should present staged debates, which are recorded one speech

at a time. You then can rerecord speeches to remove flaws and edit the final product. Inexperienced debaters are more comfortable with staged debate because they can repeat their speeches when necessary, and they do not have the pressure of a live audience. Staged debates ensure the highest quality at the beginning of the series when you are trying to attract and hold an audience.

Yet, staged debates do present problems. Participants have difficulty remaining involved when the debate stops and starts, and they can become bored and distracted. A staged debate can never duplicate the spontaneity and energy of a spontaneous debate. Use staged debates early in the series, but as the debaters become more experienced and the program has an established audience, move first to spontaneous debates and then to increased audience and commentator involvement.

Live audience for radio debates

When beginning a debate series, stage the debates in an isolated studio setting rather than before a live audience. The debaters will experience far less speech anxiety if there is no audience presence. Without an audience there will be no distracting noise and, especially, no excessive applause for one side or the other. In addition, you avoid the problem of finding an appropriate facility that can hold an audience.

Yet, even in the early stages of program development, you should involve the audience. Permit listeners to ask questions or make statements through email or the telephone. This increases the program's appeal and makes the audience feel part of the proceedings while limiting the stress on the participants.

The energy that a live audience brings to the debate is powerful and discernable even through a radio broadcast. Thus as the program and the debaters gain maturity and popularity consider including a live audience.

Site for radio debates

You can record the debates either in a studio or at other locations. Obviously, recording the debate in the studio is far easier, but recording off-site will attract an audience, which will add excitement to the program. Off-site recording poses technical challenges, such as bringing equipment to the site, setting up microphones, dealing with the acoustics of the particular venue, and making it possible for audience members and others to speak.

Decide whether the benefits of having an audience will outweigh the

technical difficulties of off-site production. You may not want to stage early debates off-site or before an audience, but after the program is established you might find the extra excitement of an audience beneficial.

Timing structure

You must also determine the timing structure of your program, whether it will be very “tight” or relatively “spacious.” Tight programs have one speech following another immediately to get as much into a time segment as possible. Spacious programs have the natural pauses one would expect from a live debate, for example, the use of silence to indicate transition from one speech to the other.

The “tight” format would be more fast-paced and might keep the audience more interested, while the “spacious” format would add suspense and move the debate in a leisurely way that audiences would be familiar with. Even an off-site debate with an audience can be recorded and tightened during editing in the studio, so the venue need not dictate the choice between these formats.

The critical factor in determining the timing structure is the length of your program. The formats in Chapter 4 are all “tight” formats; they do not allocate time for natural pauses. If it is possible to add a few minutes to the times indicated for various formats, it might be useful to have a slightly more “spacious” feel to the program, although this would obviously not be necessary for the short formats designed to be dropped in among other programs being broadcast. Adding minutes for a more “spacious” feel to the event would also mean cutting times for other parts of the debate.

Style of production

Finally, when designing a program, you must determine the style of the production and its surrounding elements (music, sound effects, attitude of the announcer, etc.). This style can range from serious and formal to staged and upbeat. A formal style would involve the announcer and the participants treating the debate like a news program, with low levels of “hype” in the production, such as upbeat music, and little emphasis on the “battle” between the two sides. The more upbeat style would copy what one experiences on a “game show” or a sporting type event, with lighthearted music, a jolly tone from the announcer, and side comments about the match to come and the battle of wits.

The ideal style is somewhere between these two extremes. While radio debates should be treated seriously because the issues debated are important

and the debaters are making meaningful appeals to the audience, they should not be dreary or boring. The series must be dynamic and exciting. Thus, you should include light musical and announcer elements in a toned down and very moderate fashion.

Production concerns

Once you have determined the design characteristics of your series, you can address production concerns. Many of the decisions you make about production modes will be dictated by the design characteristics you have chosen.

STAGED RADIO DEBATES

As suggested above, the first few radio debates should be staged. Do not begin recording the debate until the debaters have rehearsed it several times. Closely monitor these practice sessions to chart the evolution and development of the debate. In early sessions you may have to remind the debaters of the basic elements of debate. Begin recording only after you are satisfied with the debate in rehearsal.

The early recording sessions should be “stop and start” affairs. You should evaluate a speech or a question period and record an acceptable version before continuing the process with the next participant. Thus you assemble the debate piece by piece.

Repeat speeches or question periods if the speaker:

- ✦ Ignores important issues because of poor time allocation.
- ✦ Makes obviously incorrect and erroneous statements.
- ✦ Is impolite.
- ✦ Speaks in a manner that makes the presentation uninteresting.
- ✦ Offers a fallacious argument.
- ✦ Makes significant “off the topic” statements.
- ✦ Includes remarks that might offend some portion of the audience.

The speech does not have to be perfect before recording, but it should be free of the above problems or other major weaknesses.

Make sure that the debaters respond to the final version of the speech, not

a preliminary one. If debaters get confused about which version to address, put each side in a separate room where they hear only a recording of the final speeches. Unless this problem occurs, though, keep the debaters in the same room so that they hear all speeches (preliminary and final) and learn from the mistakes and repeated efforts of their colleagues.

Edit and assemble the final program only after you are satisfied with all segments. Remember that the audience will hear only the final version, so make as many attempts as necessary to produce a quality debate. The audience will benefit from your efforts.

LIVE RADIO DEBATES

“Live” debate is recorded as it happens. This type of debate is especially useful when there is an audience or if you are using commentators, because the start and stop of the staged debate would bore and confuse them.

Obviously the decision to go “live” depends on the skill of your debaters. Once they are familiar and comfortable with the debate process, you should attempt to record a debate “live.” If this attempt does not produce an acceptable program, then return to the staged stop-and-start method until the participants’ skills improve.

The program should strive to present a real, spontaneous, and vigorous debate. Ultimately this will be a live rather than a staged affair.

STUDIO PRODUCTION

Producing a radio debate is not complex. Almost any radio production studio is acceptable. You do not need expensive, high-tech equipment. You will rarely need a mixing board or more than one microphone operating at a time. You could record a radio debate on most portable stereo systems with the addition of microphones, although this is not the preferred mode of production.

Production facilities and equipment are not expensive or difficult to find. You need a reasonably soundproof studio large enough to accommodate the participants, a recording device (preferably digital to make editing easier), and low-power computer (even a laptop would be acceptable). Any radio station production facility would have the basics you need. Because the microphones determine how the debate will sound, use the highest

quality you can afford. If you must economize, focus on other parts of production.

If possible, preserve the programs in digital form on a computer. You then can distribution your programs to other stations via compact disk or even on inexpensive tape cassettes.

ON-SITE PRODUCTION

On-site debates offer public visibility and involvement, but they do present challenges. They require experienced debaters who can give a strong, spontaneous (as opposed to staged) performance. If your debaters have little experience in on-site production, be sure to rehearse the debate extensively.

On-site production involves technical challenges as well. Technical quality is lower than in the studio. You will need to find a space that comfortably fits debaters and audience, is acoustically acceptable, and has sufficient electrical outlets. You must bring all your equipment with you. You will need microphones, sound cords to link the microphones to a small portable mixing board, and a digital recorder (CD recorder, mini-disk recorder, or laptop computer with sound-in connection). Always bring lots of power cords. If the venue does not have adequate power, you will need a small portable generator as well. If the crowd is large and you need voice amplification, you will need a public address system, which must be integrated into the recording scheme. A lower quality recording system can utilize direct microphone feed (using only one microphone) into the recording device. In this case, having all participants use the same microphone is vital.

Although on-site production is challenging, it can be exciting, involving, and dynamic. In many instances these values outweigh the increased technical burden.

TIMELINE FOR PRODUCTION

Make sure that the turn around from recording to presentation is quick. Current issues are of great interest to an audience, and so the debates should be developed and broadcast as soon as possible. Hot issues may seem dated if they air even a few weeks after the subject came to the fore.

Always record one or two programs on issues that do not date quickly. You can hold these for use when some participants are not available for more

time-sensitive debates or if you encounter serious technical problems during a recording session.

You must also consider how long it would take to hold, record, and produce a season worth of shows. A fifty-week season is not inappropriate for your series, but the group involved in the programs (debaters, director, producer, production staff) does not have to be there for the entire period. You could divide the year into quarters of twelve to thirteen radio debates each. The participants could come for a few weeks each quarter and record the debates, then disperse while the programs aired. Near the end of a quarter they could regroup to discuss new topic ideas and record the next quarter's programs. Once the debaters are trained, you can create several programs a week, but in the earlier phases of debater development, program creation will be slower.

PUBLICITY FOR RADIO DEBATES

If you want people to listen to your debates, you will need to publicize the series. Publicity will not take much effort, and it will reap substantial rewards. Consider a phased approach: First, introduce the idea of a radio debate program, then introduce some of the topics, and finally offer more complete information. In each phase you should include the basic information listed below. Begin your campaign only after you are sure that the debaters are ready to be observed.

Basic publicity should provide simple information: time, frequency, and topic area. Do not provide the names of the debaters. If you do so, people may listen because they want to hear "X debate Y." This is not the goal of your series, which is to emphasize issues rather than personalities. Yet, as the series progresses and you schedule outside participants, you will want to widely publicize their participation to draw in additional listeners.

You can publicize your debates through:

- ✦ Promotional spots on the radio station that will air the debates. You might want to include short excerpts from a debate (with at least two individuals participating). Air promotional spots during news broadcasts whenever possible.
- ✦ Press releases to all interested parties and media outlets. Press releases should provide detailed background on the program, the format, the topics, the participants, and opportunities for public involvement. Remember to include follow-up contact information so that interested persons can gather more information.

- ✦ Simple posters generated by any word-processing program. You can post these in schools, around markets, and in other public areas. If you have the resources, you can create larger and more graphic posters.
- ✦ Postings and announcements on the Web sites of sponsors or cooperating agencies.
- ✦ E-mail messages to those who might be interested.
- ✦ Daily announcements at schools. Many schools broadcast daily morning announcements and may be willing to publicize your program.
- ✦ General schedules of events that appear print media outlets or on wire services, Web sites, etc.

Finally, you should network with any group that you are using as sponsors, audiences, or commentators. They will want draw a crowd to an event with which they are involved.

You will need to engage in similar publicity efforts if you want to attract a live audience. At the end of each program announce how listeners can become audience members. Remember that all publicity must include the basics: the format of the debate, the topic, the time, and the radio frequency.

In time, you can make publicity easier by creating a template for announcements so that you can merely insert the topic as necessary.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✦ Programs can be staged or spontaneous: staged earlier, spontaneous later on.
- ✦ Programs can involve an audience: when that is possible and desired.
- ✦ Programs can be recorded in studio or off-site: recorded first; later debates can be off-site, if desired.
- ✦ Programs can be tightly produced or more loose and open, depending on the mood you want the program to have.
- ✦ Programs can have high or low levels of additional production elements.
- ✦ Programs should follow a steady timeline of production.
- ✦ Radio debates should be widely publicized if possible.

Chapter VI

AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT IN RADIO DEBATES

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- ✦ Audience roles in the debate
- ✦ Announcement of voting
- ✦ Audience questions
- ✦ Audience speeches

An audience can improve the debate process, just as the debate process can benefit the audience. Members of the audience can be more than mere observers. They can serve as participants by asking questions or making statements, as judges if called on to vote on the debate, and as critics. The audience actively listens, contributes, and is engaged in the process of debate.

AUDIENCES ROLES IN THE DEBATE

Audiences watching a debate assume two roles: critic and supporter. On the one hand, the debate process encourages them to be critical of the arguments they hear and the performances they see. Their role as critic may be new, and they may engage in it tentatively at times or too enthusiastically at others. On the other hand, members of the audience may also feel a unity with the participants. They become supporters as they identify the difficult task the debaters face. These roles may seem contradictory, but they can be used in a mutually reinforcing fashion.

Debating before an audience forces the debaters to focus on their performance and provides the participants with valuable feedback. When a speaker sees so many people listening intently, it gives him confidence in his performance. At times members of the audience may give nonverbal signals that are helpful and often welcome barometers of performance.

Audience as judges and critics

Audience judging provides a wonderful opportunity for audiences to become involved more fully in the debate process and to learn about the intricacies of important topics. An audience who watches a sixty-minute debate on priorities for government spending will learn a considerable amount about the topic, as well as about the debate process. It is important to remember that every member of an audience can benefit from the experience and audiences are not just extra accessories to the broadcast debate itself.

Members of the audience often ask what criteria they should use in judging the debate. There is, of course, no one correct answer. The goals of the debate and the nature of the subject matter dictate the criteria, but there are two principal models you can follow: “better job of debating” and “your opinion.”

In the “better job of debating” model, audience members vote for the side that does the best job of arguing its case, not for the side they believe to be correct. Audience members vote for the side that did the better job of presenting its ideas in terms of delivery, organization, and composition. The audience judges the performance; it does not use the debate as a measure of truth.

Using the “your opinion” model, audience members would vote for the side that presents the most convincing arguments, not the side that performed best. This model is useful in debates on issues of fact and on controversies about which the audience does not have preconceived opinions.

You can also merge these models. The audience can base its vote on a combination of argument and presentation, recognizing that a good presentation assists the argument and that a good argument is far easier to present in an effective manner. The audience could be told to have their vote determined 50 percent by the job of debating and 50 percent by the amount they would agree with a certain side. If using this method, instruct the audience to give equal weight to both elements.

Clearly instructing the audience on how they are to judge the debate is very important to the success of the radio debate experience. You must explain the model to both the studio and listening audience before the debate begins.

The type of debate topic often determines the judging model used. Topics of value and very controversial topics should be judged on the “your opinion” model. Topics of fact and topics that involve difficult, complex issues should be decided based on the “better job of debating” model because the opinions involved are not usually controversial. Often it is useful to take a vote on the topic both before and after the debate to see whether it influenced audience opinion.

Audience ballots

If you are using audience ballots, you will have to modify your format to include time for instructions to the audience before the debate begins as well as time for voting and the announcement of the decision at the conclusion of the debate. Of course, you should ask members of the listening audience to decide the winner for themselves, even though they are not included in the formal balloting.

Occasionally, it is a good idea to ask members of the audience to “decide for themselves” without having a formal vote process. This might be useful on highly divisive issues, or where the voting might become more important than the issues discussed. You should also use this method if people would be uncomfortable publicly indicating their preference on a very controversial topic. Some topics are so important that an audience decision might trivialize the issue by giving it a “score” as is done in sports. The focus should be on the issues and the process. Do not use audience voting if it would trivialize the debate or make it appear to be a game or competition.

In some instances you can ask the audience to vote after recording has concluded, in which case the decision is shared only between the audience and the participants. Often debaters like this option because it gives them immediate feedback without the possible humiliation of having the moderator announce a very skewed vote. If you include such off-air voting, use the “better job of debating” model. Encourage audience members to evaluate reasoning and arguments made, rather than relying on impressions in making their decisions. Such comments as “seemed to make more sense” and “seemed to know what she was talking about” are not helpful. Instead, ask the audience to focus on specific ideas, facts, and arguments. This encourages audience members to engage in a deeper form of analysis and critique than they use when considering most persuasive messages. Thus, the ballot process can train the audience in critical thinking.

Encourage the audience to weigh the various issues offered in a debate. There are very few debates where all the arguments of one side prevail. Usually each side does a better job on some of the arguments. For example, in a debate about medical care reform a team may establish that there is a problem in the current health care system but may not convince the judges that their solution will be useful. In this case, even though they have “won” the argument about a need to act, the action they support does not effectively address the problem. Thus, they would not win that debate. Encourage members of the audience to discover which issues have been won by which side, and then see these issues in relation to one another to decide the debate.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF VOTING

Voting can take place immediately after the debate. When the speeches are concluded, there can be a brief pause, and then the organizer can ask for a show of hands and announce the decision. Though immediate and exciting, this process creates stress for the debaters. Voting can also take place after the broadcast is over and announced at the beginning of the next program. While less immediate, this process provides feedback about the decision without some of the attendant tension.

The announcement of voting can be either general or specific. A general announcement involves the moderator indicating which side received the most votes but not revealing the vote count. This method avoids having to announce embarrassing situations in which a side won by an overwhelming margin. A specific announcement includes the vote count. This announcement is a good indicator of whether a debate was close, but it also indicates a debate clearly won by one side.

AUDIENCE QUESTIONS

In some formats, and at your discretion, members of the audience can be encouraged to ask the debaters questions. This process reveals strengths and weaknesses in the arguments, explores important issues that the debaters have not dealt with, clarifies arguments, and provides the audience with personal interaction. Many of the longer formats specified in Chapter 4 have specific time for audience questions built into them. You can adjust these times as you wish.

You can insert an audience question period at various times during the debate. Placing the period early in the debate may cause difficulties. Usually debaters have a clear idea of what they will be saying, and if audience questions move them in a different direction, they have the difficult choice of either ignoring that direction or throwing out their prepared remarks and offering a less polished extemporaneous speech.

The preferred option is to insert the question period before the last speeches by both sides. By that point, the earlier speakers have laid out the grounds for the debate. Audience questions will then help the final debaters prepare their speeches, which are largely developed on what has transpired in the actual debate.

Questions can come from the entire audience or a panel of commentators (or simply one commentator). Permitting the audience to question the panel

gives members a sense of participation but may result in questions of poor quality. A panel of commentators will ask fewer questioners, but the questions are likely to be more serious and thoughtful.

Questions can be either verbal or written. Written questions (submitted during the debate) are easy to ask but tend to be impersonal. You can edit these so that only the best questions are used. Verbal questions take longer to ask, are personal, and provide a feeling of open discussion. Choose the option that best meets your needs. If the audience is well informed, articulate, and attentive to the debate, then verbal questions may be appropriate. If the audience lacks some of these qualities or if you are unsure of the audience, written questions are better.

You can also involve the listening audience in questioning through telephone call-ins, e-mail, or text messaging. Taking questions from an audience by telephone requires one or two open lines and telephone numbers (free calls tend to increase the number of people calling), a person to answer and transcribe questions, and a person to sort through the questions and relay them to the moderator who will ask them. E-mail questions require a computer connected to the Internet, a person to review and print the questions, and a person to sort through the questions and relay them to the moderator. Text messaging requires an incoming line and someone to monitor it and relay the messages to the moderator. Use these options only in studio debates.

If these technologies are not readily available, you can announce the topic weeks in advance and tell listeners to mail their questions. The moderator can then ask them on behalf of the audience.

AUDIENCE SPEECHES

Audience members can also voice their opinions through short speeches, known as “floor speeches.” Floor speeches are generally used instead of question periods and are placed at the same points in the debate format. They are best inserted either before the last two speeches or after the debaters have finished.

Make sure that the audience is aware at the beginning of the debate that they will have the opportunity to make floor speeches. This allows the audience to organize their thoughts and thus improves the quality of their speeches. When the moderator asks for the audience to deliver their remarks, audience members should rise and make a short statement. Floor speeches are kept short in order to avoid audience members reading long and boring remarks

they wrote before or during the debate. Those giving floor speeches should be cautioned not to read prepared statements but to deliver their remarks extemporaneous, making them far more interesting and dynamic. Keep floor speeches short—generally one minute in length—so that a number of people can give their views. Also stagger the speakers in terms of which side they support. As one member of the audience is speaking, an organizer can ask those waiting their turn which side they back so that there is a balanced presentation. No member of the audience should speak more than once.

On rare occasions people will be reluctant to speak until they understand the procedure and have mentally organized their remarks. Thus, it is a good idea to plant one or two people in the audience who will give early floor speeches.

You can also invite members of the listening audience to give “speeches” either through e-mail messages read to the debaters or telephone calls heard by the debaters and the audience (if there is one) as well as by radio listeners. Using telephones requires additional technology access and a trustworthy telephone system that may not exist. You will need one or more phone lines, a recorder for statements, a person to select and cue up the proper recordings, and a sound technician to play the speeches so that all can hear. Do not play these speeches live; there is no guarantee of their relevance or appropriateness for broadcast. Just as important, you want to avoid personal insults to the participants or provocatively dangerous statements.

Limit the floor speeches based on the time allotted in the format schedule. Do not have too many because they may dilute the debate itself. You can use the formats listed in Chapter 4 to help schedule the speeches.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ✦ The presence of an audience can enhance the debate process.
- ✦ Audiences can distract inexperienced debaters but may enhance the performance of those with more experience.
- ✦ The audience can act as judges of the debate using a “better job of debating” model, a “your opinion” model or a combination of the two.
- ✦ You can announce the results of the audience vote at the end of the program or after the program is no longer on the air.
- ✦ Do not use public audience voting on highly controversial topics.

- ♦ Audience members may ask verbal or written questions of the debaters.
- ♦ Audience members can make short “floor speeches” to voice their opinions.

Chapter VII

DISTRIBUTION OF RADIO DEBATE PROGRAMS

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Network redistribution and rebroadcast
- Program distribution to other stations
- School distribution
- Internet archive download
- Internet broadcast

You do not have to waste the time and effort you put into your debate series by broadcasting your programs only once. There are a variety of options for distributing your debates to a wider audience so that they can have a larger impact.

NETWORK DISTRIBUTION AND REBROADCAST

Many stations are part of a network, groups of stations that have agreements to share programming. Sharing programs among stations makes good sense. Because stations are usually not in the same region or listening area, they are not competing for audiences, so there is no loss in sharing programs. One station gains the benefit of a program without additional production costs, and the other station can usually take one program from the receiving station as a form of equal trade. The originating station or group can make sure that the program is branded as their production in order to gain recognition.

Stations can share programs in a variety of ways. Some stations maintain satellite links so that programs can move from one station to another. Others use the Internet to move files. More conventional means include sending programs on compact disks or cassette tapes. In fact, an entire season can fit on one low-cost CD using compressed files. High quality audio sound can be

delivered at a level (128 kps) that would allow ten to eleven hours of programming on a CD that could be used by any computer at a broadcasting station.

PROGRAM DISTRIBUTION TO OTHER STATIONS

If your sponsoring organization is not a radio station or if a station is not part of a network, you can still market your programs to other stations at very low cost. Your distribution efforts should include the following:

- ✦ Sample programs on audio CDs
- ✦ List of available topics of programs they can broadcast
- ✦ Information documenting listener response from previous broadcasts
- ✦ Cost options (Are the programs offered free of charge or at a small fee?)
- ✦ Documentation granting stations permission to broadcast the debates whenever they wish
- ✦ Different formats and program lengths available so that stations can choose debates that fit their needs

You should also include a cover document explaining the advantages of broadcasting radio debates (discussed in the Introduction to Part One). Remember to stress:

- ✦ Educating listeners on important issues
- ✦ The place of constructive debate and disagreement in creating a more open society
- ✦ The role debate in helping the audience to develop new perspectives on important issues
- ✦ The part radio debate can play in creating democratic mindsets in listeners

You might also send stations copies of debates and offer to help them stage their own radio debates on issues of local concern. In Kazakhstan, for example, the popularity of a nationally broadcast debate program has already fueled interest in several local regional stations staging their own debates.

The permutations here are almost endless. While it can be arrogant to be optimistic, it seems that if audiences enjoy radio debates, debate programs such as these could proliferate.

SCHOOL DISTRIBUTION

Many schools might be very interested in using debate programs, particularly at the middle and high school levels. While elementary schools might be interested in debate, programs produced for a general audience may not be useful as part of an elementary school curriculum.

How you approach schools about using your programs depends on the educational structure of the area. If it is highly centralized, you should begin your efforts with national education ministries and then proceed to district or regional administrations and finally to individual schools through headmasters or head teachers. An information packet for schools should include:

- ✦ Sample programs on audio CDs
- ✦ List of available topics of programs they can use
- ✦ Information documenting listener response from previous broadcasts
- ✦ Documentation indicating the flexibility of the programs; schools can use them whenever they wish
- ✦ debates whenever they wish
- ✦ Different formats and program lengths available so that schools can pick those that meet their needs

As with any distribution effort, you should include information on the advantages of using radio debates.

You can improve your chances of getting schools to adopt your programs if you associate them with the curriculum. Many debates discuss historical, political, social, and/or economic issues studied in the classroom. Language classes could also use the debates to teach public speaking. Documenting the connection to the curriculum is very valuable.

The programs can also promote the creation of debate clubs and other debate activities in schools, possibly leading to public events and competitions. Young people all over the world enjoy debating, and once exposed to formal debate, they might become involved.

INTERNET ARCHIVE DOWNLOAD

You can also keep relatively high quality sound files on the Internet so that the debates are available to any interested party, even those living far away. These users could become an additional basis of support for your program, despite their distance. You will not reach a large audience if Internet access is

low, but this will change. As Internet availability grows with time, users can access the programs you have developed over the years. Remember to include the Internet address (URL) of the site where your downloads are available in all publicity so that interested parties can access your programs.

INTERNET BROADCAST

You can also “webcast” your programs live through the Internet so that listeners worldwide could tune in. This technique has already been used for live video debate events, even with teams in different remote locations, so it would be much easier and less technically challenging to broadcast these audio debates.

The technical requirements for such Internet broadcasts are fairly modest. The software program “RealProducer,” available from <http://www.real.com>, can send such signals from a computer that has a static IP (Internet protocol) address and is running “RealProducer.” This Internet address should be part of all publicity.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ♦ Develop a marketing campaign to increase distribution of your program.
- ♦ You can rebroadcast or distribute your debates to a network of stations or to independent stations.
- ♦ You can distribute programs to schools.
- ♦ Programs can be downloaded from the Internet.
- ♦ Programs can be broadcast through the Internet.

PART II
A DEBATE PRIMER

INTRODUCTION

Now that we have outlined how to develop a radio debate series, we must turn to what may be the most important element in determining the success of the program, training the debaters. For the debates to be engaging and useful, the debating must be of reasonable quality. The higher the quality, the more likely it is to attract and hold an audience.

Part Two offers a training manual for debaters that is matched to the seven phases of training discussed in Chapter 4. Each chapter contains several elements:

- ♦ Basic information about an aspect of debate that the debaters can read before training sessions and practices.
- ♦ Exercises designed to turn the basic information into skills and behaviors needed during the actual radio debates. Remember to repeat these exercises over and over again and develop others. Debate is a skill gained through repetition.
- ♦ Useful resources such as books and articles. You can find these in libraries, but they are also available as inexpensive paperback books that you can order internationally. Many of them are published either by the International Debate Education Association [<http://idebate.org/main/books.asp>] and sold through various distributors, including Books International [<http://www.booksinternational.com/>] or Debate Publications [<http://debate.uvm.edu/eeorderform.html>].
- ♦ Streaming videos available over the Internet even at modest connection speeds. These may also be available on inexpensive CDs that can be viewed on almost any computer. Most are available at Debate Central (<http://debate.uvm.edu/>).
- ♦ Internet websites containing relevant material. The links are valid as of the publication of this volume.

Chapter VIII

INTRODUCTION TO DEBATE

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Why Debate?
- What is Debate?
- Formal Debate Procedures

While you already have many of the skills needed for radio debate, including basic reasoning and communication skills, you will need to learn the basic process and components of a formal debate. Although this guide offers information on that process, it emphasizes building the skills you as a debater need to present high-quality debates that will attract and hold audiences.

WHY DEBATE?

Debating can take time and effort, yet millions of people have it a rewarding experience.

Debating is fun. You may debate with a partner and against others. You will make friends and meet interesting people. You will engage in thrilling contests and perhaps travel to other locations to stage debates.

Debating is a sport of the mind and voice. You compete using your brain and your voice. You have a chance to win and learn. Unlike some sports that require speed, height, or other special physical characteristics, debate is for everyone. You don't have to be book-smart or test-smart to be a good debater. If you feel you can learn and if you think you are clever, debate is for you.

You control debating. You speak, you pick the arguments, and you develop your strategy. No one tells you what to do; in debate you can create your own agenda and follow ideas and issues that interest you. While program producers may have suggestions, whether or not to accept them is up to you.

Debating creates the skills you need for success. Studies show that employers are looking for people with oral communication skills, and debate helps develop these. Studies also show that those with good oral communication skills are identified as “leaders” and get promoted faster on the job. Debating will help you succeed wherever your life may lead, long after this series of radio debates has concluded. We are constantly engaged in a struggle to improve our lives and those of the people around us. Through debate your voice can be a powerful instrument for change—in your community, in your nation, in your world, and in the future

WHAT IS DEBATE?

A formal debate is defined as an equitably structured communication event about some topic of interest with opposing advocates alternating before an opportunity is given for decision (Snider and Schnurer 19).

Note the components of this definition:

- ✦ A debate is equitably structured: All sides have the same opportunities to give speeches and express themselves.
- ✦ A debate is a communication event: Those involved give speeches to express their ideas.
- ✦ A debate is about a topic: Each debate has a subject that is the focus of the debate, such as “The death penalty should not be used as a criminal punishment.”
- ✦ A debate has opposing advocates: Two (and at times perhaps three) different individuals or teams are assigned to agree or disagree with a point of view.
- ✦ A debate has alternating speeches: One side speaks, and then the other side speaks in a sort of formal conversation.
- ✦ A debate has an opportunity for decision: At the end, a judge or an audience is invited to agree with one side or the other. Debate often changes minds.

Debate is the process that determines how change should come about. It attempts to justify changing the way people think and live. Debate occurs daily in legislatures around the world, at the United Nations, the faculty meetings at a school, and at your dinner table. The procedures for these debates

may differ, but the process is the same. People engage in a discussion that will determine whether a particular change is good or bad. The United Nations debated whether or not Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was justified; school faculty meetings debate school policies; you debate with family members about domestic matters.

The radio debates in which you will participate formalize the debate process. At times you will work with a partner. You and your partner form a debate team. Sometimes you will have to support a topic (the affirmative), and sometimes you will have to oppose it (negative). In all cases, you will have plenty of time to get ready for the debate.

You will deliver speeches in a format that is unique to debate. The speeches are called *constructives* and *rebuttals*. Constructive speeches involve developing your ideas and presenting your case for the side of the topic you are assigned. Constructive speeches build what will become the main issues in the debate. Rebuttal speeches dispute these points. You attack opposing arguments and defend yours, while indicating to the listeners why they should agree with your side. There are affirmative constructives and negative constructives. There are affirmative rebuttals and negative rebuttals.

Learning the rules and components of formal debate may at first seem difficult. But once you take on the challenge, you will begin to understand how they will help you become a good debater. Your first few debates may be difficult, but debating gets easier and easier as you improve your skills.

You will debate so that your radio audience will learn about an issue as well as the debate process. You have a dual role—to discuss important issues and to show your audience what formal debating is and how they can use it to create public dialogue.

You will learn the basic customs associated with the debating process. These include being respectful of your opponents, not attacking them personally, not ignoring their arguments, not falsifying facts and information, and respecting the rights of intelligent people to disagree about issues.

FORMAL DEBATE PROCEDURES

Many new debaters are nervous because they do not have a good understanding of the procedures in a formal debate. When unsure, ask others for help. Eventually you will become comfortable debating, and your nervousness will subside.

Because your debates will be recorded for later broadcast, you can repeat your speeches over and over again until you and your producer are happy with them. Don't be nervous; the radio audience will not hear your mistakes.

The topic

Each debate focuses on a topic, the subject of the debate. The purpose of having a formal topic is to limit the debate. Arguments and issues that are not relevant to the topic are irrelevant to the debate. In school you study a specific subject; similarly when you debate you discuss a specific topic. The affirmative argues in favor of the topic, and the negative argues against it.

Speech order and responsibilities

The debate begins with the constructive speeches, which are used to build the arguments that the affirmative and negative teams hope to win. The rebuttals, which occur later in the debate, are used to solidify each team's position and to convey to the judge or audience why they should vote for one team over the other.

The first affirmative speaker has the responsibility of presenting a case that is the basis for the debate to follow. The case should involve several important reasons why the listeners should agree with the topic.

The second speaker is from the negative team. She argues against the affirmative's case and introduces other issues that the negative team thinks are important. Note this speaker's dual role: to refute what the affirmative argued and to introduce other issues that would convince the judge or listeners not to agree with the topic.

Depending on the debate format, each side may give additional speeches. Often a debate concludes with rebuttal speeches in which the sides summarize the debate and try to persuade the audience that their arguments were better and more important.

Some formats include a cross-examination period between the speeches that allows speakers to ask each other questions in order to clarify arguments. Other formats include questions from expert commentators or from the audience. Debaters answer these quickly and directly in a way that enhances their position.

Here is a common format to illustrate the debate process.

**SIXTY-MINUTE TWO-ON-TWO DEBATE WITH AUDIENCE
AND/OR COMMENTARY**

Topic: Death penalty should be abolished

Event	Minutes	Responsibilities
Introduction	1	A moderator introduces the program and the debaters.
Background	1	A moderator presents the topic and some very brief background information.
First affirmative speech	7	Speaker makes a basic case for abolishing the death penalty: 1. Death penalty fails to deter crimes. 2. Death penalty is applied unfairly. 3. Death penalty justifies other forms of state violence.
Cross examination	2	An opposing debater asks short questions of the first affirmative speaker, who answers them.
First negative speech	8	Speaker refutes the three arguments of the affirmative and introduces two new arguments to support the death penalty: 1. Those who are executed will never kill again. 2. Death penalty gives victims and survivors a sense of justice done.
Cross examination	2	An opposing debater asks short questions of the person who has just spoken, who answers the questions.
Second affirmative speech	8	Speaker defends the original three arguments and answers the two new ones presented by the negative.
Cross examination	2	An opposing debater asks short questions of the second affirmative speaker, who answers them.

Second negative speech	8	Speaker answers the defense of the three original affirmative arguments and defends the two arguments introduced by the negative.
Cross examination	2	An opposing debater asks short questions of the second negative speaker, who answers them.
Audience questions-statements, commentator	10	Audience members or others present ask questions of specific debaters or make short statements about what has been said in the debate.
Negative rebuttal	4	Negative speaker summarizes the debate and gives reasons why listeners should agree with the negative.
Affirmative rebuttal	5	Affirmative speaker summarizes the debate and gives reasons why listeners should support the topic.

Judges

At times, members of the studio audience will be asked to vote for the team they think did the better job. Even the listening audience at home may be asked to vote. Many debates, however, have no formal judges, and each person listening will make his or her own decision.

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Chapter IX

SPEAKING TECHNIQUES

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- ✦ Becoming a Dynamic Public Speaker
- ✦ Applying Dynamism Factors to Your Speaking Abilities
- ✦ The Power of an Effective Voice

There are few skills as important to a debater as the basic skills of public speaking. Although developing these skills is not integral to understanding the formal debate process, you must know them to succeed in actual debate. They are the foundation of all else that happens in the process. Developing good public-speaking techniques is a job that is never completed; techniques improve through practice and repetition. As you learn the steps necessary to become a debater, you must continue to work on your public-speaking skills. In every drill or exercise in the following chapters, you will use the tactics and skills introduced here.

A good debater should be a good public speaker. The good public speaker as well as the good debater strives for these three goals:

1. Clarity and comprehension: The audience needs to understand what you say.
2. Credibility: Good delivery makes the audience want to believe you.
3. Memorability: You want the audience to remember what you said.

Good speakers project an engaging personality to the audience. An attractive personality is based on many traits, but four are particularly important for a debater:

- ✦ Sincerity. A speaker must show a genuine concern for her subject and for its importance to the radio audience and the world at large. The speaker must radiate the desire to make the audience respond.
- ✦ Congeniality. Congeniality, or friendliness, is derived from a genuine

respect for people. We respond strongly to someone who is genuinely interested and concerned about us and who has affection for all humankind. Any speaker who exudes this “warmth of friendliness” has greater powers to persuade.

- ✦ Consideration and kindness. The speaker who understands fellow humans, considers their feelings, and treats them kindly will have strong influence on an audience. We react negatively to the egotistical, self-centered individual; we dislike the braggart. On the other hand, we respond strongly to those who are sympathetic to the problems of others. Humankind honors those who “forget themselves to serve others.” In simpler terms, the speaker serves best by serving the needs and desires of the audience.
- ✦ Sense of humor and proportion. Having a sense of humor differs from being witty. Many speakers who never use wit in a speech leave the impression of having an excellent sense of humor. By sense of humor we mean a sense of proportion “. . . all things count but none too much.” Many self appointed reformers lose appeal because they lack this sense of proportion; they arouse strong negative reactions in others and often fail to influence them as strongly as they might. Speakers who are capable of laughing at themselves, of smiling at their slight mistakes, will not only overcome stage fright easily but also have stronger powers of persuasion.

If you wish to become a good speaker, you must cultivate these traits. Develop a genuine affection for people and a respect for them and their right to their opinions. You must learn to “laugh over, laugh with, weep over, and weep with humankind.”

BECOMING A DYNAMIC PUBLIC SPEAKER

Studies show that listeners favor and agree more often with speakers who are “dynamic.” Dynamic speakers speak in a way that shows they are glad to be speaking and really care about their topic. They speak energetically and use a broad range of delivery tactics. In contrast, speakers who are not dynamic appear nervous and uninterested. They lose listener interest and often fail to persuade their audience.

Becoming a dynamic speaker is not difficult. You must follow a few guidelines and integrate them into all facets of your public speaking:

1. Use variation: Never do the same thing over and over again. Change your pace and volume of speaking, your tone of voice, your gestures, etc. so that you are never monotonous.
2. Use emphasis: Use your delivery (voice, gestures, etc.) to emphasize and highlight the important arguments and words in your speech. Listeners will not remember everything you say, so use variation to stress those things you really want them to remember, such as conclusions, significant distinctions, items personally relevant to the audience, or anything you think very important. You can highlight significant elements by saying them louder, slower, or in a different tone of voice. Or you can use all of these techniques to help listeners remember your point.
3. Be natural: Be yourself. If the audience thinks you artificial, they will not want to believe you. We all have limits to our abilities to communicate. While you should change the speed at which you talk, you want to speak neither too slowly nor too quickly. While you should change your volume, you do not want to either shout or whisper very often. While your voice can produce different tones, you want to speak in neither too high nor too low a tone because it does not sound natural. Once your variation and emphasis go outside their natural range, listeners are distracted from your message and begin to focus on why you are speaking in an unusual and unnatural way. While variation and emphasis are good, they must be kept within your natural limits.

APPLYING DYNAMISM FACTORS TO YOUR SPEAKING ABILITIES

We will look at each of the elements that make up your public speaking performance and explain how you can apply the guidelines.

Changing the **volume** of your voice can add variation and emphasis. Say the important things you want the audience to remember slightly little louder than the other words. Use this technique sparingly. If you speak too loudly too often, you will be perceived as shouting and alienate the audience. You can also use quieter tones to emphasize some portions of your speech. For example, speak more quietly when your words are more conversational and more personal.

Change the **tone** of your voice for variation and emphasis. Make important statements in a sterner tone of voice, usually with the muscles of the throat

and the vocal cords more tightly flexed. Let the tone of your voice seem angry when you are trying to communicate ire, but softer when you are trying to communicate concern and sympathy. You understand your voice better than anyone else, so you know the tones you use to express various emotions. Use them when you wish to express emotion in your speeches. Avoid inappropriate tones (for example, a soothing, calm voice tone when you are expressing displeasure) because they will seem unnatural and confuse the audience.

Remember to change the **pitch** of your voice. Pitch changes not only add variation but also emphasize the mood you are trying to project. A high-pitched voice usually indicates anxiety and sharp emotion, while a lower one indicates relaxation and comfort. Avoid using pitch in an unnatural way; it will confuse the audience.

Changing the **speed** at which you speak. You can deliver the less important elements of your message quickly while articulating the important points slowly so that the audience can understand and remember them. Speak slowly during the introduction of your major points and at the conclusions; you can deliver the portions of your speech between these elements at a higher speed. The audience will understand your speech better if you deliver it at a pace that is slightly faster than the average conversation. This is precisely why you should speak more slowly when delivering those ideas you want the audience to remember. These words will stand out because you spoke them differently.

Because this book deals with radio debate, we will not cover the use of hand gestures, facial expressions, and body movement in depth. Be aware, however, that you might debate before a studio or public audience, so remember to apply the three guidelines to nonverbal forms of communication as well.

THE POWER OF AN EFFECTIVE VOICE

Voice development is often one of the most neglected phases of public speaking.

Each human being has a voice that can do many wonderful things. Many of us have had our spirits lifted and hearts stirred by the sound of the human voice in song. Yet many speakers do not use the power of their voice effectively, using sounds that are crude and lack expressiveness. It is important to realize that the voice, if properly used, can be something that pleases and attracts listeners. Awareness and practice can improve the quality of any voice.

Developing a pleasing voice

To develop an effective voice, you must first develop a pleasing one. The elements involved in developing this are simple; the drill and practice, however, require fortitude and determination. The following are essential:

- ✦ ample breath support
- ✦ an open and relaxed throat. Remember that the sound of your own voice is quite different from what others hear. You hear your own voice as it is conducted through the flesh and bones of your head, usually giving your voice a more pleasing sound than it actually has. The first time many people hear a recording of their voice, they don't even recognize it. In order to improve the quality of the voice, a speaker needs to realize how it sounds to others and then make adjustments so that it will sound more appealing. Be conscious of whether you have a tight throat. Almost all of us do when we are excited, as we are when we are speaking before an audience. Learn to remove this tension and relax your throat by easing your throat muscles, so that you can achieve a pleasing voice.
- ✦ an open mouth. Many people do not use their lower jaw adequately. Using the lower jaw properly not only increases oral resonance but also helps open up the throat and increase the pharyngeal resonance as well. This improved resonance will improve not only vocal quality but also enunciation. When a speaker uses her lower jaw correctly, she uses her tongue, the teeth, and the lips properly as well.
- ✦ Energetic use of the lips, teeth, tongue, jaw, hard and soft palate (collectively known as the articulators). Listeners become irritated if they cannot hear or understand a speaker. Proper use of the articulators prevents you from mumbling or slurring and gives additional carrying power to your voice. You may have experienced how a stage whisper (when the words are enunciated well and when there is plenty of breath for carrying power) can be heard at great distances. Often, your enthusiasm will help you use your articulators energetically.

Develop a dynamic voice

A person determined to communicate effectively will seldom have a monotonous voice. A flexible voice, one that can vary pitch, rate, volume, and tone, is vital for dynamic speaking. A monotonous delivery usually results from a lack of speaker motivation, but in some cases speakers must learn how make their

voices more flexible. You can overcome a monotone through drills that help develop flexibility and tonal variety within the natural range of your voice.

There are four ways in which you can make your voice dynamic. First, you can develop a greater variety of pitch. Changes in pitch can be powerful communicators. In many cultures the pitch of the speaker's voice indicates an emotional state. Often voice pitch will increase when the speaker is excited or unhappy or be low if she is calm and relaxed. Thus, talented speakers will change their voice pitch to add this extra communicative element.

You can practice varying your pitch, but your emotions during debates will also help you achieve variation. The pitch of your voice naturally reflects the feelings you have toward the ideas you present.

Second, your voice will be more dynamic if you vary the speed of utterance. You should speak at a rate that is neither too fast nor too slow. The rate of a lethargic person is frequently too slow, while that of a tense person (such as one speaking before an audience) is often too fast. Determine your optimal average rate of delivery and then vary it according to the emotional or intellectual content you are trying to convey. Studies reveal that rhythm is an important factor in life, and that various emotions have their own peculiar rhythms. Sadness, for example, is slow, while anger is rapid. Unusually strong emotion will be quite irregular—now fast, now interrupted.

You should also be aware of the importance of the pause. A brief pause indicates the end of a thought, while a longer pause is often used to emphasize or strengthen the response of the audience. In effect, you are giving the audience a moment to think over what you have said. Attention to, and drill in, the development of a varied rate will make your speaking more persuasive.

A third way to add dynamism to your voice is to change how loudly you speak. An excellent way to emphasize important elements of your speech is to say them a bit more loudly. The size of the audience will also dictate your volume; the bigger the group, the louder you will have to speak to be heard clearly. Because you will be speaking into a microphone during radio debates, changes in volume will not be as large as they would be in a room with many people. Once you have determined the optimal average volume needed when speaking into a microphone, you can vary the intensity for emphasis. In fact, as you climax a particular portion of your speech, you will often find your voice naturally getting louder for greater emphasis. Many speakers do not realize that they can emphasize their point more if they follow a very loud statement with a very soft one such as a virtual stage whisper, especially if they follow the vocal variation with a long pause.

A fourth way to make your voice more dynamic is to vary the tone. The

tone of the human voice is a function of resonance and the amount of tension in the voice. At any moment, a human is in some particular emotional state. Public speakers should think of their audience as operating in an emotional continuum from love on one extreme to hate and fear on the other. Each of the emotional states along the spectrum produces its own degree of tension, which is reflected in the voice. Thus, each emotion has its accompanying tone, although that tone varies from person to person. When speaking, the tone of your voice should reflect your emotions or should suggest the emotion you want to invoke from your listener.

Develop the skill of varying the tone of your voice to enrich your meaning. Your emotional reaction to your ideas and your attitude toward your audience will guide you. Some speakers find their emotional reactions interfering with their message. For example, speech anxiety is often revealed in the voice. You can conquer this with by drill and through experience. Controlling those factors that cause vocal tone to vary will increase your powers to persuade.

Be cautious when trying to develop an interesting voice. Remember to remain within a natural range. If you understand your audience and have a genuine interest in getting your meaning across to them, you will have no trouble. The vocal variation you use in your public speaking should approximate that which takes place in animated daily conversation. In fact, good public speaking can be described as “enlarged conversation.”

Enthusiastic desire to obtain a response—avoid artificialities

If the speaker is genuinely interested in and motivated by her message, she will deliver it more effectively. Listeners are very discerning and can tell the difference between a speaker who really cares about the message and a speaker who merely delivers the message in a mechanical fashion. Vocal techniques used without connection to either the message or the audience call attention to themselves and prevent communication. To avoid these pitfalls, you must have a genuine interest in people and in getting a response from them, and you must approach public speaking wholeheartedly.

EXERCISES

Speaking drills are primarily exercises in exaggeration. If you speak too fast, slow way down; if you don't use emphasis overemphasize, etc.

INVENTORY DRILLS

Work with a partner. Speak on any debatable subject for 30 seconds. Ask your partner to make a list of what you should do differently and review this with her. Repeat the process until you are satisfied.

FOCUS ON ONE OR TWO FEATURES

Work with a group. Give a two-minute speech trying to use your best public-speaking techniques. Have your group note all the delivery techniques you used and then comment on where you need improvement. Then pick one area needing improvement and repeat your speech, focusing on this area. Do the same for each area. Finally, present the speech twice more, attempting to improve all areas at once. Wait an hour and then give the speech again, making sure that you have not forgotten what you just learned.

DRAMA DRILL

Say something (anything) boring in an over-dramatic way. Be more and more dramatic as you speak longer. Think of a bad actor who is trying to act too hard and is only becoming a parody of him or herself.

WORD ECONOMY DRILLS

Some debaters just take a long time to get to the point and, as a result, make very few arguments. Make one argument in 30 seconds. Then in 20, then 15. If you can complete the argument in the given time period, you are improving your word economy.

UM-AH-ETC. DRILL

Debaters who use the same "verbal pause" ("um," "ah," etc.) all the time need to improve their delivery. Work with a partner. Speak for 30 seconds and have your partner count the number of verbal pauses. Repeat the exercise until the number of pauses drops significantly.

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Chapter X

MAKING AN ARGUMENT

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- ✦ How to Present an Argument—the ARE Model
- ✦ Types of Argument
 - o Induction
 - o Deduction
 - o Causal Reasoning

This chapter discusses the basic elements of an argument and how to present an argument in a speech. It then explains the common types of arguments and outlines how debaters can test them.

An argument is not just a claim, such as “You should loan me some money.” A sentence becomes an argument when it offers a reason for a claim, for example, “You should loan me money because I loaned you money last year.” An argument must include some reasoning as to “why” one thing relates to another. There are several basic types of arguments. Once you can identify and understand these you can use them in your speeches and criticize their use by others.

HOW TO PRESENT AN ARGUMENT—THE ARE MODEL

Every argument has three components: the Assertion, the Reasoning, and the Evidence. These components form the ARE model.

- ✦ Assertion: This is the label, or the name, for this argument, and it is what the debater wants the audience to understand and remember. It should be relatively short and snappy and express an argumentative relationship. A bad label would be “X is not bad,” whereas a good label would be “X is good for your health” or “Studies show no harmful

effects.” The more expressive label does more than just say, “we win”; it gives a reason why, and giving reasons why things are true is the basis of argumentation. The assertion labels a statement that expresses a relationship between two ideas and that should communicate those ideas well, such as “regular physical exercise promotes health.” Be sure to keep it short!

- ✦ Reasoning: The debater explains the logical basis of the argument. There is a difference between a “claim” and an “argument.” A claim merely asserts that something is so but does not explain why. A team that makes only claims (“we win,” “our arguments are better,” “our case is true”) will make no progress in the debate. An argument expresses a reason why something is true. It uses logic to compel belief on the part of the listeners. Quite often debaters leave this step out. They do so at their peril, as will be explained later.
- ✦ Evidence: The debater uses some fact, testimony, example, or expert opinion to bolster the point being made. Evidence is often researched prior to the debate. It should directly support the assertion. You do not need to use formal evidence to make an argument, especially if it uses some sound logical principle that can be demonstrated rhetorically. A logical demonstration of the argument can also serve as evidence, as can an example from everyday experience.

Each argument in the debate should include these three elements, as seen in this example:

Assertion: (debaters directly explain what it is they wish to prove)
 “Donor nations will not increase assistance to Afghanistan”

Reasoning: (why they believe this to be true) “You can judge future behavior by past behavior.”

Evidence: (offers support for the assertion) “Donor nations have failed to follow through on pledges of assistance for Afghanistan in the last three years, and there is no reason to believe they will change their behavior”.

You can provide logical support for an argument in many ways. Here are a few:

- ✦ Commonly accepted idea: A widely accepted idea. (“Oil and water do not mix.”)
- ✦ Example or parallel case: The thing you are talking about is very similar to something else, and the two might be considered the same in other

ways. (“You should not move to the city to seek a better job; two of your friends tried it and failed to achieve meaningful employment.”)

- ✦ Analogy: Two things are compared that might not be the same but might have some similarities. (“The corrupt government of X will rot like an old melon left out in the sun.”) This technique often has an almost poetic element.
- ✦ Statistic: Concrete data expressed as a number. (“Life expectancy in our country has increased by four years in the last fifteen years.”)
- ✦ Generalization: A general truth is applied to a specific situation. (“When the National Guard is called up, Ahmed will answer because he joined last year.”)
- ✦ Category: Something is located within a category, and the things within that category have certain characteristics. (“Lotifah was born and raised in Saudi Arabia, so she must speak Arabic.”)
- ✦ Disjunctive: Two courses of action are possible, one of which is better than the other. (“We cannot afford to pay our rent and buy a new television, so we should pay our rent because it is more important.”)
- ✦ Causation: One thing leads to or causes another. (“People with university degrees get better jobs because of superior training.”)
- ✦ Expert opinion: Someone who has expertise in an area supports a claim, so it must be true. (“Famous banker Yee Chop So predicts that the Chinese economy will enter a period of decline.”)

EXERCISES IN ARE

Debaters often need basic training in how to make an argument. Usually they present arguments in a sloppy fashion, waste too much time, and have little or no evidence to support their assertion. Review the three simple steps in the ARE model:

- ✦ Assertion: Say what your argument is. Keep it simple, something a judge or a member of the audience could remember. Use a subject-verb-object-value term, such as *horrible*, *wonderful*, *beneficial*, *disastrous*; for example, “War between India and Pakistan would have terrible consequences.”
- ✦ Reasoning: Explain the logical process behind your argument (causation, category, similar example, etc.)
- ✦ Evidence: Produce data, etc., to support your argument.

Work with a partner. Make one argument against some point using the ARE model. Take 20 seconds. Ask your partner to critique. Repeat until you are satisfied.

TYPES OF ARGUMENT

The three most common types of argument are induction, deduction, and causation. These include the vast majority of possible logical relationships used in debates.

Induction

Induction Defined

Inductive reasoning is the process of citing a sufficient number of specific examples to prove a generalization. You may characterize the process as “going from the specific to the general.” You cite example 1, example 2, and so on, and then draw the conclusion, a generalized statement about those factual examples. You can also reverse the process. You may state the generalization that you intend to prove and then cite examples to support it. Debaters utilize the later technique most frequently when using induction.

Characteristics of Induction

You must remember the following five guidelines when using induction:

1. The examples cited must be factual, not hypothetical.
2. The examples must be analogous; they must be of the same type, species, or category.
3. The induction must be built on a sufficient number of factual examples. What constitutes a sufficient number depends on the nature of your subject and your audience. If you are talking about major oil producing nations, for instance, you cannot not use examples from South America alone. An audience that has knowledge of your subject will usually require more examples than one that has none. An audience that does not want to believe your conclusion will demand more examples than an audience that wants to believe it.
4. The conclusion of induction is a generalization; it is a statement about the factual examples as a class; it states a characteristic that these examples have in common.

5. You can effectively undermine an inductive argument by challenging the methodology or process used to collect the data. Whenever we talk in terms of percentages, ratios, indices, the majority of cases, and the minority, we are referring to terms statistical in nature. Yet in most subjects for which we are apt to become advocates and use such statistical terms, the probabilities are great that the actual statistics have been gathered by a sampling process (an inductive process) rather than the complete counting.

Tests of inductive arguments

You can ask the following questions to validate, test, or invalidate the inductive process:

- ✦ Are the facts true? This is the first question you should ask. Sound induction must be based on factual examples, not hypothetical ones. You might suggest that the examples given were not gathered by a person trained in research or in observation, or that they were gathered by an individual who is prejudiced or who exaggerates. In a similar fashion you can point out that examples cited in the form of percentages or ratios are not really an index to what we want to know, or else that the examples are not comparable.
- ✦ Are the examples universal or isolated instances? When you use induction, you want to leave the impression that the examples you are citing are universal rather than isolated instances. If you are testing or refuting the inductive process, you want to show that the speaker could cite only isolated or exceptional instances. Validating or invalidating induction in this manner is based on the principle that the conclusion drawn from the inductive process is a generalization. This fallacy of drawing a universal conclusion from too few examples is known as *hasty generalization*.
- ✦ Do the examples cover a sufficient period of time? If time is a factor in your inductive conclusion, you must make sure that your audience sees that your examples are spaced over an appropriate period. This is particularly important whenever you try to prove inductively a proposition that establishes a trend. In refuting induction, using this question can be quite effective. If you can show that all the examples your opponent cites were taken from one year and that the evidence is dated, you can nullify the effectiveness of the speaker's argument. This is particularly true if the debate is focused on areas that change rapidly, such as

most phases of the economy, many phases of medicine and science, and some phases of education. When using this technique, the debater is merely pointing out that the speaker has failed to provide the evidence expected.

- ✦ Are the examples cited typical or atypical? Extremes exist everywhere in this world. Storms vary from gentle rain showers to disastrous hurricanes or tornadoes. People's attitudes vary from the ultraconservative to the ultraliberal. In evaluating inductive arguments you must determine whether a speaker has chosen typical examples or used extremes. The fact that the debater cannot cite typical examples weakens her argument.
- ✦ Are there significant negative instances? Induction is the process of demonstrating that a characteristic is generally true of all the examples. Whenever the characteristic is absent from one of the examples, we have what is known as a *negative instance*. Negative instances are the exceptions to the rule. The more frequent the exceptions, the more doubtful the conclusion. The debater will find the citation of negative instances a powerful weapon in refuting an argument.
- ✦ Is the conclusion properly stated? People tend to draw conclusions from evidence based on what they would like rather than logic. Betrayed by their prejudices, they offer a conclusion different from what could be logically stated. To debate effectively, you must learn how to discern this faulty analysis and present the logical conclusion and not exaggerate.

Induction is a powerful weapon in influencing people's beliefs. Speakers use it to defend or challenge the present system, to demonstrate historical trends, to estimate public opinion, to show that certain courses of action are advantageous, and to establish universal truths. Induction is used widely in all areas of endeavor to uncover knowledge and verify findings. Induction is a constantly used technique in establishing knowledge. When we conduct a poll in a neighborhood, when we study a major example of a social phenomenon, or when we conduct an informal experiment we are using induction. Almost any inquiry that uses empirical information is an example of induction. Thus, a person who wishes to become an effective debater will learn how to use it to strengthen her arguments and to refute the arguments of others.

EXERCISES IN INDUCTION

The following examples are attempts of induction reasoning. Explain why each is inductive and use lines of argument to evaluate or refute.

- ✦ Mary Smith is tall. Jack Smith is tall. Frank Smith is tall. The Smith family must be a tall family.
 - ✦ The percentage of native born Mumbai people living in Mumbai must be very small. Last Saturday evening I stopped one hundred individuals as they were walking down the street in a tourist area. Only one was a native of Mumbai.
 - ✦ I shall never like Ahmed. I was introduced to him the other night, and he insulted my teacher in a conversation.
 - ✦ Professor Ali is better known than Professor Kuti. The other day I stood in the hall of the university science building with pictures of each. Twice as many were able to identify Professor Ali as Professor Kuti.
 - ✦ Banks are untrustworthy. All bankers are swindlers. Why, a banker cheated me out of some money once.
 - ✦ Oh, he is nothing but a gambler! I had a conversation with him, and he kept talking about his bets on football matches.
 - ✦ She must be an ignorant person. She didn't know but ten national capitals in Africa. She could only name five national African leaders.
 - ✦ Kazakhstan certainly is a flat nation. I went through it on a train trip and did not see any mountains.
 - ✦ Pollution of rivers is a serious problem in our nation. Studies by the United Nations reveals that three rivers, the X, Y and Z, are particularly bad.
-

Deduction

Deduction is one of the most common forms of reasoning found in debate. The essence of deduction is to take two ideas that we accept, find a relationship between them, and then draw this relationship as a conclusion. Those investigating crimes often use such reasoning. For example, if a murder was committed in one city on Friday night, and if the enemy of the victim was seen in another city at the same time, then the enemy cannot be the murderer

because of the accepted generalization that a person cannot be in two places at once. Often a deductive argument will take some accepted generalization and apply it to a specific situation. If one accepts the generalization, then it seems reasonable to accept the specific conclusion.

Deductive reasoning defined

Deductive reasoning is that form of reasoning in which a conclusion is drawn from premises. The following are examples of deductive reasoning (but are not necessarily free from fallacies):

Any form of government that does not allow the people to elect their own representatives is a bad form of government.

Dictatorship does not allow the people to elect their own representatives.

Therefore, dictatorship is a bad form of government.

Any nation that has good roads has good financing for them.

Japan has good roads.

Therefore, Japan has had good financing for roads.

Any person who has a record of honesty in the past can be relied upon to be honest in the future.

Professor Adwua has a record of honesty in the past.

Therefore, Professor Adwua can be relied upon to be honest in the future.

Note that the proposition to be proved in each case is the concluding statement of the deduction. In each of the above examples the conclusion is drawn from the two statements that precede it. The first two statements are the premises upon which the conclusion is based.

Types of deduction

There are three types of deduction: categorical, disjunctive, and hypothetical.

- Categorical Deduction

You will probably use this type most frequently. Categorical deduction is that form of deduction in which a general law or truth is demonstrated to apply to a specific instance. The first premise is an assertion applied to a large category

of persons, places, or things. The second premise asserts that a specific case or instance is a part of the category indicated in the first premise. The conclusion asserts that what is true for the whole category will be true for the particular case indicated. The phrase “going from the general to the specific” describes the process of categorical deduction.

The major premise of categorical deduction must either be immediately acceptable to the audience or be proved. If it is a general truth that the audience readily accepts, you need not prove it. In this case it has probably already been proved. Such is the case with the premise “All humans die.” If the audience won’t accept the premise, you must prove it. Most frequently this will require inductive proof. The truth “All humans die” has been inductively proved throughout the ages. If a causal relationship exists in the major premise, you may use that form of reasoning. In some cases you may use reasoning from analogy or you may establish the premise by documentary evidence. Thus, if you are using categorical deduction to gain the belief of audiences, you must make certain that they will believe the major premise.

If you are evaluating or refuting deduction, you may claim that the first premise is false or that it has not been proved true by induction or some other method of reasoning. Probably the best method of refuting a deduction is to point out what the speaker will have to do to prove it and show why she can’t. If the major premise requires induction, you may use the lines of argument for induction. If causal reasoning is required to prove it, then use lines of argument against causation.

The second premise of categorical deduction must be proved unless the audience will accept it as true by merely stating it. More often than not, this minor premise will require proof and may constitute the bulk of the proof for the deduction.

To refute deduction you can claim that the minor premise is false or at least has not been established as true. You can do this by proving the contrary or by demonstrating what evidence and/or what arguments the speaker must develop to prove the minor premise. You can also refute a deduction by pointing out that there may be exceptions to the general rule stated, and that the specific instance presented may fall outside the general rule. For example:

Rebel movement X believes in the forceful overthrow of the current government.

Ahmed Varghese is a member of rebel movement X.

Therefore, Ahmed Varghese believes in the forceful overthrow of the current government.

This deduction is sound if all members of rebel movement X believe in the forceful overthrow. If there are exceptions, the reliability of the deduction is weakened because Ahmed Varghese might be an exception. Since it is not necessarily true that 100 percent of those who became members of rebel movement X believe in the forceful overthrow of the current government, and since we cannot be sure into which of the two classes Ahmed Varghese falls, we could doubt the truth of the conclusion. The probabilities may favor its truth, yet doubt remains.

Thus, to have sound deduction you must avoid making wider application of the term in the conclusion than is warranted by the premises. Don't overstate your conclusion.

- *Tests of Categorical Deduction*

There are several questions you can ask to test the validity of a categorical deduction:

- ♦ Is there an illicit premise? An illicit first premise is that fallacy of deduction in which the term is given wider application in the conclusion than is warranted from its use in the premises. For example:

Cats are animals.
Dogs are not cats.
Therefore, dogs are not animals.

This deduction is fallacious because the term *animals* in the conclusion is used in the universal sense of all animals, while in the first premise the word means only some animals.

or

All judges are trained in law.
All judges are citizens.
Therefore, all citizens are trained in law.

Here the term *citizens* in the second premise refers only to some citizens, but in the conclusion it is used in the sense of all citizens.

- ♦ Are the characteristics ascribed to a category universal? It is one thing to say "all men mistreat their spouses" as opposed to "some men mistreat their spouses" and "no men mistreat their spouses." Often debaters will use a deductive argument as if the claim was universal when that would

be unjustified. There are certain lines of argument, certain sentences that can reveal this fallacy to an audience. You might say, "Since the specific case could be an exception to the general rule as stated in the major premise, the conclusion is unworthy of our belief."

"Until the gentlepersion can demonstrate that only the group mentioned are concerned (hold that attitude, or the like), her argument is unworthy of our belief." ("Until the gentlepersion can demonstrate that Communists are the only ones who believe in government ownership and operation of electric power, her argument is unworthy of our belief.") These are a few suggestions by which the fallacy of universal characteristics may be shown to an audience.

- ♦ Is there a fallacy of equivocation? To be sound, the basic deductive argument must consist of only three major ideas. The following syllogism is obviously fallacious because it has four major ideas:

The people of India are Asians.
Chinese are Orientals.
Therefore, the people of India are Orientals.

The same rule applies to meaning as well. Sometimes a term occurs in the two places within the syllogism, but have two different meanings. When this happens, there are four terms in the argument, and it is fallacious.

Cat is a word composed of three letters.
A cat drinks milk.
Therefore, a word composed of three letters drinks milk.

Cat in the major premise means the word *cat*. In the minor premise it refers to the cat as an animal. Thus the deductive argument has four major ideas and the conclusion is fallacious. Sometimes the double meaning is difficult to discern as in the following example:

Public nuisances are punishable by law.
A barking dog is a public nuisance.
Therefore, a barking dog is punishable by law.

Since both premises seem to be true, we may accept the conclusion as true, particularly if our neighbor has a barking dog. But deeper analysis reveals that the conclusion is false because the term *public nuisance* is used with two different meanings. In the major premise it is used in the

legal sense, while in the minor it has the meaning of an irritant, such as dust, poison ivy, or mosquitoes.

The name given to the above fallacy is *equivocation*, an error in reasoning in which a word or term is used with two or more meanings in order to develop an argument. Equivocation appears not only in deduction; but also in induction, causal reasoning, or reasoning from analogy.

- ♦ Does the argument contain two negative premises? You cannot draw a sound conclusion from two negative premises. To draw inferences there must be a relationship between the two premises. Two negative premises deny the existence of such a relationship. If X is not Y, and if Y is not Z, no particular relationship or agreement has been established between X and Z. The following argument is fallacious for the same reason:

Americans are not Asians.
 Europeans are not Americans.
 Therefore, Europeans are Asians.

Don't think that by using the word *not* in the conclusion you can disavow the negative premises rule. The following example will show why:

Americans are not Asians.
 Chinese are not Americans.
 Therefore, Chinese are not Asians.

Conclusions drawn from negative premises are not reliable. However, the mere presence of the words *not* or *no* does not necessarily make the premise negative. In the following valid argument, the premises are not negative despite the use of *not*.

Any chemical substance that is not a compound is an element.
 Gold is not a compound.
 Therefore, gold is an element.

To refute a deduction based on two negative premises, you have to show the lack of relationships between the terms of the two premises. In many cases, you might be able to suggest that other conclusions are equally valid. For example, in the syllogism "Americans are not Asians," you could suggest that the conclusion "Europeans are not Asians" is just as logical. Furthermore, it is supported by known facts.

- *Disjunctive deduction*

Frequently, people are confronted with choices, particularly in determining standards of conduct, exercising judgments of value, and finding solutions to problems. As an advocate of a particular solution, for example, you want to demonstrate its superiority. To do so, you can use disjunctive deduction. In its simplest form, two alternatives are given in the first part of the argument, one is affirmed or denied in the second part, and the other denied or affirmed in the other. For example:

For you to pass the course either you must study harder or the professor must become more lenient.
The professor will not become more lenient.
Therefore, you must study harder.

In the above disjunctive deduction, the minor premise denies one alternative and the conclusion affirms the other. The opposite occurs in the following; the minor premise affirms, the conclusion denies:

Either Russia or the United States will win the Olympic gold medal for basketball.
The United States will win the Olympic gold medal for basketball because it has the better players.
Therefore, Russia cannot win.

Note that you can identify disjunctive deduction but the use of the words *either* and *or* in the syllogism.

In cases where there are three or more choices, the minor premise denies all but one, while the conclusion affirms the preferred choice. For example:

We can either go to the movies, go to the football game, or stay home and watch television.
The movies and television will be dull;
Therefore, let us go to the football game .

If you were to fully develop this argument, as you would in a speech, each of the undesired alternatives would be a separate minor premise. Thus the reasoning becomes:

We can either go to the movies, go to the football game, or stay home and watch television.
The football game will be dull because the teams are unskilled; Staying home and watching television will be uninteresting.
Therefore, let us go to the movies.

- Evaluating or refuting disjunctive deduction

The first step in evaluating this form of deduction is to word the complete syllogism so that you can uncover potential errors. Having done this, you can use the following lines of argument:

- ✦ Suggest alternatives. You can offer possible alternatives to prove that the speaker's conclusion is not justified. Or, you may present one of the alternatives and support it with evidence and reasoning. Using the example above, we could stay home and study the Quran as another alternative.
- ✦ Suggest that the alternatives are not mutually exclusive. In this case, you offer an alternative and provide evidence and reasoning to demonstrate that both choices are possible, that they overlap, or that neither is possible or desirable. For example, we can go to the football game and then to the movies after the game.
- ✦ Deny the alternative stated in the conclusion. Muster arguments supported by reasoning and evidence against this alternative, or reveal through an evaluation process that the speaker did not prove the alternative to be a desirable or logical. For example, the movies will be uninteresting because we have already seen what is showing.

- Hypothetical deduction

We frequently use hypothetical deduction to understand the forces and the events of the past and to predict or change future events. Hypothetical deduction is that form of deductive reasoning based on a major premise that expresses a hypothetical or conditional relationship of sign or causation. The key word by which you can identify this major premise is *if*. The conditional or limiting clause begins with the word *if*. For example (predicting the future):

If our best player cannot play tonight, we will lose the game.
Our best player is injured and cannot play tonight.
Therefore, we will lose the game.

Or (past fact):

If it had rained, the ground would have been wet.
The ground was not wet.
Therefore, it did not rain.

- Evaluating or Refuting Hypothetical Deduction

The best way to evaluate or refute hypothetical deduction is to use the lines of argument available to you under causal reasoning (see below). Within the major premise of all hypothetical deduction, there is either a direct or indirect causal relationship stated or implied. Search out that relationship and determine its weaknesses using causal reasoning.

EXERCISES IN DEDUCTION

Identify the type of deductive argument in each statement below and then use the lines of argument discussed above to analyze the arguments.

- ✦ John Brown must be a Communist. He believes it morally right to overthrow the capitalist system by force.
- ✦ Alcoholism is a dreaded disease. Drinking is the cause of alcoholism. Therefore, drinking leads to this dreaded disease.
- ✦ Only one of the two candidates from the two major parties can win the election, so we should vote for one of them.
- ✦ Pine is good for lumber. Matches are pine. Therefore, matches are good for lumber.
- ✦ She is not unemployed. therefore, she must be a working person.
- ✦ It is obvious that Sarah Vinez is subversive. She is a member of two organizations that have been listed as subversive by the government.
- ✦ She will frown on drinking alcohol at our party. She is a devout Muslim.
- ✦ Most people agree that it has been good for workers to unionize. Then why shouldn't teachers and professors unionize? After all, they have to work for a living.
- ✦ Of course Jim Johnson believes in the policies of political party X. He has stated again and again that he is a member of political party X.
- ✦ Edwin Owusu must be interested in athletics. He is a university student.
- ✦ Most people agree that it is good for a person to develop social relationships. Then why shouldn't all people join a community group? After all,

- many of these community groups are chiefly concerned with social life.
- + Since the United Nations can't accomplish its basic purpose of preventing war, it should be abolished.
 - + Capitalism with the profit motive has brought us greed and more greed. Therefore we should adopt socialism.
-

Causal reasoning

Causal reasoning defined

Causal reasoning is that form of reasoning in which an individual demonstrates that an event that happens first has the means, power, facilities, and/or desire to produce a second event. We often suggest to a friend, "You'll get wet because it is raining." In this case, we are suggesting a certain conclusion, namely, your friend will get wet. This is our proposition to be proved. Our support or proof for the proposition is the statement that it is raining.

The actual process of causal reasoning in its simplest form involves the statement of either a cause or an event as sufficient support for the whole reasoning process. This is what you did when you cited rain as the obvious reason why your friend would get wet. In most of your speaking, however, your causal reasoning will take the form of explaining why the cause produces the effect.

The process of causal reasoning can be explained by the following simple diagram:

Event 1 > Event 2

The arrow represents the theoretical explanation you will offer to prove that Event 1 caused Event 2. The more obvious and reasonable your explanation, the stronger your impact will be upon your listener.

You can substantiate causal relationships and strengthen your arguments by citing experts who attest to the relationship or by using induction. For example, to prove that vitamin A in a food supply would reduce blindness, you could present evidence that thousands of people used it in three different cities, with the same results. You can then say that the causal relationship was proved.

Here are two examples of causal reasoning:

- ✦ Statistics show that smokers have a higher incidence of lung disease. The cause is that smoking damages the lungs.
- ✦ Corruption in the current government will make it difficult for the party to win the upcoming election. The cause is that voters will not vote for a corrupt government.

Tests of causal argument

As with all types of reasoning, there are certain questions you can ask to evaluate causal arguments:

Does the alleged cause have the means, power, facilities, and/or desire to produce the effect? This is the most important question you should ask in developing or evaluating a causal argument. Your argument will be extremely powerful if you show that your solution has the means, the power, and all the facilities and machinery necessary to achieve the result and if you show that the solution will create advantages. If you are refuting an argument of this type, you need only point out that one of these conditions is lacking. If two or more are lacking, you weaken your opponent's argument significantly.

- ✦ Is this the sole cause or are there other causes? If you can find a single cause for a phenomenon, you are fortunate. Stating the cause will easily convince an audience of the truth of your argument. For example, mosquitoes transmit malaria. Thus, you would have an easy time convincing an audience that mosquitoes caused a recent outbreak of the disease. But most phenomena have multiple causes. To refute causal reasoning, offer other causes than that suggested. If you can present multiple causes, you can seriously weaken your opponent. Alternately, you can show why another cause is more justified. For example, you could say that smoking did not cause a person's lung disease because he worked in a coal mine for many years but only smoked for one.
- ✦ Is this cause significant or insignificant? The "significant cause" argument is a powerful tool in a world in which there are multiple causes for most phenomena. Instead of suggesting that yours is the sole cause, you can advance your argument by proving that it is the most significant. You do this by showing that your cause has the strongest force behind the observable change. The "significant cause" line of argument is effective because the speaker seems to be understating her case by showing her understanding of other causes without retreating from her claim. If

there is this overstatement, members of the audience will be thinking, as she speaks, of other causes that may play a part.

To refute a “significant cause” argument, show that the suggested cause is insignificant; it lacks the force to produce the effect cited. For example, those who advocate that democracies should recognize “pariah” nations could argue that the negotiations involved in the process of recognition will lead to the settlement of disputes. Those opposing recognition could use the “insignificant cause” argument, showing that past negotiations have not deterred these countries from doing what they want to do.

- ✦ Is this an original or contributing cause? Planting flower seeds may be the original cause of a display of beautiful flowers. However, the flowers also require the contributing cause of rich soil as well as adequate water and sunshine. A skillful speaker knows the difference between an original cause and a contributing cause.

When you are the affirmative in a debate on a policy topic, you advocate the adoption of a new policy. In the first part of your speech you demonstrate that the existing policy is bad and outline the cause or causes why this is so. In the second part, you advocate a new policy that will solve the problems of the current one. If you can show that your new policy will remove the original cause of the problem, you will have a strong argument. Your solution is better than the current policy.

You do not have a strong argument if your solution deals with a contributory cause. You can refute arguments by pointing out that the solution deals with a contributing, not an original cause. For example, those opposed to the recognition of “pariah” nations could point out that recognition was a contributory cause to the reduction of tensions between the democracies and these countries; it did not remove the original cause of these tensions.

- ✦ Are there or will there be counteracting causes? A counteracting cause is any incident or force that will prevent things from happening. Laws that contain penalties are counteracting forces by which we attempt to control behavior. The solutions that we establish for many of our problems could be called counteracting-cause solutions. Whenever we advocate a solution, we should be aware of whether we are advocating a counter-cause solution or one that is a substitution of a new cause for an old one. For example, in combating the problems of tobacco use, a counter-cause solution might be a large financial penalty for using

tobacco while a substitution of a new cause might be a medicine that counteracts the addictive properties of nicotine. The more attentive and involved our audience is, the more essential is this discrimination if we wish to be successful. We immediately counter the objection that we are doing nothing to remove the original cause. We leave the impression of accurately evaluating our solution rather than overstating our case. On the other hand, whenever we are advocating a new policy or course of action we may sometimes enhance our position by suggesting that no serious counteracting causal forces will arise. In this case we are picturing the probability of the solution working as we predict it. Be careful not to use this line too often as you may suggest to your listeners ideas that had not occurred to them. On the other hand, this latter line of argument is quite good when these counteracting forces have been widely predicted.

To challenge the adoption of a policy, list the counteracting forces that may arise. List as many as you can. This is one case in which quantity may overwhelm and defeat. The skilled debater uses not only the counter causes suggested by experts but also those she has thought of herself.

- ♦ Has coincidence been mistaken for a causal relationship? This fallacy occurs when Event Two follows Event One and individuals assume a connection that does not exist. For example, the rooster crows before the sun rises, but it is not the cause of the sun rising. This example the fallacy is obvious. In other cases it is more difficult to distinguish between cause and coincidence. For example:

Event One: Education in country X has increased.

Event Two: Crime in country X has increased.

Therefore, the increase in education has caused an increase in crime.

Or

Event One: The standard of living in country Y has increased.

Event Two: Crime has increased.

Therefore, the increase in the standard of living causes an increase in crime.

The fact that one event occurs after another is not proof that one event causes another.

You can counter an opponent's argument by suggesting that he has mistaken coincidence for causal relationship and then to use other lines of argument to substantiate your claim.

EXERCISES IN CAUSAL REASONING

Explain why the reasoning in the following statements is causal and use one or more lines of argument to evaluate or refute it:

- ✦ Since 1990, crime in country X has been increasing rapidly. During the same period the number of violent movies shown grew just as rapidly. Therefore, the increase in crime results from violent movies.
 - ✦ In the last few years we have improved the educational system, and more people are receiving better educations. During the same years, however, the per capita crime rate increased. Better education produces a higher crime rate.
 - ✦ I just broke a mirror; therefore I can expect to have bad luck.
 - ✦ There wouldn't be so much crime if our laws carried heavier penalties.
 - ✦ We must conclude that our laws controlling opium production are not good. Otherwise we wouldn't have so many people producing opium.
 - ✦ She is all wet. Therefore it must be raining outside.
 - ✦ The barriers to voter registration in our country deprive people of the right to vote. In nations with easier registration, more people vote. Therefore, we should adopt easier voter registration procedures.
 - ✦ To ensure that we have enough highly qualified teachers, we must pass the new minimum wage law calling for much higher salaries for teachers.
 - ✦ Obviously the legal penalties for serving alcohol are not severe enough. Look at the large number of cases in which alcoholic drinks are sold to people.
 - ✦ We must do as much as possible to prevent murder; therefore we must never abolish the death penalty.
 - ✦ She is training for the race. Obviously she will win it.
 - ✦ There is a great deal of corruption in our police force. If we were to increase police salaries, we would have less corruption.
 - ✦ There wouldn't be so much reckless driving if our laws carried heavier penalties.
 - ✦ I took a course in argumentation. It must inevitably follow that I am now a more logical person.
-

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Huber, Robert and Alfred Snider. *Influencing Through Argument*, 2nd ed. New York: International Debate Education Association, 2005.

Zeigelmüller George, and Jack Kay. *Argumentation: Inquiry and Advocacy*, 3rd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997.

Chapter XI

PREPARING AND GATHERING INFORMATION

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- ✦ Necessity of an Organized System of Gathering Material
- ✦ Importance of Your Own Knowledge and Thinking
- ✦ Exchanging Opinions and Knowledge with Others
- ✦ Observation
- ✦ Conducting Original Experimentation and Research
- ✦ Using the Library
- ✦ Using the Internet

There is no substitute for knowledge of the topic you are debating. Arguments and advocacy are based on both information and reason. Debaters cannot win a debate by relying solely on the latter; they must support their reasoning with concrete information. Radio debaters should also remember that they have a serious obligation to their listening audience to share relevant and accurate information through the debate process.

Because the quality of and access to information resources differs widely from area to area and country to country, we can offer only broad guidelines on information gathering that will be useful in a wide variety of situations.

NECESSITY OF AN ORGANIZED SYSTEM OF GATHERING MATERIAL

You should develop a systematic scheme for gathering material so that you can accomplish two objectives. First, you want to gather materials that permit

a fairly complete analysis of the subject. You will want representative information on all sides of an issue, if possible. You will need to understand various points of view so you know how to select and shape your arguments effectively. Second, you need to compile evidence on which you base your arguments. Your evidence will be the facts by which you will change the opinions of your listeners. You will want to find examples, statistics, and opinions that best support your arguments. With these two objectives in mind, let's lay out a plan.

IMPORTANCE OF YOUR OWN KNOWLEDGE AND THINKING

Even without research, debaters frequently know more about a topic than they think they do. Your education and experience, combined with that of your fellow debaters, are valuable resources you should consider first. To find out what you already know, take a few sheets of paper and carry out the following steps:

- ✦ List why debating this topic is important.
- ✦ Define the terms of the topic in your own words.
- ✦ Briefly outline what you already know about the topic. You do not have to do this in any order. At this point, you just want to see what you already know.
- ✦ Divide a piece of paper into two columns—one for the affirmative and one for the negative—and list all the arguments you can think of on the affirmative in one column and for the negative in the other. If it is a policy topic, for example, for the affirmative list all the evils or the disadvantages of the current policy that might justify change. Then develop in detail the solution or solutions for the problem. List them as well as all the arguments supporting the solution. Remember that you are creating preliminary lists that might change after research. For the negative you might list all of the good aspects of the current policy as well as shortcomings in possible solutions.
- ✦ Under each major argument list all the facts that you already know. Remember to include examples that you can use in your speech. Often the strength of your support material determines which arguments you will use in the actual debate.

After you finish this process, you probably will be astonished at how much you already know. If you have extensive knowledge of the topic, you may not need to gather additional material, but if you do need to conduct further research, your analysis will help you organize it, saving you time and resulting in a stronger speech.

EXCHANGING OPINIONS AND KNOWLEDGE WITH OTHERS

Much of the knowledge and information we have is gained through social channels. We learn through conversations with friends, instructions from parents, interactions with educators and other interactions with people.

Once you have conducted your preliminary analysis, find out what your contacts—parents, teachers, friends, etc.— know about a subject or what their opinions are on a topic. You can do this in several ways:

1. **Informal Discussion.** Discuss your topic with other radio debaters, members of your family, associates, and friends. Your family and friends probably hold opinions similar to those of your debate audience, and so in discussing your subject with them, you will be learning more about your radio listeners. You will be able to test your arguments to determine which are strongest and which will need powerful evidence to change minds. Furthermore, your friends may have factual examples that you can use to support some of your positions.
2. **Personal Interviews.** Interviews with experts can help guide your research, excite you about your topic, and provide you with evidence that you may have difficulty finding elsewhere. Students at the University of Vermont were preparing presentations about homelessness in their community and realized that most of what they knew about the subject came from news reports. They recognized that they lacked personal understanding and so visited two homeless shelters, spoke with staff and clients, and gathered useful primary data. They also walked the downtown area and stopped to speak with homeless people they could identify. As a result, not only did they have a better understanding of the situation, but also they became passionate about the topic and were able to communicate the reality of homelessness to audiences in a very compelling manner.

3. Letters and e-mail. When a personal interview is out of the question, you might write or e-mail experts on your topic. You should write or e-mail only when you need a specific bit of particularly factual information. Do not abuse this method. You would be foolish to write a letter or e-mail saying, "I have a debate on such and such a topic. Would you please send me any information and thoughts you have on it?" The recipient would be justified in throwing it immediately into a wastepaper basket or pushing the delete key.

OBSERVATION

Observation is a means of gathering material by direct experience, which furnishes the most vivid information for your speech. We know vividly what we have seen, heard, smelled, and touched, and can describe it convincingly to others. Do not fall into the habit of using the library or the Internet and neglecting direct experience. After giving a mediocre speech about water pollution, a debater was asked what she knew about the subject. She replied that she had been to the library and had read a number of articles on the subject. Her teacher advised her that to better understand the situation she needed direct experience. She decided to visit the water treatment plant outside the city and also a paper mill located on a nearby river. After seeing how the water treatment plant worked and seeing—and smelling—the results of the run-off from the paper mill, she became a far more exciting and informed debater on the subject. Thus, if you are debating about reform of elementary schools, visit one and talk to the teachers and the children. If you are debating about the effect that taxation has on businesses, visit business establishment and ask their opinions. Personal experience will always enhance debate advocacy.

CONDUCTING ORIGINAL EXPERIMENTATION AND RESEARCH

Some of your best support material is that which you have gathered by direct experiment. Often, it is more real to you than written evidence, and thus you can use it more effectively. One speaker was arguing that growing vegetables in a garden was far more economical and healthy than buying vegetables in a local store. He went to the community gardening plot in the town

and talked to people there about their vegetable gardens and also about how the exercise and experience of gardening had increased their physical and emotional health. He also spoke to people who bought vegetables regularly in his local store. While not a large study of many individuals, he gained unique insights into the different practices and was able to become a more persuasive speaker on the subject.

Use your imagination in preparing your arguments so that you can produce this lively kind of evidence. Obviously, you must make sure that your data is valid and that anyone would get the same results.

USING THE LIBRARY

The library will be one of your most important sources of material, but to use it effectively, you must approach it in an organized way. Obviously, browsing can be fun and rewarding, but often you will not have the time for this. Use the following guide to help you locate important sources of information.

Sources and materials for the cause of the problem

Go to newspapers for current information and editorials on your topic. Many newspapers have an index, which can save you considerable time. Periodicals offer material that looks at your topic in greater depth. They can supply you with background as well as current information. Many periodicals publish their own indexes, but you may find general indexes to a wide range of periodicals either in print or online.

Sources for background information and history

Encyclopedias are your best source for background information and brief histories on your topic. If you do not find the information you need there, or need more in-depth information, go to general histories or overviews of your subject. Finally, if you still have not found your information, consult monographs on your subject.

Sources of definitions of terms

Contrary to what you might believe, general dictionaries do not offer the best definitions for the terms that are essential in building your argu-

ment. When trying to define terms, first look at books on the subject, most of which will have definitions in their early chapters. These definitions are written by authorities who have a deep understanding of their subject matter. Their definitions are likely to be complete and more nuanced than those in a standard dictionary. Encyclopedias are the next best source of definitions. Do not completely ignore general dictionaries. They will affirm definitions found in other sources and at the same time have authoritative weight for most people.

Sources for main and subordinate arguments

You have several excellent sources for help in this area. The library catalog will guide you to books that will outline the issues involved in your topic. Surveying editorials from newspapers across the political spectrum will give you an overview of the arguments surrounding an issue. Magazines, too, may offer an overview of the issue and provide you with evidence you can use to support your arguments. They may also provide you with leads to experts on your topic. Although these magazines are in English, you will find the *World Press Review* and *the Economist* useful for a wide range of debates because of their broad international coverage.

Government documents can also be important sources of information, but they do have limitations. First, not all governments make their documents freely available to the general public. Some offer them only in facilities that are not user-friendly. Second, public documents and publications may present only the government's side of an issue without addressing the criticisms of the government's position. Yet even this information can be useful, if you can find opposing positions in other sources.

Pamphlets of professional organizations such as manufacturers' associations, trade groups, political parties, and non-governmental organizations are yet another source for arguments. Many are biased, but they will provide you with the arguments on a particular side of a question. Use these with a great deal of caution, however, not only because of their bias but also because these organizations do not always choose the strongest arguments for their case. If possible, locate a list of registered lobbying groups or nongovernmental organizations operating in your country, select those that might seem relevant, and search for their materials. You may find these materials in your library, or you may locate the organization on the Internet.

Sources of factual data

You must confirm any facts you will use in your debate. Nothing can destroy your credibility more than having your opponent reveal that your facts are wrong.

When researching factual data, turn first to general publications and then to more specialized sources. Often general publications will include bibliographies and additional material that will help direct your research. You will uncover much factual data from books and articles on your topic, but much will also appear in publications that seem unrelated to your subject. Learn what these unrelated sources may be, how to use them, and what valuable material they contain. Be sure to note the bibliographies in such volumes because they are excellent guides to additional material. Don't ignore footnotes: They may contain important information and will include citations to further data. Remember to build a bibliography of sources as you conduct your research.

Scholarly journals may publish articles that include data. Often the article will describe the methodology behind the study. Often scholarly articles will evaluate and suggest possible errors in arguments, studies, or data. You can also use academic journals to find experts on your topic.

Finally, consult the reference section of your library, where you will find specialized encyclopedias, almanacs, statistical abstracts, and census reports that will facilitate your research. A reference librarian can direct you to the most appropriate sources.

Utilizing electronic resources in libraries

More and more libraries are becoming gateways to a wide variety of electronic resources. Your reference librarian can describe the holdings and offer you advice on the best online materials to use. Some of the most useful resources for debaters include:

- ✦ Congressional Quarterly Researcher, <http://library2.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/>
- ✦ EBSCO Research, <http://support.epnet.com/CustSupport/AboutUs/AboutUs.asp>
- ✦ EHRAF Collections of Ethnography, <http://library2.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/>
- ✦ Global Books in Print, <http://www.globalbooksinprint.com/GlobalBooksInPrint/>

- ✦ InfoTrac Databases, <http://web5.infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/info-mark/>
- ✦ JSTOR journal storage, <http://www.jstor.org/demo.shtml>
- ✦ Lexis-Nexis Databases, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com/>
- ✦ Project Muse scholarly journals online, <http://muse.jhu.edu/about/contact.html>

USING THE INTERNET

Contemporary researchers tend to use the Internet extensively to gather information and evidence. This is unwise. Do not fall victim to the allure of simply sitting in front of a computer screen to gather all the information you need. Remember that most information on the Internet is not reviewed or edited. Any unqualified person can put views or information on a web page. Books and newspapers have editors, and they still contain substantial amounts of less than credible information, so imagine how much more prevalent this problem is on Internet sites. Find out who has written the information you are viewing and ask:

- ✦ Who is the person or people making the statements?
- ✦ Are they qualified to make such statements?
- ✦ Might they have a bias?
- ✦ What was the exact date on which the statements were made?
- ✦ What groups are associated with or endorsing the statements?

The Internet contains a huge amount of excellent information, but you must examine the source critically.

Most Internet users locate the information they want through search engines, sites where you can type in your subject and receive a list of possible web pages to view. These search engines come and go with some regularity. As of 2005 <http://www.google.com> is the preferred engine. Use it, but take advantage of its advanced features in order to limit the number of irrelevant results you receive. When you look at resulting web pages, do so with a very critical eye. One good guide for debate research that is available on the Internet and is Deatabase, sponsored by the International Debate Education Association. It can be found at <http://www.deatabase.org/> .

Make sure to keep track of the sites you consulted. In recording an Internet source, use the standards provided for print information but also make sure to include the URL (universal resource locator or Web address) and the date when you viewed the page, as often web pages change quickly.

EXERCISES IN GATHERING INFORMATION

Indicate the specific steps you would take in finding the following material:

- ✦ You will be introducing a prominent person to an audience and need background for your introduction.
 - ✦ You want to find the profits of the European Union steel industry for 2004.
 - ✦ You want to find the number of AIDS cases in India in recent years.
 - ✦ You want to gather information about terrorist incidents over the past two years.
 - ✦ You want a good definition of the economic law of supply and demand.
 - ✦ You want to know the most prominent problems currently facing your national government.
 - ✦ You want to discover the more frequently used arguments, pro and con, on capital punishment and the abolition of the death penalty.
 - ✦ You want a brief history of labor unrest in the Republic of Korea during the past year.
 - ✦ You need information on the history of intercollegiate debating in the United States.
 - ✦ You want to conduct an intensive study of Internet-related legislation and want to begin with legal studies in this field.
 - ✦ You want factual proof that crime has either decreased or increased in your country during the past few years.
 - ✦ You want to know the name of the current World Cup football champion.
 - ✦ You want to know the amount of agricultural subsidies given farmers in the European Union.
-

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Meany, John, and Kate Shuster. *On That Point: An Introduction to Parliamentary Debate*. New York: International Debate Education Association, 2003. Chap. 8.

Snider, Alfred. "Evidence Drills." Debate Central. <http://debate.uvm.edu/code/083.html>.

Zeigelmüller, George, and Jack Kay. *Argumentation: Inquiry and Advocacy*, 3rd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997. Chap. 4 & 5.

Chapter XII

BUILDING A CASE

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- ♦ Types of topics
 - o Fact topics
 - o Value Topics
 - o Policy Topics
- ♦ Preparing a Case

The affirmative team begins the debate with a constructive speech that presents the case for the topic. This speech is the most important speech in the debate because it sets the stage for what follows. A well-organized and presented case can help create a vibrant and productive intellectual debate. On the other hand, a confusing and largely irrelevant case will drag the rest of the debate down to its level.

In this chapter we will explore what radio debaters should keep in mind while building a case in the first affirmative speech, discuss the three types of topics and how to construct them, and describe in general terms how to prepare a case.

The affirmative team's case is like an argumentative essay; it uses logic and information to persuade the readers (in your case listeners) of their viewpoint. Unlike an essay, however, the case will be argued against and defended in an extended oral argument.

The following are important features of any case:

- ♦ Rhetorical framing for introduction and conclusion. You should have a slogan, metaphor, or rhetorical device that you use to frame the case. Your team should use it in all of their speeches. For example, a team debating about increasing spending for road repairs might repeat, "the costs of improving our roads is small compared to the costs of not rebuilding our roads," or "our nation cannot travel into a better future

on the broken roads of the past.” Be creative and think of what will appeal to your audience.

- ✦ Clearly organized major arguments. A case should be composed of no more than three or four major arguments that you clearly identify to the audience. For example, tell the audience, “Our first major point in today’s debate is...” and so on, so they can focus on your main ideas.
- ✦ Use of best arguments. Include your best arguments in your first speech and make sure to explain them completely.
- ✦ Use of evidence (facts, past events, expert opinion, etc.) to support major arguments made. Do not neglect the “E(vidence)” portion of the ARE model when building arguments in the first speech. The only difference between the first speech and later ones is that in the first speech you have more time to develop the “R(easoning)” and “E(vidence)” components of the model. Do not be afraid to offer multiple items of evidence to support your major arguments.

TYPES OF TOPICS

Fact topics

Topics of fact invite the debaters to argue about what “is,” “was,” or “will be.” There are four types of fact topics (Branham 34):

Topics of fact regarding what “is” are generally claims of causality (x results in y), such as “Opium poppy production in Afghanistan causes the moral degradation of the Afghan people.” A topic concerned with causality should include such terms as “causes,” “leads to,” or “significantly contributes to.”

Topics of fact regarding a definition are hypotheses regarding people, events or things and classifying them as to what they “are.” For example, the topic, “Yassar Arafat’s Fatah fighters were Palestinian freedom fighters, not terrorists” defines a group of people into a certain category. Another example of a topic of definition would be, “Sun Yat-sen belongs among the great revolutionary figures of history.” A topic centered on definition should include such terms as “belongs to,” “is one of,” or “should be defined as.”

Topics of fact regarding what “was” are hypotheses regarding events or conditions of the past (for example, “Alexander the Macedonian’s military suc-

cess was due almost entirely to his superior use of heavy infantry”). A topic concerning conditions of the past should use the past tense, “was” or “did,” or a statement of the time period the topic deals with.

Topics of fact regarding what “will be” are predictions (for example, “The United Nations will fail to effectively implement the Millenium 2000 goals for reducing global poverty by 2005”). Predictive claims generally draw on an understanding of the past and present to postulate future events. This type of topic should use the future tense, such as “will,” specify the particular situation or event predicted, and include a point in the future so that the debate is not about the unlimited future.

You can construct fact cases as follows:

- ♦ Introduction: presentation of rhetorical slogan and recognition of current situation
- ♦ Major reasons to support the topic
 - o 1. Major argument (ARE)
 - o 2. Major argument (ARE)
 - o 3. Major argument (ARE)
 - o 4. No more than four major arguments (ARE)
- ♦ Conclusion: rhetorical slogan revisited

Fact topics are highly debatable. Our interpretation of facts changes through time, often through the process of debate and discussion. Debating these topics can help better understand what they accept as facts and how they came to accept them.

Value topics

Topics of value represent claims of evaluation, stipulating something as good or ill, ugly or beautiful, important or inconsequential, great or mediocre. Value topics are commonly associated with disputes on matters of ethics, religion, philosophy, or aesthetics, but they are also a regular part of our daily conversations. When we dispute the merits of a book or a restaurant, we are debating a value topic. When we face moral choices, we will probably dispute value topics with others (or ourselves in a struggle of conscience) in an effort to determine the proper course.

Debaters frequently assume that questions of value must be resolved in an absolute manner: Something is good or bad, ugly or beautiful. But values can be debated in comparison to one another, for example, “The pursuit of economic prosperity is less important than the preservation of environmental quality.”

You should structure value cases as follows:

- ✦ Introduction: presentation of rhetorical slogan and definition of the value question at hand in the topic
- ✦ Major reasons to support the topic
 - 1. Major argument (ARE)
 - 2. Major argument (ARE)
 - 3. Major argument (ARE)
- ✦ Conclusion: rhetorical slogan revisited

Policy topics

Policy topics concern social or individual action. They ask the question, “What should be done?” They can involve potential action at all levels of government (for example, “All nations should cease the killing of whales” or “The city of Kabul should adopt mandatory garbage recycling procedures”). But they can also focus on matters of personal or institutional decision and action (for example, “Every family in nation X should attempt to save at least 8% of its income” or “knowledge of at least one foreign language should be required for graduation from this university”).

Most policy topics about government action must include a plan in order to make sense. For example, if the topic were “Our country should adopt a graduated income tax,” the affirmative team would have to offer a proposal for such a tax, describe how it would operate, and explain how much money it would raise. In crafting policy plans, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- ✦ Specify an action or policy, including
 - How to do it
 - How much to do
 - How long it will take
- ✦ Specify the agent of that action.
- ✦ Explain implementation and funding.

Structure policy cases as follows:

- ✦ Introduction: presentation of rhetorical slogan
- ✦ Major arguments:
 - Harms of the current situation
 - Plan: who, what, how, cost
 - Benefits advantages
- ✦ Conclusion: rhetorical slogan revisited

Do not assume that a policy topic would not deal with issues of fact and value. These are important in evaluating the policy debated. In fact, in deciding how to handle a policy topic you need to determine what the facts of the situation are as well as the values you wish to achieve with your proposal.

Preparing A Case

Debaters enjoy building their case to support the topic because they decide what it is they will talk about and what they think is important. They control the ideas. The affirmative thinks in strategic terms about how they wish to organize the debate. They can set traps for negative teams, hide answers to their arguments, and lure their opponents into supporting weak arguments. They develop a sense of advocacy, deciding what they want to stand for and proposing changes in a public forum where their ideas can be tested.

You may wish to select approaches for your case based on the evidence you have to support it. You will need evidence that the listening audience can understand and feels is relevant. If possible, consult articles and books to develop a good understanding of the topic so that you can marshal available data to support the case.

Do not be discouraged if you find evidence that goes against your case. No case is perfect. After all, we stage radio debates because there are arguments on both sides of a topic. You can use evidence that counters your case to anticipate negative arguments. Just remember that you always want the preponderance of evidence to support your side of an issue.

While it is not essential, it is a good idea to choose a case approach that you support. Certainly, advocating ideas with which you do not agree is intellectually valuable. Remember the aphorism: "You do not understand your own position unless you understand the arguments against it." One of the benefits of debate is that it encourages you to scrutinize ideas and maintain flexible thinking. However, as beginning debaters, you will find it easier to research

and prepare your case if it is one you support. You will also make fewer contradictions when you debate because your case fits your other beliefs and values.

The affirmative case is the audience's first impression of the side, and as we know, first impressions are very important. Choose your language carefully. Use colorful but sophisticated language and strongly worded statements explaining what your arguments prove and why they are important.

Early in your speech, perhaps after the rhetorical slogan and introduction, read the topic and then give two or three sentences that explain the thesis behind it. This insures that audience will understand your major ideas before presenting evidence and minor supportive arguments.

Present your major arguments in a clear, organized way, through the identification of several "contentions," or issues. Present only a few contentions and match them with the topic's stock issues. Word the contentions clearly and simply so that the audience can remember them. You or your team should repeat these contentions throughout the debate. Avoid using numerous sub-points; too many can make your argument appear fragmented and trivial. Present your arguments in meaningful groups, for example, all the arguments about why the proposal solves the problem followed by all the arguments as to why the present system is flawed. Use and adjust the models for case construction (discussed above) as necessary.

EXERCISES IN BUILDING A CASE

CASE CONSTRUCTION

Examine one of the following topics and outline a case to support it. Make sure that all of the elements called for above are included. Make sure to include rhetorical framing and various forms of evidence. Then meet as a group or with your teacher and review your work.

Topics:

- ✦ Family is the most important part of a person's life.
- ✦ Foreign military forces should leave our country.
- ✦ In order to have a better future we must throw off the chains of our history.
- ✦ The national government should substantially increase funding for women's education.

- ✦ Those who committed crimes under the previous regime should be prosecuted and punished.
- ✦ Our lives will be better than the lives of our parents.
- ✦ The United Nations has failed to reduce war and conflict.
- ✦ Our nation will benefit by increased integration into the global economic system.
- ✦ There should be a strict separation between religion and government.

FORMS OF EVIDENCE AND SUPPORT

Working in pairs, choose a topic from the list above and take 10 minutes to come up with examples, statistics, or other forms of support for that topic. Share the results with the other teams.

RHETORICAL FRAMING

Every good case should have a slogan, an expression, or an analogy that gives it additional rhetorical power. Think of speeches like Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" or Ronald Reagan's "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." Work with a partner and choose a topic. Take 10 minutes to come up with a rhetorical frame and compose an introduction and a conclusion using it. Share your material with the entire group.

NEGATIVE ANTICIPATION

Work with a partner. Take 10 minutes to design a first speech on a topic of your choice. Take another 10 minutes to develop major opposition arguments and determine how you would answer them. Share your material with the group.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Jarvis, Jason. "Affirmative Policy Case." Debate Central. <http://debate.uvm.edu/watchintermpolicyvideo.html>.

Meany, John, and Kate Shuster. *Art, Argument and Advocacy: Mastering Parliamentary Debate*. New York: International Debate Education Association, 2002. Chap. 4.

Zeigelmüller, George, and Jack Kay. *Argumentation: Inquiry and Advocacy*, 3rd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997. Chap. 18.

Chapter XIII

ATTACKING A CASE

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Defense: Attack the Affirmative Case
- Offense: Attack the Topic Itself

One of the defining characteristics of debate is clash. Audiences look for specific disagreement when deciding who did the better job of debating. The center of that clash experience is the negative team's analysis and refutation of the affirmative case (the affirmative's first speech). In order to win, however, the negative must go further. It must introduce other issues that team members feel warrant the rejection of the affirmative's case and the affirmative side of the topic itself.

A sports metaphor will be useful here. In the international game of football (soccer), teams have offense and defense. The defense tries to stop the other side from scoring. The offense tries to score goals. It is similar with debate arguments, especially those of the negative. The negative team moves defensively to refute the case of the affirmative (stop them from scoring). But it also moves offensively, usually in the first negative speech, introducing independent arguments as to why the topic should be rejected (scoring points to win). Just as the only sure way to win in football is to play both offense and defense, so the only way to win a debate is to present independent arguments against the case. Applying this football analogy to debate, even if the affirmative case does have some merit, outstanding negative offense may produce a 3-2 negative victory.

This chapter will teach you how to refute the affirmative case (play defense) and introduce independent reasons why the topic is false (play offense). Although this chapter is directed to the negative team, affirmative debaters will also find it very useful. The discussion of refutation will help the affirmative learn to refute negative arguments, while that on weighing and comparing issues will help them learn how to explain why they should win the debate.

DEFENSE: ATTACK THE AFFIRMATIVE CASE

Goals of attacking the affirmative case

The following are the basic goals of attacking the affirmative case:

- ✦ Attack their harms and advantages. The affirmative will try to establish specific scenarios or logical conclusions to reinforce their general claim about the topic. Usually they discuss a social problem or area of controversy and attempt to show that their solution or conclusion would be preferable.
- ✦ Use case turns. A turn is an argument that captures what the other team is saying and “turns the tables” on them. You can turn the plan in a policy case (“My opponent’s plan makes the problem worse”), or you can turn the advantage in a policy case (“That isn’t a harm, it is actually a benefit”). This tactic not only eliminates the affirmative’s advantage, but also creates a new reason to vote the negative. Thus, turning a portion of the case provides offense as well as defense. For example, the affirmative may claim to increase industrial activity in a country and may claim that this is a good thing, but the negative can counter that industrial activity may be harmful because it disrupts existing living patterns and also creates harmful pollution.
- ✦ Defeat a major issue. Since the affirmative’s case is often built on a series of linked issues, especially in a policy debate, the negative should attack the weakest of these issues. If one link in this argumentative chain is broken, the negative may have a reasonable claim that the affirmative case is no longer valid.

Organizational guidelines in attacking the case

Sound organization enhances any debate presentation, but it is most important for the negative team when attacking the affirmative case. In responding to the affirmative, the negative must use the structure of the affirmative case. To do so:

1. Number your arguments on each major case argument. Many debaters try to analyze each argument in the affirmative case separately. While this strategy might work if they had unlimited speech time, it will not work given the time constraints of formal debate. Nevertheless, you must retain the sense of clash. The most effective way to do so is to launch a number of arguments against one component of the affirmative case, numbering your

arguments consecutively. For example, a negative speaker might say, “Please turn to their argument, “The current government has failed to improve the lives of the people” where we will argue. 1. ARGUMENT...2. ARGUMENT...3. ARGUMENT...”

2. Attack the case in the order it is presented. Examine the affirmative case in an organized manner. Do not jump from point to point. Most affirmative cases take a step-by-step approach to presenting the team’s position. If you refute the case in the order it was presented, the audience can follow your arguments easily.
3. Centralize your argumentation. Many negative speakers make the mistake of repeating their arguments so that they waste time and weaken their position. In some cases, speakers repeat the same basic argument with mild rhetorical changes. This misuses time and does not further the debate. The affirmative simply answers the argument once (very thoroughly) and then refers all repetitions back to this answer. In other cases, the negative puts different arguments about the same general topic in different places in the debate. For example, the negative might put arguments about how the proposed plan will not solve the problem in two different constructive speeches. This fragmentation dilutes the argument. Say it once and put it with other arguments of its kind.

Strategic willingness to concede portions of case

You should base your refutation and attack of the affirmative case on strategy, not just the reflex action of disagreeing with everything the affirmative says. If an affirmative argument is difficult to disprove, accept it and address a more useful issue. This saves time and shows that you are not unreasonable. Often some of the most useful arguments for the negative can be those the affirmative have advocated. If the negative can use affirmative positions as a foundation for their arguments, they will be in a strong position because the affirmative team cannot withdraw from its case. Consequently, the negative may wish to concede various portions of an affirmative case if the concession strategically promotes the negative’s interests.

Specific techniques for attacking the affirmative case

The following techniques should become “habits of mind” for negative speakers attacking the affirmative case and also for debaters in other situations as well.

1. Utilize challenges. A *challenge* is an argument that indicates inadequacies in an opponent's arguments and urges their rejection. It identifies logical and developmental failures in argumentation and then reevaluates the argument based on these inadequacies. If the affirmative fail to deal with these challenges and fill in these inadequacies, the negative reevaluation stands.

The format for an effective challenge is simple:

- ✦ Specify the lacking element. Indicate what is missing or imperfect about the argument. Perhaps an argument is missing a logical step, involves an argumentative fallacy, is not supported by evidence, or confuses the specific with the general. Point out these failings when attacking the affirmative case.
 - ✦ Demonstrate its importance. Now that you have found a problem in an argument, you must reevaluate it. Many debaters erroneously assume that because an affirmative argument is not perfect it should be rejected. They would be far more credible if they said that the argument is not as strong as the affirmative asserts or that it lacks relevance to the point it is trying to prove. The affirmative will find this approach much harder to answer than mere pleas for perfection. And if the affirmative cannot answer the
2. Indict affirmative evidence. Evidence is the support on which many arguments rest. To succeed, the negative must point out major inadequacies in affirmative evidence. Here are some simple techniques for doing so.
 - ✦ Match the evidence with the claim. Often the affirmative's claim is much broader and stronger than the evidence supports. Negative speakers should pay close attention to the wording of affirmative evidence, and then launch challenges against important pieces of evidence that does not match the claim.
 - ✦ Analyze the strength of the evidence. Probability is a continuum that begins at "absolutely will not happen" and runs to "absolutely will happen." Few ideas exist at either end of this spectrum; most fall somewhere in the middle. Identify and analyze the qualifiers contained in the evidence and challenge claims that go beyond what the evidence supports.

- ✦ Be aware of the date of the information. Is the evidence dated? In most circumstances, recent evidence is better than old. Nevertheless, there are some instances where the date of the evidence does not matter. Competing evidence about the need humans have to be loved and respected would not be decided based on one example that is six months older than another. However, competing evidence about North Korea's intention to acquire nuclear weapons might be decided based on the date of the evidence, especially if the situation has recently changed. Point out that the affirmative's evidence is dated only if events are likely to have changed since it first appeared. Recency can be important, but it is not an ironclad standard for refuting evidence.
- ✦ Evaluate source qualifications. We use evidence in a debate to support our arguments with fact and expert opinion. Negative teams should ask for the qualifications of affirmative sources while providing the same information for theirs. If the affirmative cannot establish that their source is qualified, the negative can then ask the audience to support its qualified sources.
- ✦ Investigate source bias. Often those who write about important topics are fervent believers in a specific approach or have a vested interest in making certain statements. Of course, everyone who has an opinion is not necessarily biased, and some source bias is rarely grounds for rejecting the evidence entirely. But you should point out serious bias to reduce the strength of that evidence.

Techniques for dealing with common claims

Clashing with affirmative impact claims

Affirmative teams often claim that there is a "problem" and that "harms" are taking place, and then argue that their policy plan will solve or reduce these. Here are some simple tactics you should consider in evaluating and analyzing such claims.

1. Demand and analyze scenarios. A *scenario* is a specification of a series of events that results in an outcome. Specification is critical here. A scenario should not say "a war will start" but that "a war between X and Y will start if A happens, and that war will result in B." In traditional argumentation parlance, this is known as *demonstration*. A general claim ("unprotected nuclear weapons will be misused") needs to be demonstrated through a scenario ("unprotected nuclear weapons used during coming ethnic con-

flicts in India and Pakistan will cause millions of deaths”). The negative should require specification and demonstration of a scenario from the affirmative when they make impact claims. You can then examine lines of causation and influence, and expose weak elements in their argument.

2. Attack value or qualitative claims. Qualitative claims are those that are not readily susceptible to numerical evaluation. They tend to be abstract. For example, freedom, equality, and justice, are important concepts, but they cannot be evaluated in numerical terms (11 percent more justice or 25 percent more equality). Nevertheless, value claims do have their numerical dimensions, which you can use in evaluating them. Here are some grounds on which to challenge such claims:
 - ♦ Number of people impacted. Indicate that this qualitative impact occurs in a small number of cases and is therefore not significant. When one person’s freedom is compromised, it is unfortunate. However, it is far worse if millions of people were affected.
 - ♦ Amount the value is infringed. The affirmative’s qualitative claim must not escalate beyond the specific dimensions they describe. Do not let the affirmative claim the whole value when it is only partially compromised. For example, the affirmative may claim that a school’s refusal to let students publish what they want in the school newspaper violates the First Amendment and then talk about the importance of preserving First Amendment rights. The negative team must make sure that the discussion of this incident does not elevate to an affirmative claim that the entire weight of the First Amendment should be given to its argument, since only a few high school students lost their rights—in the forum of the high school newspaper
 - ♦ Not a preferred value. Indicate that those who are experiencing qualitative losses do not object to the loss. Freedom, justice, privacy, and other rights are only as valuable as individuals make them. If people value privacy, then its loss might be serious. If they do not, its loss would be hardly noticed. If individuals do not object to an affirmative qualitative impact, the affirmative speaker cannot assert that they are victims.
 - ♦ Trades off with other values. Indicate that by affirming one value another is compromised. Some values may be “mutually eroding,” in that achievement of or movement toward one may reduce achievement of or movement toward another. Liberty and security, privacy and community, equality and justice, these are just a few of the values that are mutually eroding in some situations.

- ✦ Cultural bias. Indicate that affirmative values are not important because they are culturally embedded. Some value claims are based in a specific cultural context. These values are less important than those that are more broadly recognized and globally accepted. The negative can claim that the affirmative is ethnocentric and then counter with broader value or impact claims to support their position.

Attack factual or quantitative claims

Quantitative claims (such as “many jobs are being lost”) are often best analyzed in terms of their qualitative dimensions. Here are some common and simple grounds on which you might refute quantitative impact claims:

1. The amount of times it happens or number impacted. Obviously, an event that costs 10,000 lives is more significant than an event that costs 1,000 lives. Make the affirmative prove a number with evidence and then try to reduce that number. Do not understate the number, and remember to use it consistently.
2. The amount of harm of each instance. Evaluate the seriousness of each impact. Something may happen to one million people, but if what happens is not serious, your audience will not think it important. As the negative, you can use this tactic to show that your arguments outweigh affirmative claims.
3. Probability. The affirmative must indicate the probability of the future event they claim. One formula debaters have used to evaluate impact is to state it as a function of probability (the certainty of the event taking place) multiplied by harm (if it should happen). A 50 percent probable event costing 10,000 lives is worth 5,000 lives, etc. Too often future scenarios are evaluated as 100 percent or 0 percent, when the reality is somewhere in between, especially if the negative is clashing substantively with affirmative claims. For example, the affirmative team may have slightly better evidence that China will attack Taiwan than the negative team does, but that does not mean that China will attack Taiwan, but only that there is more probability that they will. Consequently, the harms of that scenario can be reduced accordingly.
4. Time frame. Traditionally, those events that will occur in the immediate future dominate our attention. We know more about them than those that are more distant in time and so can better relate to them. This is traditionally called “future discounting.” Negative debaters should challenge affir-

- mative scenarios for their time frame, “When will this happen and how long will it take?” You may not be able to defeat a scenario by asking this question, but it may strengthen your arguments that have a shorter time frame.
5. **Reversibility.** Losing your wallet and losing your arm are two different types of events. One can be reversed but the other can't. We think of events that can be reversed as less important than those that cannot. For example, some evidence indicates that once the Amazonian rain forest is chopped down, it will not be able to grow back and repair itself, thus making deforestation of the Amazon more important than some other ecological disaster that can be repaired. This is a logical distinction, because mistakes made in terms of reversible events can be repaired while mistake made in terms of irreversible events cannot. The negative should point out if affirmative scenarios are reversible while negative scenarios are not.
 6. **Moral requirement.** You can explain away some quantitative benefits or harms by contrasting them with a moral requirement. For example, a parent would not kill his child even if it were necessary for the survival of the entire community. The utilitarian logic would be clear, that the “needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, and the one,” yet he has a moral requirement to protect his child. The negative may be able to justify a quantitatively unfortunate situation because of the morally required actions involved.
 7. **Voluntary risk.** Some situations involve voluntary risk (for example, smoking cigarettes); we choose our actions. In other situations, however, the risk is involuntary (for example, being killed by an intruder in your home). Traditionally, this notion of risk has been cross-applied to the value of personal freedom. British philosopher John Stuart Mill, for example, thought that as long as you damaged no one else, you should be free to damage yourself. More current thinkers have felt that while voluntary risk is different from involuntary risk, the former, while not a social good, was not nearly as serious as the latter. Where appropriate, the negative should argue that affirmative impact scenarios involve voluntary risk. You may not be able to defeat a scenario using this argument, but you could outweigh the affirmative with negative scenarios that involved involuntary risks.
 8. **Percentage of the total.** One way to make something seem small is to compare it to something big. For example, if you point out that although 3 percent of the population was effected by some malady 97 percent of the

population was not, you would make the 3 percent figure insignificant. This tactic is only marginally effective, however, and must be in combination with others in this section. It can reduce the value of the claim someone is making, but will rarely be a winning issue by itself.

9. Comparisons through time and space. Descriptions of impact scenarios are always statements that are based on expectations and so are trapped in time and space. For example, we have different expectations about sanitation than people living during the Middle Ages. What seemed like a clean city to them would seem quite dirty to us. Comparisons can be useful in reducing the apparent magnitude of affirmative impact scenarios. For example, while things are not perfect, they may be: a) better than at any time in history, or b) better than in any other country in the world.

These techniques are useful not only for attacking affirmative claims but also for comparing issues in the later speeches of the debate. For example, the affirmative claim that their plan will protect the environment and reduce some pollution. The negative may show that this plan will damage the economy and cause people to lose jobs. You could use the standards above to compare the two events. Generally the debater will embrace the standard that makes their issue look more important. In this case, “some pollution will have to be tolerated so that people can have jobs and support their families.”

Attack the affirmative plan

The affirmative gets no credit for simply identifying a problem; they must offer a plan that solves it. As the negative, you should show that their plan has little value. Here are some basic techniques for attacking affirmative proposals.

1. Find the amount of problem they claim to solve. Even the best affirmative evidence will not claim to solve 100 percent of the problem. In fact, most affirmative teams can find evidence that indicates that their plan will solve only “some” or “much” of the problem. Point this out and state specific amounts—the plan will only solve 30 percent of the problem, less than half of the problem, etc. *Make the affirmative quantify their solution.* If they cannot produce evidence to support a high figure, you should suggest a low one.
2. Attack specific approaches. The affirmative will use a specific technique

- to solve a problem. Use evidence that indicates that this approach is not effective.
3. Attack their evidence. Often the affirmative will find an example of where some solution has worked on a small scale and try to apply it to a larger universe. For example, just because school uniforms helped academic achievement in an upper-class school in Chicago doesn't mean it will work in such poor areas as Harlem or South Central Los Angeles or that it will work in Kigali or Kabul. The Chicago school might have been atypical; the study size might have been too small to be statistically significant or be statistically skewed; or the result being measured was not very specific ("better learning environment," what exactly does that mean?). Any time the affirmative tries to generalize their solvency from a small example, you can challenge their arguments.
 4. Find alternative causes. Most things have multiple causes. For example school violence might be an indirect result of students wearing gang related clothing. Uniforms will solve this problem, but they do not address other causes of school violence (poverty, poor conflict resolution skills, violence at home, etc.) Find those alternative causes and show how the affirmative's plan does nothing about them.
 5. Find ways for people to sabotage the plan. If you can prove that people don't like or want the plan, you can show that they will want to sabotage it and thus prove that the plan will fail. To create this argument, first find a reason why people will want to sabotage the plan (for example, gang members will hate the uniforms) and then find a way for them to sabotage it (gang members will adopt different gang markers like hairstyle, gestures, etc.).

OFFENSE: ATTACK THE TOPIC ITSELF

Negative debaters should not allow the issues of the affirmative case to dominate the debate. It is extremely useful to introduce important issues ignored by the affirmative to show that their advocacy is not justified. These include such arguments as disadvantages (the proposal of the affirmative will have harmful effects), the counterplan (our different proposal would be better), and the critique (the assumptions of the affirmative are incorrect or evil).

Disadvantage argument

A disadvantage is an argument stating that if we adopted the proposal of the other team something bad would result. Thus, disadvantages are compared to the advantages to decide whether the effects of the case are more advantageous than disadvantageous.

A disadvantage argument has the following components:

- ✦ Name: what you want to call the argument in the debate.
- ✦ Thesis: the basic story of the argument. Present this first so the audience is familiar with the basic idea of the argument before you go into detail.
- ✦ Link: reason(s) why adopting their policy would cause the disadvantage to occur. The link states why the affirmative plan causes this problem to happen.
- ✦ Internal link: other lines of argument needed to reach the impact. Sometimes when the plan changes something, it does not cause an immediate problem. This is when an internal link is needed. The internal link states that when the plan causes something to change (the link), then that causes something else, and that then causes the problem (the impact). The disadvantage is often a chain of reasoning and the internal link is one of those parts of the chain.
- ✦ Impact: describes the problem that will happen and why it is bad. The impact is usually something very large and harmful. The negative uses this impact to say that the affirmative plan should not be adopted because, although some aspects of it may be beneficial, the problems the plan causes are worse.

Structure of a disadvantage argument

Most disadvantages begin with the link and end with the impact. Here is a simple example. In this case, the affirmative suggest that students be required to learn Chinese.

NAME: Curriculum Trade Off

THESIS: There is only so much time in the school day. When the affirmative team adds new requirements to the curriculum, something else has to be cut. Art will be cut, and art is a much more valuable than what it is they are adding.

- A. Affirmative adds study of X to the required curriculum. (link)
- B. Because the length of the school day is set, some subject will have to be cut (makes link unique)
- C. Art is the first subject to be cut to make room for new courses (internal link)
- D. Art is extremely valuable to education and personal development (impact)

Types of disadvantages

Debaters can develop an infinite number of types of disadvantages. Here are a few of the most common:

- ✦ **Cost, and what gets cut.** Most government policy proposals will cost money. These funds have to come from somewhere. The negative can claim that the plan will be expensive and then argue that raising the funds to finance the plan will be harmful (e.g., increased taxes on an already overtaxed population) or that the funds will have to be cut from a more important part of the budget (e.g., law enforcement).
- ✦ **Backlash.** The negative might prove that the plan will be unpopular and have harmful repercussions.
- ✦ **Internal political effects.** If a plan is very unpopular, it may damage the ability of the party in power to pass more important programs. If the plan is very popular, it may allow the party to enact harmful ones.
- ✦ **International effects.** Often policy changes, particularly those in foreign policy, affect international relations. Friendly nations may be alienated by the plan, or unfriendly nations may be emboldened by it.
- ✦ **Distortion of markets and economies.** A plan that involves government intervention in the marketplace may distort the flow of goods and services or dissuade people from investing in the economy. If there is a shortage of cement in Afghanistan, for example, the government may have to choose between building roads or repairing houses. If the government heavily regulates businesses, people might not want to invest in the economy.
- ✦ **Harm to specific individuals.** Some extremely broad plans might be used against certain individuals. For example, the government might

use new security powers to fight terrorism to spy on and sabotage their political opponents.

- ✦ Bad precedent. The plan may set a harmful precedent. For example, a plan making it easier for families and doctors to stop providing medical treatment to the incurably ill may establish a precedent for withholding care from those who cannot afford expensive care or are old and unlikely to be socially productive.

Counterplan argument

Sometimes the current situation is bad, and it is difficult for the negative to defend it. To avoid giving the affirmative an advantage in such a situation, the negative may offer a reasonable offer—a counterplan. It is almost always presented in the first negative speech and then defended throughout the debate.

The counterplan must be a reasonable alternative to the affirmative plan. You can use two standard types of arguments to show that the counterplan is a reasonable:

- ✦ Mutual exclusivity: The counterplan and the affirmative plan cannot coexist.
- ✦ Net benefits: Adopting just the counterplan is better than adopting *both* the affirmative plan and the counterplan. Often you can show this by indicating that a disadvantage of the affirmative plan does not apply to the counterplan.

The arguments surrounding a counterplan may seem complex and confusing, but like many debate concepts, once you apply them to everyday situations they make a lot more sense. Let's use the example of what you and your friends should do this evening.

- ✦ The affirmative says that you should go to a movie. That is their plan.
- ✦ The negative counterplan is that you should not go to a movie but go out to dinner.
- ✦ The affirmative response is that the counterplan is not a reasonable substitute because you can do both.
- ✦ The negative replies that you do not want to do both because a) you cannot afford to do both because of limited funds (net benefits competition), and b) because dinner and the movie are at the same time (mutual exclusivity competition).

- ✦ The affirmative replies that you have enough money to do both and that you can go to dinner and then see a later show.
- ✦ The negative finally explains the movie is terrible because it is racist and sexist (disadvantage to the plan).

Just like the affirmative case, the counterplan must solve a problem or produce an advantage. The affirmative may wish to argue that the counterplan has no advantage because it “doesn’t work.”

Critique argument

The critique is an argument used by the negative to attack the affirmative’s fundamental assumptions. Sometimes the affirmative makes these assumptions by choice, and sometimes they make them because it’s their job to defend the topic. In either case, the negative focuses on what the other team says in the debate or what they propose to do in their plan. For example, the affirmative might say that foreigners should not be allowed to attend our schools because they are evil people who will have a bad influence on our children. The negative might then use a critique to point out the racism and xenophobia in the case justifies voting against the affirmative.

A critique is a way to criticize the assumptions an affirmative makes or the language they use to make their arguments. What is an assumption? An assumption is a part of an argument that people think is true but never explicitly prove. How are assumptions revealed? Sometimes assumptions are revealed by the language we use to make our claims and arguments. Sometimes assumptions are revealed in the way we claim to know something. The first type of criticism is a language critique, and the second type is a philosophical critique.

How does the negative attack the assumptions? The negative must identify the assumption, explain how it links to the critique, and describe the implications of the critique. Generally, critiques can have three implications. They might show that the affirmative case does not prove the harm, they might prove that the affirmative is unable to solve the harm, or they might establish that the case will have consequences similar to those of a disadvantage. By rejecting the assumptions the affirmative makes, a critique provides grounds for voting against the affirmative. That is why it is an offensive argument.

Critiques are valuable arguments for several reasons:

- ✦ Critiques are highly generic: They can be applied to a large variety of

cases. The topic always makes critical assumptions, such as who should act, how the policy should be implemented, why a particular area is important, etc. The critique provides a general argument that can be used to attack these critical assumptions.

- ✦ Critiques have multiple consequences: They can minimize the affirmative advantage while also providing counter arguments.
- ✦ Critiques integrate many arguments into one position. Because the case arguments frequently stem from the critique, the negative has a coherent position.
- ✦ Critiques frequently have important implications. These kinds of arguments must be resolved first, usually before the substantive issues of the debate. For example, the negative could argue that policies that reinforce racism are so evil that they must be avoided absolutely. If the affirmative case is racist, it should be rejected regardless of the substantive benefits that might result from it.

Types of critiques

Common types of critiques include:

- ✦ Prior critiques. These arguments urge the audience to strike a preemptive blow against some failure of the other team. They point out why some errors deserve to be rejected even before the issues of the case are examined. Examples might include language-based value objections, questions of jurisdiction, evidence fabrication, etc.
- ✦ Value prioritization critiques. These arguments challenge the basic values of the affirmative case or attempt to guide the audience in understanding the preeminence of particular values. For example, if the affirmative says that freedom is the most important value, the negative might offer a description of a world with complete freedom and no restraints—a vicious jungle where the strong prey on the weak.
- ✦ Foundation critiques. These arguments examine the assumptions undergirding systems and positions. If a team is unable to defend the basic assumptions underlying their case, questions of bad assumptions elsewhere seems hardly relevant. An example might be a critique of capitalism as a system characterized by greed and exploitation against a case that claimed to use free trade pacts as vehicles of global economic growth.

EXERCISES IN ATTACKING A CASE

ATTACK EVIDENCE DRILL (DEFENSE)

Critique the following evidence examples:

1. Mister Y, the baseball star, says, "Smokies are the least harmful of all cigarettes."
2. Married couples just aren't getting along as well together as they used to. In 1920 only one marriage in six ended in divorce while today two in four ends in divorce.
3. Parental care of children is becoming more and more lax. The head of the police reports, "Juvenile crime is on the increase."
4. The president of the mineworkers says, "The workers of our mines have never gotten their fair share of the fruits of industry."
5. The American Automobile Association reports show that Nevada spends more per capita on roads than New York. Obviously, Nevada must have better roads than New York."
6. The president of Russia testifies, "Russia wants only peace."
7. The head of the Catholic Church testifies that the chief causes of divorce lie in hasty marriages.
8. If 35 percent of the consumers, 60 percent of management, and 90 percent of labor are for the repeal of the law, we can readily conclude that the people are overwhelmingly for its repeal.
9. A cabinet member in charge of the UK Department of Defense says, "Our department has the most efficient organization that it has ever had."
10. The farmers of the United States are worse off than the factory workers. According to the United States Treasury Department reports, the annual income of the average factory worker is five hundred dollars more than that of the average farmer.
11. We can readily conclude that the people today are having trouble paying for hospital care. The president of the Association of Hospitals reports, "Due to increased costs, we have had to double our charges on hospital services over the past ten years."

DRILLS ON VALUES

Analyze the following value claims based on the guidelines given above:

1. Freedom of speech is more important than security from terrorism.
2. Security from terrorism is more important than freedom of speech.
3. Economic growth should always be pursued as a goal.
4. Freedom of the press is more important than the privacy of government officials.
5. Public nudity at beaches is obscene and dangerous.
6. All over the world we must guarantee equal rights for women.
7. During divorce proceedings custody of the children should be given to the mother as a right.
8. Democracy is the best form of government.
9. Personal information should always be considered as private and citizens should not be required to disclose it.
10. Art is always valuable and should never be destroyed.

DRILLS ON GENERAL DEFENSE

Using one of the topics for which you prepared a case:

1. Anticipate possible proposals and craft basic answers to them showing that such proposals will not solve the problems identified.
2. Plan for disadvantages, counterplans, and critiques.
3. Review your ideas with others and/or trainers.

DRILLS ON ATTACKING PLANS (DEFENSE AND OFFENSE)

Take an affirmative plan and:

1. Outline what the proposal is.
2. Compose arguments against the problems they are likely to be addressing.
3. Compose arguments against the plan being proposed.
4. Compose two disadvantages to the plan.

5. Compose one critique of the case.
6. Review your ideas with others and/or trainers.

OFFENSE DRILL

Work with a partner. Take a topic on which you have worked previously and develop two offensive arguments. After 15 minutes, share your arguments with the group.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Chapter XIV

CROSS-EXAMINATION AND QUESTIONS

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- ✦ Guidelines for Asking Questions
- ✦ Guidelines for Answering Questions

Listeners and audiences find the interactive parts of the debate extremely interesting. While every part of the debate includes a clash of ideas, cross-examination and question periods present clearer contests between individuals. The rapid back-and-forth of questioning makes the entire debate more stimulating.

The cross-examination period is a time when the person who is not going to speak next questions the person who has just finished speaking. In other formats using questions, members of the audience, topic area experts or commentators may be called on to ask questions.

Cross-examination and other forms of questions have six objectives:

1. To clarify points made by debaters
2. To expose errors made by debaters
3. To identify important issues ignored by debaters
4. To obtain admissions that can be used later
5. To setup arguments to be made later
6. To show the audience how intelligent you are.

Most debaters ignore the value of good cross-examination and questions, because they concentrate on their individual speeches. Remember, valuable minutes in the debate are spent in cross-examination; it should be a meaningful and essential part of the debate. Do not underestimate the impact that

cross-examination may have on your listeners. It will show the listeners how sharp and spontaneous a debater you are. Invisible bias always occurs in those listening to a debate, and listeners will often want to side with the sharpest team. Good, effective cross-examination can play an important psychological role in winning over your listeners.

Be dynamic. Have your questions ready, and answer questions actively and with confidence whenever you can. The image you project is very important to the audience. The question-and-answer or cross-examination period is the one opportunity the audience has to compare you with opponents side-by-side.

GUIDELINES FOR ASKING QUESTIONS

1. Ask a short question designed to get a short answer. This saves time and makes you appear more focused.
2. Indicate the object of your question. Let everyone know what it is you are asking about.
3. Don't signal the argument you want to make with your question. If you want to gain an admission, don't make it too obvious.
4. Don't ask questions your opponents won't answer properly. "So, we win, right?" Understand that they are trying to answer in ways that help them, not you.
5. Make questions seem important, even if you are merely attempting to clarify. Don't say, "I did not understand X, can you explain it?" Rather, say "Can you explain the reasoning behind your claim of X?"
6. Politeness is a must. Always be polite to your opponents. However, you do not have to be polite to their arguments.
7. Approach issues from a non-obvious direction. Then trap them. Imagine what you would be arguing to get them to say what you want, and then make it look like you are arguing that. You can trap them this way. Instead of asking questions like, "Your proposal will be very expensive, won't it?" try asking question like "How can the plan work if it does not have outreach mechanism X or funding for Y?" They will be glad to say that their plan will contain such things, which, of course, will be expensive.
8. Make notes about items you wish to question during the previous speech or even before the debate.

9. Avoid open-ended questions unless you are sure your opponents are clueless and cannot answer it, which is very rare. An open-ended question such as “Can you explain X?” only gives the other side a chance to make a speech for their benefit.
10. Face the audience, not your opponent. Radio listeners, of course, will not notice this.
11. Remember (this is very important): The answers you receive must be integrated into your arguments later in the debate.

GUIDELINES FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Remember that most questions are a fishing expedition to get you to say something that can be used against you.

1. Answer concisely. Keep it short and to the point. This makes you appear in control of the information and also avoids careless mistakes you might make while rambling.
2. When in doubt as to how to answer, refer to something you have already said whenever possible. This is safe and your opponent cannot trap you.
3. Answer based on your position in the debate so far. Keep options open. Do not address arguments made in questions that were yet not presented in the debate. In this case reply with “When you make this fully developed argument we will be able to answer it.”
4. Don’t make promises of what you or your partner will do later. Keep your options open. If your opponent challenges you to produce a specific fact or item of information, do not immediately volunteer to produce it in a later speech. Instead, say, “When you show that this information is necessary and essential, we will be glad to discuss it.”
5. Qualify your answers. “Perhaps,” “sometimes” and “often” can be useful qualifiers and are probably more accurate than “always” or “never.”
6. Answer only relevant questions. If a question is not relevant to the topic or the speech you have made, try saying, “This does not seem to be a relevant issue so far in the debate. I will be pleased to answer all relevant questions.”
7. Address the audience; they are the people you are trying to convince.

8. Do not answer hypothetical questions. Be wary of questions that begin with, "Now suppose X happens, then what would happen to your argument?" Your opponent must prove the hypothetical before you answer it. Instead, reply with "that is a hypothetical question, and if you prove X will happen then we will be glad to answer any argument you make about it."
9. Don't say "I don't know," say "I am not sure at this time" or "I am not a library, but within ten minutes in one I could find that answer."

EXERCISES IN ASKING AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS

1. Take more time in a practice debate for questions and answers. Stop after each question and answer and evaluate the performance with those watching.
 2. As you prepare for a debate on a certain topic, develop lines of questioning designed to lure the other team into making damaging admissions. Remember that you should appear to arguing something other than your plan, thus luring your opponents into making admissions.
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GLOSSARY

The terms below are not specific to debate: They are broadly applicable in testing and evaluating ideas and advocacy. This glossary is starting point. Find out what others actually mean when they use these terms. They might not mean exactly what is written here. After all, meaning is found not in words, but in people. The glossary also includes terms that are not used in *Voices in the Sky* but which you may encounter in the world of debate.

Add-on Advantage

A new advantage presented by the affirmative in the second speech.

Affirmative

The team that supports the topic.

Affirmative case

The initial presentation of the affirmative team in which they outline why the topic should be accepted.

Affirmative plan

- 1) The policy action advocated by the affirmative,
and
- 2) any one of many possible ways of specifying the action in the topic.

Agent of the topic (or agent of change)

That power or institution called for by the topic to carry out topical action.

Agent counterplans

A counterplan that argues that the plan being implemented through one agent of change should, instead, be implemented by another.

A priori

Literally, prior to. Usually an argument that indicates that a particular issue should be resolved before all others. It is frequently used to argue that procedural concerns should be considered before substantive issues.

Audience

Those who are physically present during a debate or, in the case of a radio debate, are listening.

Brief

A prepared argument with evidence and arguments already structured on the page.

Brink

In debate, the point at which a disadvantage actually happens. It explains why a disadvantage impact will happen if the plan is passed but is not happening now, because we are “at the brink” but not “over the brink” of this event actually taking place.

Burden of proof

Whoever first introduces an idea into the debate has the burden of proving it to be true and should do so right after introducing that claim.

Burden of rebuttal

If a major issue is presented by one side, the other side has the obligation to refute it. Silence by one side toward an issue raised by the other is a sign of agreement.

Case

The basic arguments for the topic offered in the first affirmative speaker.

Categorical deduction

An argument stating that all members of a category have certain characteristics, placing something within that category, and thus claiming that it must have those characteristics.

Causal argument

An argument stating that one thing leads to or causes another.

Channel

A specific avenue of communication through which meaning and information are transmitted

Circumvention Negative

argument proving that the plan will not solve the problem. People are opposed to the plan (motivation), they will find a way to circumvent the plan (mechanism), and this will stop the plan from being effective (impact).

Citation

Where a piece of evidence came from. Usually includes author, title, date, page number. Should be sufficient to allow someone to locate that evidence again.

Clash

Actively attacking and refuting positions of the opposing team.

Commentator

A person not directly involved in the debate who is invited to ask questions or make a brief statement during the debate.

Comparative advantage case

A type of affirmative case that argues that the present system isn't necessarily harmful but that things would be better with the affirmative's plan.

Competition

Burden of the negative counterplan. The counterplan competes if it is a reasonable substitute for the affirmative, so in voting for the counterplan you would be rejecting the affirmative plan. A counterplan is competitive if it would be better to adopt just the counterplan rather than the affirmative plan and the counterplan.

Conditional argument

An argument that a debater can drop whenever he or she wishes or when certain conditions are met.

Conditional counterplan

A plan tentatively presented by a negative team that can be dropped without forfeiture of the debate.

Constructive speeches

First speeches of the debate, where teams build and elaborate on their issues and advocacy.

Contention

A major point in the debate. Affirmative cases are often built of such contentions.

Contradiction

Two arguments or ideas that are incompatible, or have a perceived conceptual tension between them.

Counterplan

A “better solution” than the plan offered by the affirmative. It is similar to the affirmative case, and should have a plan and solvency as well as be competitive with the affirmative plan.

Counterplan advantages

Benefits that result from the adoption of the counterplan.

Co option

The influence of outside parties hampering an agency’s efforts to carry out its instructions.

Credibility

A quality a speaker has that makes the audience want to believe her. Usually audiences find speakers credible if they communicate well, have knowledge of the topic, and seem to be of good character.

Criteria

Decision rule or conceptual tool to be used in deciding who wins the debate.

Critique

An argument that establishes that the fundamental assumptions made by the other team are false, reprehensible, or both.

Cross-examination

One debater asks questions, another answers, about the debate that is taking place.

Debate

An equitably structured communication event about some topic of interest with opposing advocates alternating before an opportunity is given for decision.

Decision rule

See Criteria.

Deduction

An argument that takes accepted premises and draws conclusions from them.

Disadvantage

Argument that the plan proposed by the other team will cause bad things that would not have happened otherwise.

Discursive impact

An argument saying that the language used within the debate is more important than the issues debated. Discursive impacts are usually claimed by critiques.

Disjunctive deduction

An argument that indicates certain alternatives and then rejects some and accepts another.

Double turn

In answering a disadvantage, this takes place when a team argues a link turn (we solve that problem) and an impact turn (that problem is actually a benefit). Thus, they are saying that they stop a good thing from happening. A double turn is often thought to be an easy way for a judge to vote—against the perpetrator of the double turn.

Enforcement plank

A part of the affirmative plan providing assurance that the plan's mandates will be carried out, usually through a directive that a particular agency will oversee and ensure compliance.

Evidence

Information used to support arguments.

Extension

Continuing to advance and elaborate on an issue through several speeches of the debate.

Fiat

The assumption that in order to decide the desirability of an alternative future, we first have to imagine that it exists. Thus, teams are not required to show that their plan “will” be adopted but that it “should” be adopted.

Flip

See Turn.

Floor speeches

A point in some debates where members of the audience make very short statements about the topic and the debate.

Flow

Notes taken by debaters during the debate and then used while they speak.

Flow sheet

Paper used to keep track of the arguments in a debate. Usually the sheet of paper has a separate column for each speech so that arguments can be tracked throughout the debate.

Format

The arrangement and timing of speeches and other components of the debate.

Funding plank

The part of the plan listing those sources from which the money the plan requires will be garnered.

Games theory

A paradigm for debate that views the debate as an educational game requiring fair rules to insure each participant has an equal chance of winning.

Generic arguments

Arguments, usually negative, that are general and apply to a wide range of affirmative cases or plans.

Generic disadvantage

A disadvantage designed to link to almost any affirmative plan.

Goals case

A type of affirmative case that claims a particular goal is sought by the status quo and proceeds to argue that the plan better meets that goal.

Ground

The positions teams must defend as affirmative or negative.

Hasty generalization

An argument that claims that a judge cannot conclude that the topic is true based on a minor or small example used by the affirmative.

Hypothesis testing

One of many paradigms used to explain the debate process. The focus of a debate is on testing the topic, just as a scientist would test a scientific hypothesis.

Hypothetical counterplan

See conditional counterplan.

Hypothetical deduction

An argument claiming that one thing will happen if another thing also happens. It expresses a conditional relationship.

Impact

Explanation of why something is important, and thus how it influences the outcome of the debate. Usually impacts must be proved, not just assumed.

Impact turn

An argument that establishes that the supposed impact or harm claimed is a good thing. For example, one team says an environmental plan hurts the economy; the other “turns” the impact by arguing that increased economic growth is bad because it destroys the environment and widens the gap between rich and poor.

Independent advantage

An advantage that can justify adoption of a plan, even if the other advantages may not be true.

Induction

A type of argument where a number of examples are noted, a common characteristic of those examples is identified, and then the conclusion is named as a general truth.

Internal link

Conceptual linkages and relationships between ideas. Part of a causal chain a debater constructs in here arguments that hold them together.

Internet archive

A file on the Internet made available to anyone. It is used here to refer to sound files of specific radio debates made available on the Net.

Internet broadcast

A radio debate available for listening on the Internet whenever a user wishes. It requires specific encoding of the sound file and the availability of the appropriate “player” software (usually available for free) on the listener’s computer.

Jurisdiction

The topic provides the parameters within which actors in the debate operate. The affirmative may propose something within the jurisdiction of the topic, etc.

Justification

A negative argument indicating that the affirmative must have a reason for each part of the topic. It is not very popular.

Legislative intent

A provision in a plan that future judgment of the meaning of the plan will be based upon its advocate’s speeches, thus allowing them to explain more about their plan later in the debate.

Link

A causal or correlative relationship between two ideas. Usually the negative looks for a “link” between the affirmative plan and their disadvantage.

Link turn

An argument that establishes that a given policy does not cause a problem or disadvantage identified by the other team, but actually works to solve the

problem. For example, the negative claims that the affirmative plan will be costly and that the federal government cannot afford it, the affirmative “turns” the argument by showing that the plan would actually save the government money.

Listeners

Individuals who are listening to radio debates as they are being broadcast.

Minor repair

A nontopical small change in existing programs to solve the problem. It is advocated by the negative. It should not require structural change and should be within the philosophy of the present system.

Motion

The term used in some formats of debate for the topic of the debate.

Mutual exclusivity

Method for determining competition of the **counterplan**. If the affirmative plan and the negative counterplan cannot exist together, they are competitive with each other based on the concept of mutual exclusivity.

Need

The problem that the affirmative hopes to solve; the area of affirmative significance.

Net benefits

A method for determining the competition of the **counterplan**. If adopting only the counterplan is more beneficial than adopting it and the affirmative plan, the plans are competitive based on the concept of net benefits.

Permutation

A test the affirmative uses to examine the competitiveness of the counterplan, in which they speculate on how their plan might be merged with it.

Philosophical competition

A standard of competition for counterplans that argues that since the two plans under consideration have different philosophical approaches they are exclusive of one another. It is not very popular.

Plan

A proposal for policy action presented by the affirmative. It usually includes agent, action, extent, funding, enforcement, etc.

Plan attack

Arguments directed at an affirmative policy (e.g., fails to solve the problem, disadvantage, workability).

Plan mandates

The topical action specified in the affirmative plan.

Plan side

That part of the **flow** on which arguments are written about the plan, such as a **disadvantage** or **critique**.

Plan spike

A nontopical element included in a plan to avoid a disadvantage.

Policy making

A philosophy that policy debates should be evaluated from the perspective of a pseudo legislator weighing the advantages and disadvantages of two conflicting policy systems.

Politician debater

A political figure in office or seeking election who is invited to take some role in a debate.

Political disadvantages

Arguments that indicate that the political consequences of passing the plan will lead to impacts that will outweigh the advantages. (See Disadvantages.)

Political capital

The amount of good will a politician can muster to get policies enacted. In debate, a debater argues that the political capital expended passing the plan sacrifices the political capital necessary to get other policies passed.

Political focus

The ability of political leaders to concentrate on particular issues. In debate, the argument says that passing the affirmative plan will require so much

energy and time that policymakers will be unable to deal with more important plans.

Political popularity

The approval rating of a politician. In debate, the argument considers how approval of the plan will impact a policymaker's effectiveness. If the plan is unpopular, policymakers will lose credibility, making it extremely difficult to deal with other, more important plans. If the plan is popular, it may boost the policymaker's credibility, making it easier to get less desirable plans passed.

Preemption (or preempt)

An argument designed to respond to an anticipated argument.

Presumption

The assumption that we should stay with the current system. It operates against change and untried policies.

Prima facie

Latin for *at first glance*. The requirement that the initial presentation of major issues in the debate should be "logically complete" but not necessarily perfect.

Proposition

The word used in some debate formats to refer to the topic of the debate.

Rebuttal

Shorter, later speeches in the debate in which the speakers argue over and weigh the issues built in the constructive speeches in an effort to influence the decision of the audience or judges.

Refutation

Answering or criticizing ideas and issues presented by the other team.

Reify

Using language that makes "false" or "illusory" things seem real and/or legitimate.

Resolution

In some formats the word used to refer to the topic of the debate.

Retrench

To reinforce the present system. Usually occurring in discussions of critiques, the argument says that the effect of a policy is to reinforce the prevailing attitudes in the present system. Thus, the problems that exist will not be solved and may worsen.

Reverse voting issue

Often used when one team argues that something is a “voting issue.” The other team can explain that if it is a voting issue one way, it should also be a voting issue the other way as well. For example, if one team claims that misquoting a source is a reason to lose the debate (voting issue) then an unsubstantiated claim of misquoting a source should cause the accusing team to lose the debate (reverse voting issue).

Risk analysis

The theory and procedure of claiming that one hundred percent certainty is not needed to act and that the level of certainty that does exist is sufficient basis for policy decisions.

Sandbag

Save the best evidence for an argument until the rebuttals, or presenting the impact for an argument later.

Scenario

A specification of a particular series of events. A scenario usually consist of who, what, when, where, now, and why.

Shift

Changing advocacy in the middle of the debate from one position to another.

Should-would

The concept that the affirmative does not have to show that their plan *would* be adopted, only that it *should* be adopted.

Significance

Usually a component of the affirmative policy case, it is an explanation of the serious problems that exist now. See also impact.

Solvency

Usually a component of the affirmative policy case, it is an explanation as to how the affirmative's plan solves the problem they have identified.

Spread

Making a large number of arguments in an attempt to prevent the other team from answering them all.

Squirrel case

An affirmative approach that isolates an obscure area of the topic to justify their position.

Status quo

The way things are at the time of the debate.

Stock issues

Standard points of controversy in policy disputes that have been used since classical times: harm, cause, solvency, plan, disadvantages.

Subpoints

Substructures of a larger argument, contention, or observation.

Threshold

See Brink.

Time frame

Explanation of when a predicted or caused event will take place.

Topic

The subject of the debate.

Topic area expert

A noted individual with expertise in the subject of the topic who is invited to ask questions or make a brief statement during a debate.

Topic of fact—causality

The subject of the debate concerns the claim that one thing leads to another.

Topic of fact—definition

The subject of the debate concerns what something is and seeks to define it.

Topic of fact—past

The subject of the debate concerns some factual issue about the past.

Topic of fact—prediction

The subject of the debate concerns what will happen in the future.

Topic of Fact—present

The subject of the debate concerns conditions at the current time.

Topic of policy

A debate topic that concerns what action should be taken.

Topic of value

A debate topic that involves evaluation of something or a comparison of values.

Turn (or turn around or flip)

The tactic in which a debater argues that the problem discussed by the opposition is unique to the policy system they defend, not to the policy system they oppose. Thus, the plan may not cause the problem; it may solve it (turn).

Uniqueness

Whether something is an essential cause of a situation or scenario. If a disadvantage will take place whether the affirmative plan is adopted or not, then it is “not unique.” That component of a disadvantage that illustrates that the disadvantage impact which the negative claims results only from the adoption of the affirmative plan. That is, the disadvantage impact would not occur absent the affirmative plan.

Value objection

An argument used primarily in nonpolicy debate that argues that a competing value to the affirmative value exists. The argument has to be proven to be more important than the affirmative value.

Voting issue

An argument stipulating that this issue alone, and its fate, should determine the decision in the debate.

Whole resolution

A generic non-policy debate argument that says that the topic must be debated in a holistic manner to determine its probable truth. Usually the negative must establish some form of standard to measure when it is possible to prove the truth of the topic.

THE CODE OF THE DEBATER

Many debaters have found this “Code of the Debater” (Snider, 1999) to be useful in orienting them to the debate process.

I am a debater.

I attempt to be worthy of this title by striving to observe the code of the debater.

FOR MYSELF:

I will research my topic and know what I am talking about.

I will respect the subject matter of my debates.

I will choose persuasion over coercion and violence.

I will learn from victory and especially from defeat.

I will be a generous winner and a gracious loser.

I will remember and respect where I came from even though I am now a citizen of the world.

I will apply my criticism of others to myself.

I will strive to see myself in others.

I will, in a debate, use the best arguments I can to support the side I am on.

I will, in life, use the best arguments I can to determine which side I am on.

FOR OTHERS:

I will respect their rights to freedom of speech and expression, even though we may disagree.

I will respect my partners, opponents, judges, organizers, and the audience.

I will be honest about my arguments and evidence and those of others.

I will help those with less experience, because I am both student and teacher.

I will be an advocate in life, siding with those in need and willing to speak truth to power.

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