

DEBATE TEAM DICTIONARY

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above: A direction of reference on the Flow. A reference to previous argumentation.

abuse: Arguments fundamentally unfair in some intuitive way. Abusive arguments often impose impossible burdens.

ad hominim (ad hom): An attack on the person making the argument, not the argument.

anthropomorphism (anthro): The notion that human values ought to be, or are, central in importance.

bi-directionality: Where a Resolution urging action uses a verb not specifying the direction of the action, and two conceivable causal directions exist. For example if the Resolution requires the United States to advance its human rights foreign policy, any given Plan might increase or decrease American involvement in Mexico; either direction may arguably achieve Resolutional ends.

Affirmative (aff): 1. The team advancing the Resolution; 2. The Case (and sometimes Plan) made by the Affirmative team.

Affirmative Constructive (1AC, 2AC): 1. The Case made by the Affirmative team, specific to the 1AC; 2. The pair of eight or nine minute speeches made by the Affirmative team, where new arguments may be formulated.

Affirmative Rebuttal (1AR, 2AR): The pair of five to seven minute speeches given by the Affirmative team near the end of the debate where no new arguments may be forwarded.

analysis: 1. Reasoned argument; 2. Extrapolation from evidence; 3. The Tag Line

answer: 1. An argument; 2. Response to an argument.

a priori: Gottfried Leibnitz, the 17th century philosopher makes the distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge. *A priori* truths are knowable prior to, and not justified by experience. For example: the fact that a triangle has three sides is not proven true or false by appeal to and examination of multiple triangles in the world. Rather, it is true by virtue of it being an foundational axiom; something true in and of itself. Similarly, an *a priori* issue in debate is a primary issue that must be evaluated and settled before all others. The Negative will often argue that Topicality is an *a priori* concern, and therefore a loss at that level precludes Case examination. A loss on an *a priori* issue should decide the round.

below: A direction of reference on the Flow. A reference to subsequent argumentation.

Blip: 1. An argument; 2. A derogatory reference toward a short, incomplete, or underdeveloped argument.

Blippy: Making Blips, short, terse, incomplete arguments.

break: When a team's win to lose ratio in any given tournament (except round robins) entitle them to proceed to out-rounds, or elimination rounds.

Brink: The point of some causal threshold just before some Impact is to occur.

broke: See "break" *supra*.

Debate Team Dictionary

Case: The main thesis or contention brought forward by the Affirmative team in the First Constructive speech (1AC) that proves the Resolution to be true, or argues for its adoption. A Case is traditionally composed of five parts in policy debate, the Solvency, the Harms, the Inherency, the Topicality, and the Significance. All five are required to meet *prima facie* burdens.

Card Cutter: One who finds evidence, and organizes it, tagged and cited, into briefs. One who makes Cards.

Cards: See “evidence” *infra*. Called Cards because Evidence used to be noted, or cut and pasted to 3x5 or 4x6 index Cards.

CEDA: The Cross Examination Debate Association. A policy debate league, originally founded as “value” debate which introduced the concept of 3 minute cross-examination segments. CEDA and its sister forum, the NDT merged in the mid-1990s.

claim without a warrant: A claim with neither Evidence nor analysis to support it.

clear: See “break” *supra*.

conditionality: A macro-framework that allows one team to take two contrary positions. It acknowledges the wide divergence of perspectives that make alternate, though contradictory, arguments necessary. In a court of law this is analogous to “pleading in the alternative.” For example, the defendant (1) didn’t murder anyone, (2) but if she did, she did it in self defense, (3) and even if not, she was provoked. See “Hypo-Testing” *infra*.

counter intuitive: An argument or position that cuts against long held and deeply rooted sentiments. For example, to argue that nuclear war is a good thing because it eradicates the human scourge, is counter-intuitive.

Counterplan (C.P.): An alternative Plan to the Affirmative’s Plan. Within a policy making paradigm, if the alternate Plan, i.e. the Counterplan, is a better one, and the Plan and the Counterplan cannot be implemented concurrently, the Affirmative would lose. See “Plan” *infra*.

Critic: See “Judge” *infra*.

Critique (kritik): 1. The theoretical position that indicts the Resolution’s Ideology, Framework, or Language. Critiques often seek to win the round by exposing some fundamental flaw, or ideologically repulsive assumption of the game or its Resolution. Whereas Policy debate asks the question “what should be do,” Critique debate often poses the question “who should we be?”

Cross Apply: 1. To apply an argument previously placed in one location on the Flow, to another location; 2. To apply an argument to multiple locations on the Flow.

Cross Examination (Cross, Cross-X, CX): A three minute period after each Constructive speech where the non-speech making team asks questions of the speaker. It is not usually Flowed, but what is said or conceded by either party can be binding. Some judges consider what is said in Cross Examination co-equivalent to Evidence.

decision calculus: A philosophy, or judicial paradigm that creates a mechanism with which to sort through, digest, and evaluate argumentation.

Disadvantage (Disad): A micro-Case advanced by the Negative, arguing that even if the Affirmative’s case were true, there is some other countervailing consideration that outweighs’ (i.e. is more important) the Affirmative case impacts. The Disadvantage, like the Affirmative Case, is a coherent, self contained thesis. Its Shell is often composed of three parts, the Link, the

Brink and the Impact. The Link explains how either the Resolution, the Affirmative Case, or the Affirmative's Plan causes or contributes to some particular dynamic, or Harm. The Brink explains how that dynamic, or Harm is just on the verge of exploding into a full blown catastrophe. The Affirmative's straw breaks the camel's back. The Impact explains in detail how that catastrophe would affect the world, often in lives lost or other values impinged, which is of a magnitude greater than the Affirmative's case impacts.

Disco: An extremely risky, winner takes all strategy, usually implemented by a team losing badly in Rebuttals. A Disco usually involves collapsing the entire round down to one argument or position upon which the round is to be decided.

Double-Turn: Advocating two contradictory position that negate each other. The theory behind a Double-Turn suggests that the two positions implode under the pressure of coherent advocacy.

down below: See "below" *supra*.

drop: An argument not responded to, or answered, thus conceded.

eat: To suffer the consequences of.

Effects Topicality (Effects, Effects-T, ET): A Negative Procedural that argues the Affirmative has failed to meet its Topicality burdens because some aspect of Case is only effective as a causal side-effect and not a direct effect.

Emory Switch: A strategic decision by the Negative to spend the 1NC putting out Disads and the 2NC answering Case. The result is two-fold aggravation for the Affirmative, (1) being under-loaded in Constructives, and (2) being overloaded in the 1AR, a position already handicapped by time constraints.

Evidence (Ev, Card): Remarks published in a magazine, newspaper, book, catalog, transcript, government documents, electronic medium, or any other publicly available media. Tag lines and source citations accompany all Evidence.

Evidence Challenge: The process by which one team disputes the authenticity of another's Evidence. In such a challenge, winner wins the round. If the Evidence is found to be legitimate, the challenger loses. If the Evidence is fabricated, the team challenging the evidence wins that round. Such challenges are very serious. Teams that forge Evidence can be ejected from a tournament or worse.

Extend: To bring forth an argument from previous speeches to the present one. Arguments that are not Extended in each speech are Dropped and cannot be resurrected. Also known as "pulling."

feed: To lend strength and legitimacy to.

fiat: Latin for "let there be" or "there is." In debate, *fiat*, is the power conferred upon the Affirmative to assume, in a policy framework, that their Plan will be passed through the legislature. This allows the debate to focus on whether the plan "should" be passed, not whether, for political reasons, it actually will be passed.

Flow: 1. A note-like record of the emerging round, usually inscribed on 8 1/2 X 14, legal-sized paper; 2. To record the round in cryptic debate-style notation; 3. A person who records a debate round on paper; 4. The paper upon which the round is Flowed.

Flow paper: Paper upon which a Flow is taken.

framer's intent: The core issue or issues that the authors intended the debate to be about when they wrote the Resolution.

Ground: The framework that circumscribes the issues each side, Affirmative, and Negative, may legitimately debate. Metaphorically, ground is the territory in war. To make the competition fair, each side should be given approximately the same amount of ground (amount of issues to debate) and the same kind of ground (the quality of issues to debate). One example of the activity's attempt to distribute ground fairly is that although the Affirmative can argue a case, the Negative can argue a Disad. The Affirmative can argue a Plan but the Negative can argue a Counter-Plan.

Group: To collect a number of opposing arguments for the purpose of responding to them with one or more arguments.

Gut Spread (Spread): 1. The act of making arguments very quickly; 2. A derogatory name for the act of making difficult-to-understand and perhaps weak arguments very quickly as a substitute for intelligent argumentation.

Harm: Some problem or negative effect.

Hasty Generalization (Hasty-G, HG): A logical fallacy wherein a conclusion has been made prior to all the necessary and/or available evidence being examined and accounted for. One of the more famous hasty generalizations in recent memory was the conclusion by many of the TV networks in 2000 that George Bush won Florida. At the time, not enough evidence was available to safely make any conclusions as to the winner of the Florida race. Evidence eventually proved that upon counting all votes, using an intent of the voter standard, Al Gore had actually won Florida.

high-point-loss: Where the losing team receives more speaker points than the winning team.

Hypo-Testing: A justification for conditional argumentation, allowing for the

advancement of inconsistent or contradictory positions under the theory that as the Affirmative is the advocate, the Negative need merely test that advocacy. As tester, the Negative may use any of the tools at its disposal to disprove the Affirmative's contentions. No burden of consistency lies where the test-maker does not claim, and need not claim, to provide coherent advocacy of its own. *See* "conditionality" *supra*.

Impact: The final consequence in a chain of causation. Impacts tend to conclude in catastrophes or other impressive Harms.

Impact Turn: An argument that the opponent's impact argument is a reason to vote *against* the opponent. For example if the opponent argues that the impact of some argument is air pollution and air pollution is bad because it causes asthma, then the impact turn argues that pollution is good because it collects in the poles, bolsters the ozone layer, and protects people from skin cancer. *See also* "Link Turn" *infra*.

impossible to meet: *See* "meet" *infra*.

Individual Events (IE): Any of a number of individual speaking competitions, such as extemporaneous speech, humorous speech, or impromptu speech, often held in conjunction with debate. These forensic competitions emphasize rhetoric and theater in short, five minute, speeches.

infinitely regressive: Like a pair of mirrors that reflect themselves, a claim that refers to another argument for support, that in turn refers to another argument for support, and on infinitely.

Inherency: Refers to the status quo's inability to solve or even move toward solving some dilemma.

Internal Link: Specifically makes the logical connection from one subpoint to another within a Disad, or within Case.

Contrasted against a general Link which could make a causal argument among Disads, or between Case and Disads.

Intrinsicness: 1. Essential causality; 2. A Procedural, sometimes called Causality that suggests a flaw in the analysis of some causal chain.

Issue Selection (punt, kick-out): A strategy, usually implemented in Rebuttals, whereby certain weak arguments or positions are conceded or granted, in order to concentrate more time and energy on what appear to be the stronger arguments.

kick out: *See* “issue selection” *supra*.

Judge (Critic): The person who determines wins and losses and awards speaker points.

Jurisdictional: *See* “Procedural” *infra*.

Justification (J): 1. Reason or foundation for believing so. 2. A Procedural modeled after Robert Bork’s constitutional analysis, that seeks to require the Affirmative to justify their Case by proving that it is within the boundaries of the framer’s intent. The Substitution Test is offered by way of delineating such a boundary. The test involves substituting one word in the resolution for an arbitrary one. If the Affirmative’s Case becomes more Topical under the Resolution with the substituted term than it was under the original wording, the Case is not “justified.” Generally, this Procedural is considered abusive since it may be used to co-opt nearly all Topical Case Ground.

Link: To draw a causal relationship from one concept, or event to another.

Link Turn: An argument that the opponent’s causal link chain actually works in a direction opposite of the one claimed. For example, if the opponent argues that subprime lending causes the economy to grow because it gets more people into

homes, the link turn argues that in the long run, after the inevitable market crash, subprime lending, in fact, causes the economy to shrink. *See also* “Impact Turn” *supra*.

meet: To satisfy some standard. Standards that can never be reached are unfair impositions, and can be addressed by explaining they are “impossible to meet.”

Negative (neg): The side that negates or prevents the advancement of the Resolution.

Negative Constructive (1NC, 2NC): The pair of eight minute speeches made by the Negative team, where new arguments may be formulated.

Negative Rebuttal (1NR, 2NR): The pair of five minute speeches given by the Negative team at the end of the debate, where no new arguments may be forwarded.

new argument: An argument made in Rebuttals that was not already heard, in some form, in Constructives. New arguments are not allowed in Rebuttals, though a certain amount of fudging is common.

non-unique: Not the only cause, or most important cause of some effect. For example pepper is non-unique to sneezing if you have allergies and would sneeze anyway, with or without pepper.

Off-Case (off): Self-contained thesis not attached to any particular part of Case. Typical Off-Case arguments are Disads, Procedurals, and Critiques.

outweighs (o/w): A comparison between two consequences or Impacts in which one is qualitatively more important, and/or quantitatively greater.

overlimits: The claim that some limiting structure, either within the rules of the game, within the Criteria, or Decision Rule, or

within the substantive issues, establishes overly burdensome demands.

paperweight: 1. Octa-final debate trophy.
2. Any small debate trophy.

paradigm: 1. Within the context of a judging philosophy, an outline of the framework from which the Judge will evaluate the round. Popular paradigms are games, and policy making; 2. A meta-level analysis of issues or among issues.

parametrics: An Affirmative theory position arguing that the Resolution is only a fence or perimeter for Topical Case Ground. Any Case inside the fence, no matter how small, is to be considered Topical. To parametricize is to make the Case, for the purposes of a particular round, the Resolution—also phrased as collapsing the Resolution into the Case.

Permutation (Perm): To concurrently enact the Affirmative's Plan and the Negative's Counter-Plan at the same time. If it is possible to concurrently enact both the Plan and Counterplan, and doing so produces superior results than just enacting the Counterplan alone, then no competition is present, and the Negative loses the issue.

pimp: 1. Responsive argument 2. Weak or mitigating response to argumentation.

Plan: The part of the Affirmative Case that posits a Topical solution for presented Harms through a specified course of action.

post-date: A quality comparison between rival Evidence where newer, more recently published, Evidence is generally considered better because it is better able to account for the present state of the world, having the benefit of the most recent information, and discoveries.

press: Responsive argument.

prima facie: Latin for "on its face." A requirement that the Affirmative Case must

be coherent and in possession of a complete and proven thesis. Missing stock issues, an absence of Evidence, fallacious causal links, or logical impossibilities presented as actualities, are examples of how the Affirmative might fail to meet its burden of presenting a facially valid Case. Without a *prima facie* case, the Negative team should win on presumption alone.

Procedural: Off-Case position, presented by the Negative with self-contained thesis, arguing that the Affirmative has failed to comport with certain requirements of the game. Procedurals typically present game-level rules, and then explain how the opposition has violated the precepts therein. Common Procedurals include Causality (also known as Intrinsicness), Topicality, Justification, Hasty Generalization, Whole Resolution, and (according to some) Critiques.

proof: See "Evidence" *supra*.

protect me: Plea made to the judge to ignore one's opponent's new arguments in Rebuttals.

pull: See "Extend" *supra*.

punt: See "issue selection" *supra*.

qualifications (quals): The background and experience that lends authors of Evidence expertise and legitimacy.

reasonability: 1. To achieve the reasonable person standard; 2. Being reasonable.

regressive: See "infinitely regressive" *supra*.

Reverse Voting Issue (RVI): An issue, that when defeated, is sufficient to win the round. When one side labels an issue a voting issue, the other side can label it a reverse voting issue. For example if the Affirmative wins the voting issue, the Affirmative wins the round. Conversely, if the Negative wins the reverse voting issue,

then the Negative wins the round. The argument usually revolves around some notion of risk assessment. If a round can be won on a single issue, then when the opposition defeats that issue, fair game reciprocity demands that the side that formerly stood to win, should now necessarily lose.

Road Map: An outline given by the speaker, before the speech begins, to indicate what major positions will be developed or rebutted and in what order. The Road Map is usually not timed.

Shell: The basic parts of a Disad, Critique, Procedural or other Off-Case. A Shell usually consists of three basic parts. In the Disad for example, the Shell would consist of the Link, the Brink and the Impact.

Shit Spread: A speed strategy that utilizes pure speaking speed and often poor argumentation, poor annunciation, or outright obfuscation to overload and confuse opponents.

schlag: Fatuous argumentation, or other general weak shit.

Significance: A stock issue that refers to the substantial nature of the Harms delineated.

Sign Post: The practice of clearly describing where one is on the Flow at any given time during a speech.

Solvency: 1. A mechanism that eliminates or quells problems, or foreseeable problems; 2. A Stock Issue in the Affirmative Case that explains how the Harms in the status quo will be remedied.

source citations (source cites, cites): The bibliographic origins of Evidence; usually includes the name of the author, the name of the work, the name of the publisher, the number of the page upon which the text appears, and the year of publication.

Speaker Points (speaks): Points awarded to speakers on a scale from 0-30 (a de facto scale of 20 to 30) based on the subjective qualities of persuasion and charisma. The points are irrelevant to actual winning or losing. The side with higher speaker points may still lose the round. Awards are given based on the point system, with the high and low usually being tossed out.

speed: The rate of word delivery.

Spread: See “Gut Spread” *supra*.

Standard: Some gauge by which to evaluate argumentation

Stock Issues: In traditional Oxford style policy debate, five key issues that must be defended by the Affirmative and attacked by the Negative. The loss of a single issue is enough to award a Negative win. The stock issues are: Significance, Harms, Inherency, Topicality, and Solvency.

Substitution Test: 1. A standard for the Justification Procedural 2. A test that substitutes one word for another in the Resolution to see how it affects the Case.

tabula rasa: Latin for “blank slate.” English philosopher John Locke believed that people are born blank, without belief nor knowledge, and only through empirical sensation do we come to understand anything. In debate, this notion has come to mean the Judge is clean of personal bias—a blank slate—when she evaluates competing issues. The Judge will evaluate the round before her, not the round she wishes were before her.

tag lines (tags): One line synopsis, or interpretation of Evidence. Located on the brief above the source citation and above the text.

Tag Team Cross Examination (Tag Team, Tag Team Cross-X, Tag Team CX): In purist form, one team member, the one

having completed her Constructive speech, is cross-examined by a single member of the opposition. Tag Team Cross Examination occurs where either member of the inquiring team asks questions, and/or either member of the responding team answers them.

take out (T.O., T/O): An argument that eliminates its rival.

threshold: A scale of causation that predicts when in time some action will occur based on a measure of some other currently occurring variable. For example, the camel's back will be broken when exactly one-thousand pounds of straw is loaded upon it. One-thousand pounds is the threshold.

time frame: The time required to achieve some result or Impact.

Topicality (T): 1. Affirmative Stock Issue that requires that the Case actually affirm the resolution and that the Plan solve a problem suggested by the Resolution; 2. A Procedural run by the Negative that argues that the Case and Plan have failed to affirm the resolution.

Turn: Like stealing your opposition's sword and using it against them. A responsive argument that shows that for any claim, just the opposite, in fact, is true. *See* "Link Turn" and "Impact Turn" *supra*.

Violation: 1. To break, or fail to meet some rule, or standard. 2. Part of a Procedural, that explains how the opposition has failed to accord themselves with some standard previously presented.

Voting Issue (Voter, VI): A single, absolute issue or argument that can independently win the round, regardless of what other arguments have been made elsewhere.

we meet: *See* "meet" *supra*.

Whole Resolution (Whole Res, WR): A Procedural that Critiques the Affirmative's use of example and induction, as being an

inherently flawed mechanism for arriving at truth. Instead, deduction is the preferred method of Case affirmation.