Lincoln/Douglas Debate

Debating is like Fencing

- Thrust
  - Making assertions backed by evidence

- Parry
  - Refuting opponents assertions

Burden of Proof

- In a formal argument, the Affirmative must establish a prima facie case (that stands on its own) and thus carries the *burden of proof*. The Negative only needs to show that the case is *not proven* to win the argument and thus may well focus on attacking and disproving the given case.

- An alternative case may also be given, but is not needed.

Format

- **First Affirmative Constructive – 7 minutes**
- *Cross Examination of the Affirmative by the Negative – 3 minutes*
- **First Negative Constructive – 8 minutes**
- *Cross Examination of the Negative by the Affirmative – 3 minutes*

- *Rebuttal Speeches – No new arguments are allowed – new evidence, analysis of existing arguments is allowed*
- **First Affirmative Rebuttal) - 4 minutes**
- **Negative Rebuttal – 7 minutes**
- **Second Affirmative Rebuttal – 4 minutes**

First Affirmative Constructive

Prepared written speech

Prima Facie case

- State the resolution
  - State "I support the resolution"
- Short introduction that attracts the audience's attention and interest in the topic
- Clearly state each$_o$ f your principal assertions
- Develop each assertion with reason and evidence
- Conclude by concisely restating main

First Negative Constructive

First part prepared written speech then extemporaneous

- State the resolution
  - State "I oppose the resolution"
- Short introduction that attracts the audience's attention and interest in the topic
- Clearly state each of your principal assertions
- Develop each assertion with reason and evidence
- Refute Affirmative's assertions
- Conclude by concisely restating main assertions

First Affirmative Rebuttal

No new evidence allowed

- Respond to the Negative Assertions

  Refute them

  – Show how they are not as strong/relevant as the Affirmative assertions

- Rebuild the Affirmative case

Negative Rebuttal

- Respond to latest Affirmative arguments
- Make your final case to the audience that the Negative position is superior to the Affirmative
- Try and convince the audience the Affirmative has failed to carry the burden of proof
- Summarize the debate and conclude effectively and ask for the audience to agree with the Negative position

Second Affirmative Rebuttal

- Respond to final Negative arguments
- Summarize the debate and show the audience how the Affirmative position is superior – and the Affirmative has carried the burden of proof
- Conclude by summarizing one to three main points.

Refutation

- Logic
- Definitions
- Analogies
- Evidence
  - Examples
  - Data
  - Experts
- Connections between assertion and evidence
- Present counter-arguments

Refute Logic

- Check that logical connections are clear and sound.
- Watch for unfounded assumptions.
- Test causes for clear and direct connections.
- Check that generalizations, inductive and deductive arguments are used in the right way.
- Look for bias, intentional or otherwise.
- Watch out for distractions and changing the subject.
- Show that they are using a fallacy of some sort.

Refute Definitions

- Check for single, clear meanings.
- Verify that meanings are clear to everyone.
- Seek ambiguity and uncertainty.
- Challenge expertise and assumptions of authority.
- Show that there are contradictory definitions.

Refute Analogies

- Show why situations are not analogous

- Extend analogy to absurd situation

Refute Evidence

- Example
  - Show that example is not typical
  - Give counter-examples
- Data
  - Show that there is not enough data being used.
  - Show that some critical evidence is not being used.
  - Indicate how data that might refute the argument is being ignored.
  - Show how data is being misinterpreted or misrepresented.
  - Seek to uncover suppressed evidence.
- Question expert testimony

Cross Examination

- Basic function is refutation
- You ask questions – have a strategy or at the very least a direction to your questioning
- Be courteous
- Face the audience

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