# AFRICAN VOICE

## TRAINING GUIDE

### SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIPS 2013

# Introduction

African Voice is delighted to have the opportunity to run comprehensive training at the 2013 South African National Universities Debating Championships.

After completing a training tour in 2012 that reached over 700 students from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Namibia, we left Africa excited about the future of African debating. With the right training and a strong organisational framework, African debaters can beat anyone in the world. Our organisation was formed to provide free access to the highest quality training resources to help African debating reach its potential.

This training guide is intended to be a useful introduction to debating for novice debaters and adjudicators. It outlines the rules of British Parliamentary debating, tips on winning from the Opening Half and the Closing Half and a framework for approaching BP adjudication.

However, it also seeks to be a valuable resource for more advanced debaters by outlining the 'First Principles' of debating. First principles are key concepts and ideas that are applicable to a wide variety of debates. By illustrating the core clash of values underpinning certain issues, this guide provides an accessible template for debaters approaching unfamiliar topics. Our aim is that this guide will provide a clear framework for approaching most (but not all) debates. We outline the First Principles governing a variety of issues: government intervention and individual freedom; advancing social change; criminal justice; morality and ethics; process vs. outcomes; and international relations.

A cautionary note: this guide does not attempt to exhaustively define the different perspectives concerning the issues we have identified. It merely seeks to provide a clear outline of some of the most common approaches adopted in Western liberal democracies. In future versions of this guide, we will attempt to more effectively integrate uniquely African perspectives on these issues.

The information in this guide is based largely on what we have learnt as members of the Monash Association of Debaters. However, we are indebted to a number of people for their insightful suggestions and advice on the content of this guide: Ben Woolgar, Chris Bisset, Amit Golder, Victor Finkel, Harish Natarajan, Paul Karp, Madeline Schultz, Liz Sheargold and Lilia Kilburn. All mistakes are our own,

We hope you will find this guide useful.

<p align="right">Damien Bruckard, Kiran Iyer and Sashi Balaraman</p>

# AFRICAN VOICE TRAINING TOURS

African Voice will be running the following training programs in 2013:

- Special training for participants at the South African National Universities Debating Championships, the Zimbabwean National Debating Championships and the Pan-African Universities Debating Championships

- The inaugural Rwandan National Universities Debating Championships, following a workshop targeted at Rwandan women

- Human rights advocacy workshops in Uganda and Kenya

African Voice is a non profit organisation that sends volunteer trainers to Africa. We seek funding from philanthropists and corporations to minimise the costs of our workshops to our host organisations.

If you are interested in us running a workshop for your society, please let us know. We are keen to expand our operations to new cities and countries.

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# THE BASICS OF DEBATING

# THE BASICS OF BRITISH PARLIAMENTARY DEBATING

The South African National Universities Debating Championships adopts the British Parliamentary (BP) format of debating. The World Universities Debating Championships also uses BP and it is one of the most popular debating formats in the world. This part of the guide outlines the basics of BP and provides some practical tips for winning BP debates.

## Teams in a BP Debate

| Government Bench | Opposition Bench |
|---|---|
| **Opening Government**<br>Prime Minister<br>Deputy Prime Minister | **Opening Opposition**<br>Opposition Leader<br>Deputy Opposition Leader |
| **Closing Government**<br>Government Member<br>Government Whip | **Closing Opposition**<br>Opposition Member<br>Opposition Whip |

A BP debate has four teams of two speakers:

The members of the Government Bench argue for the motion. The members of the Opposition Bench argue against the motion. For example, if the topic is 'This house supports invading Syria', the Government Bench will argue for an invasion and the Opposition Bench will argue against an invasion.

## Structure of a BP Debate

The Prime Minister is the first speaker in the debate, followed by the Opposition Leader. The speakers from each side then alternate until the debate concludes.

Therefore, the order of speeches is as follows: Prime Minister; Opposition Leader; Deputy Prime Minister; Deputy Opposition Leader; Government Member; Opposition Member; Government Whip; Opposition Whip.

Each speaker can speak for 7 minutes. Between the 1st and 6th minute of every speech, debaters from the other bench can stand up and offer questions, known as Points of Information (POIs), to the speaker. Speakers should accept a minimum of one POI and a maximum of two POIs during their speech, but can choose to refuse to accept a particular POI (generally by waving down the person offering the question). Each team should accept at least three POIs during their combined speeches.

# Winning a BP Debate

All four teams in a BP debate are competing with each other. At the end of the debate, the adjudicator awards 1st place, 2nd place, 3rd place and 4th place. This order will be based on a comparison of the persuasiveness of the teams, based on the style and content of the speakers.

All of the teams in a BP debate have a specific role. Adjudicators will consider the extent to which teams have fulfilled their role when ranking the teams. Role fulfilment is not a separate category for adjudicators to consider, but is relevant as it affects the persuasiveness of the teams.

# Team Roles

| Team | Role |
|---|---|
| **Opening Government** | • **Outlining the context and defining key terms**<br>• Outlining the policy (if a policy debate)<br>• **Providing arguments supporting the motion**<br>• Responding to the Opening Opposition arguments<br>• **Actively engaging in the debate through POIs** |
| **Opening Opposition** | • **Outlining the stance of the Opposition Bench**<br>• Providing arguments opposing the motion<br>• **Responding to the Opening Government argument**s<br>• Actively engaging in the debate through POIs |
| **Closing Government** | • **Providing an Extension (a new contribution to the debate)**<br>• Responding to the main argument/s in the Opening Half<br>• **Responding to the Closing Opposition extension** |
| **Closing Opposition** | • **Providing an Extension (a new contribution to the debate)**<br>• Responding to the main argument/s in the Opening Half<br>• **Responding to the Closing Government extension** |

# Speaker Roles

## Prime Minister

- **Outlining the context for the debate**
- Defining any contentious terms
- **Outlining the policy (if a policy debate)**
- Providing arguments supporting the motion

## Opposition Leader

- **Outlining the Opposition stance**
- Accepting/rejecting definition (if necessary)
- **Rebutting the Prime Minister**
- Providing arguments opposing the motion

## Deputy Prime Minister

- **Rebutting Opposition Leader (defending Prime Minister if necessary)**
- Providing arguments
- **Summarising Opening Government case**

## Deputy Opposition Leader

- **Rebutting Opening Government (defending Opposition Leader if necessary)**
- Providing arguments
- **Summarising Opening Opposition case**

## Government Member

- **Rebutting most important issue/s in the Opening Half**
- Providing an Extension

## Opposition Member

- **Rebutting Government Member and most important issue/s in Opening Half**
- Providing an Extension

## Government Whip

- **Summarising and rebutting most important issues in the debate**
- Defending Government Extension (limit new arguments as much as possible)
- **Rebutting Closing Government Extension**

## Opposition Whip

- **Summarising and rebutting most important issues in the debate**
- Defending Opposition Extension (strictly no new arguments)
- **Rebutting Closing Opposition Extension**

# Points of Information

POIs are an essential element of BP debating. There is a growing consensus in the international debating community that each team should accept a minimum of three POIs across their team. Therefore, speakers should accept at least one POI during their speech and two if their teammate only accepted one POI. Furthermore, across a team, it is worth ensuring that each opposition team has the opportunity to ask at least one POI.

## Rules about asking POIs

There are no rules about what you can ask in a POI. You may ask a speaker anything you like. There are, however, two important rules about how you can ask POIs.

First, debaters should ask POIs by standing and saying 'Point of Information' or 'Sir/Madam'. Debaters should avoid asking POIs by saying anything else, such as flagging the issue they wish to ask a question about ('On criminal responsibility' or 'On your model'). This is often referred to as 'Headlining'. Saying anything other than 'Point of Information' or 'Sir/Madam' is unfair to other teams (by raising a point outside your allotted time) and unfair to the speaker (by distracting them and distracting the adjudicator from the speech).

Second, POIs should be no longer than 15 seconds. Any POIs longer than 15 seconds unfairly eat into the opponent's speech. If a POI lasts longer than 15 seconds, the speaker may wave down the person offering the POI and the adjudicator should call the offeror 'Out of Order'.

Beyond those rules about the form of POIs, there are no rules about the substance of POIs. You may ask a speaker anything you like.

## Advice for asking effective POIs

While in principle you can ask anything you like, in practice you should try to make your question as effective as possible. You may only get to ask one or two questions of your opponents during the debate, so you should make them count. There are two important aspects to asking an effective POI – substance and style.

As for style, above all, be clear. You need the speaker to understand your question so he or she can answer it. And you need the adjudicator to understand it so he or she appreciates your point. You get no credit for a point – no matter how brilliant – if the adjudicator doesn't catch it. Accordingly you should (1) speak to both the speaker and the adjudicator, (2) make your sentences short, (3) avoid rambling and (4) have only one essential point. You are making a point – not points – and in fifteen seconds you do not have an opportunity to make an argument or offer rebuttal. To maximise the impact of your POI, you should know precisely what you want to say before standing up. Consider writing your question down on a piece of paper.

Secondly, you should think carefully about what type of POI is most useful for your team in the circumstances.

## Some of the most effective POIs are:

- **Rebuttal:** the aim of such a POI is to immediately point out a problem in the argument of the speaker. This is the simplest and most common form of POI.

- **Pointing out a contradiction:** the aim of asking this POI is to immediately highlight to the adjudicator a contradiction in the speaker's case. By asking this POI, and not waiting for when it is your turn to speak, you can force the speaker to defend his or her case and spend less time on substantive argumentation. It should be noted that you should be careful in labelling something as a contradiction – do not say something is a "contradiction" unless you are absolutely sure that this is the case, because if you get it wrong and the speaker points that out, you've wasted a POI and undermined your credibility.

- **Hard case question:** the aim of such a POI is to force the speaker into a corner and is best illustrated through an example. In the debate where the government wants to ban cigarettes, an effective hard case POI from the opposition is to ask the government whether they would also ban alcohol. If the answer is yes, then the opposition can argue the government is being too intrusive. If the answer is no, then the opposition can argue that the government is being philosophically inconsistent – why not ban alcohol when it is potentially as harmful as drugs?

- **Bringing back your own material:** these are most effectively used by Opening teams to keep their material in the debate during the closing half. The POI is usually asked by referring to your own material, and rather than directly addressing the speaker's material, it aims to force the speaker to turn their attention to arguments put forward earlier in the debate.

- **Flagging an extension:** flagging your extension through a POI can be an effective tool to influence the manner in which a debate is progressing, by making the speaker address your own material before you have presented it. Do not ask such a POI until the speaker immediately preceding you, to ensure that your Opening team doesn't steal your extension!

## How to respond to POIs

Answering a POI can be scary but it is also an opportunity for you to highlight the strength of your case and demonstrate you are engaging with your opponent's arguments.

- **Answer questions directly:** when you are asked a question, don't try and distract the issue by saying you'll answer it later, or answering the POI by continuing with your own material. Answer the question you're asked.

- **Accept a POI when it is good for you:** Be in control when you're accepting and answering a POI – choose the best moment in your speech to take the POI, rather than simply accepting a POI because POIs are being offered repeatedly. This will help ensure that you're tackling questions about your case at the best possible moment in your speech.

# Extensions

An extension is a new contribution to the debate. The Closing teams are expected to provide an extension. Importantly, what constitutes an extension is not limited to what is flagged as 'the Extension' in the Member speech. Any new contribution to the debate (whether made in arguments or in rebuttal) may also be considered part of the extension.

Commonly, there are two types of extension:

## New Issue/Affected Group:

The simplest extension is to identify an issue that has not been outlined by the Opening team. Let's take the debate: 'This house supports banning smoking'. If the Opening Government does not provide a principled justification for the government restricting individual choice to smoke, the Closing Government might provide this argument, thereby outlining a new issue.

The Closing teams may also highlight the impact of a policy on a group that has not been analysed in the Opening half of the debate. Say, for example, you are debating the topic: 'This house supports high taxes on fatty foods'. The Closing Opposition may argue that this policy disproportionately and unfairly affects the poor, who are more likely to consume fatty foods. This is a new group that has not been analysed in the debate.

If you are using an extension that identifies a new issue or group, it is essential to demonstrate that this issue/group is central to the debate, to ensure that your extension does not seem marginal.

## Deeper Analysis:

Often, the most effective extensions provide deeper analysis (stronger or more detailed reasons) for an argument outlined in the Opening half.

Let's look at the topic: 'This house supports banning boxing'. The Opening Government may argue that individuals do not consent to the harms of boxing, without providing reasons justifying this position.

At Closing Government, you may provide a series of reasons why consent does not exist, including: financial pressures to enter boxing; the difficulties of consenting once you enter the ring; and pressure from managers and peers to keep boxing. Alternatively, you may provide a clearer definition of what constitutes consent, arguing that the decision to box is uninformed and not made voluntarily.

If you are adopting this approach, it is essential to clearly differentiate yourself from your Opening team. During the debate, if you feel that the Opening team has comprehensively covered an issue, it is not worth rehashing this argument, as you will not have provided a new contribution to the debate.

# CRAFTING AN EFFECTIVE ARGUMENT

An effective argument generally has the following structure:

## 1. IDEA

The Idea is the assertion that you are trying to justify.

For example, if you are defending the death penalty, you may outline the following ideas:

> *The death penalty is morally justified;*
>
> *The death penalty deters criminals;*
>
> *The death penalty delivers justice for victims; and*
>
> *The death penalty is the best way to protect society from future harm.*

These are all potentially powerful arguments. However, at this stage, they are mere assertions. Often, debaters will merely outline the Idea (or Heading for their argument) without providing any reasons justifying this view.

## 2. ANALYSIS

The Analysis is the portion of the argument in which you outline the reasons justifying the Idea. Effective Analysis requires you to answer two questions:

- **Why is the Idea true?:** If you are arguing that the death penalty deters criminals (prevents them from wanting to commit the crime), you need to provide reasons why this is true. For example, you may argue that people are rational and weigh up the risks of offending against the benefits of doing so. People fear the death penalty and will avoid conduct that puts them at risk of death. Therefore, the death penalty deters crime.

- **So What?:** This is where you explain why the analysis, if true, is significant for your case and for the outcome of the debate. Your aim is to link the Idea back to the topic. In the context of the death penalty debate, you may argue that deterrence is essential because the government has an obligation to do whatever it can to prevent harm occurring to its citizens. This obligation trumps consideration of other aims of the sentencing process, such as rehabilitation. Failure to complete this step in the analysis may mean that a clever opposing team can argue that even if deterrence is established, it is less important than other issues such as the right to life.

To improve your Analysis, it is worth asking 'Why?' after every point that you make and 'So What?' to explain why this point is important.

## 3. EVIDENCE

Evidence is used to substantiate the Analysis that you have provided.

If arguing that the death penalty deters criminals, you may outline the following Evidence:

- **Case Studies:** You may argue that the death penalty, since its introduction in [X] State, has led to less violent crimes when compared with [Y] State that has abolished the death penalty; or

- **Statistics:** You may argue that the death penalty has led to a 20% reduction in violent crime in [X] State.

Evidence may be important in justifying your claims and adding credibility to your team. However, this is the least important component of an effective argument. An Opposition team can easily dispute your evidence or offer alternative evidence that supports their case. It is therefore more effective to use Evidence sparingly and focus your time on developing your Analysis.

**Idea** + **Analysis** + **Evidence**

# APPROACHING DEBATES STRATEGICALLY

Approaching topics with only 15 minutes preparation is a difficult challenge. Teams that win close debates often do so by being more strategic. Being more strategic means structuring a case or arguments in a way that makes them more likely to withstand rebuttal and remain persuasive.

# WINNING FROM THE OPENING HALF

## 1. Identify the Problem and Solution

This section of the guide concerns policy debates. Policy debates require teams to propose a change to the way the world works now (i.e. 'banning drugs' or 'invading Syria'). The proposal for change suggests that there is a problem and it is your job to outline the best solution for this problem. Outlining a clear problem and solution is often essential to winning from the Opening Half.

### Identifying the Problem

After receiving the topic, you should identify what the problem is. Ultimately, you are asking a simple question: Why is this change being proposed? What is the issue that people who advocate this proposal are trying to address?

Identifying the problem requires you to identify the failures of the current situation ('status quo'). Let's look at some examples.

- **This house supports banning cosmetic surgery:** Cosmetic surgery may be harmful because it: is a risky procedure; creates low self-esteem among patients and the wider community through reinforcing unrealistic expectations about body image; and takes resources away from other, necessary forms of surgery.

- **This house supports invading Syria:** The Syrian government violently represses its own people; a civil war has broken out; and Syria continues to empower terrorists in other countries, such as Lebanon.

### Approaching the problem strategically

Once you have identified the problem, it is essential to use this strategically. Highlighting the severity of the problem or the urgency of resolving the problem will make it easier to justify the solution being proposed.  It is often useful when outlining the problem to:

- **Use Evocative Language:** When describing the problem, use language that reflects the seriousness of your solution. For example, if you are defending military intervention in Syria, it may be worth briefly describing the horrific atrocities occurring to better justify this extreme step.

- **Outline Trends:** If the problem has continued or will continue to get worse, there may be a trend in need of correction. For example, in defending an invasion of Syria, the trend of increasing violence by the Syrian government and reprisal attacks by the rebels may mean that immediate action needs to be taken to prevent an all-out civil war.

- **Outline Tipping Points:** A tipping point is a point of no return. For example, many people argue that we are at a tipping point when it comes to resolving climate change: if we do not act now, it will be impossible to prevent the most harmful consequences of global warming. Therefore, outlining a tipping point adds urgency to the solution and makes it harder for the opposition to defend inaction.

It is not always possible to identify an obvious trend or tipping point. In the debate, 'This house supports banning cosmetic surgery', it is hard to isolate an obvious trend justifying a ban. However, you may point to society's increasing obsession with body image as a subtle trend that needs to be redressed.

## Identifying the Solution

The solution ('model') is your policy response to the problem that has been identified. In the examples listed above, the solutions identified by the topics are 'banning' cosmetic surgery and 'invading' Syria.

It is essential before developing your solution that you have a clear idea of the current policy approach to this issue. The topic may be helpful in developing this understanding (for example, the topic 'That this house supports invading Syria' makes it clear that the current policy is not to invade Syria, 'That this house supports banning cosmetic surgery' makes it clear that the current policy is one of free access).

## Opening Government

For the Opening Government, identifying the solution is usually quite simple (as the topic generally identifies the solution that you need to support).

However, it is important to keep three things in mind:

- **Provide sufficient detail about how your solution will work:** For example, if you are advocating invading Syria, you will need to outline: (1) which countries will be invading Syria; (2) what type of invasion they will be launching (i.e. air strikes or ground troops); (3) how will they defeat the Syrian army; and (4) what happens next (i.e. will there be elections and/or a continued peacekeeping force). If you are defending banning cosmetic surgery, you will need to outline whether you support a ban in all cases, or support an exception for certain procedures (such as for burns victims).

- **Clearly define the scope of the debate:** If you are given a broad topic (e.g. that we should offer amnesties to dictators), be very clear about whether you want the debate to be about all dictators or about a particular dictator (e.g. Bashar Assad). There are pros and cons of defining the debate broadly or narrowly and you should consider which approach provides your team with the best chance of success. The benefit of a broad definition is that it provides a larger impetus for action; the problem is it may be harder to achieve a solution. The pros and cons of a narrow scope is the reverse: a smaller impetus but a solution that is more likely to succeed.

- **Avoid the problem-solution gap:** This refers to situations where the solution identified would not, even if enacted, solve a problem as large as the one identified. For example, if you are arguing that cosmetic surgery has terrible implications and should be banned, a problem-solution gap exists if the solution you outline is 'banning this procedure for women between 18 and 21 years old'. As this only targets a small group of individuals, it fails to fix the broader problems associated with cosmetic surgery. Therefore, always aim to ensure that your solution is proportionate to the problem identified.

## Opposition teams have three options when faced with the government's proposed solution:

### Reject the existence or extent of the problem:

It is rare that this approach will be effective, as balanced topics generally require some sort of problem for the government team to combat. You won't get very far arguing that there are no problems in Syria or that cosmetic surgery has no harms. Having said that, it may be effective to dispute the size or nature of the problem and thereby undermine the opposition team's imperative for action.

### Accept the problem, but propose a counter-solution:

Adopting this approach requires opposition teams to outline a detailed alternative proposal for resolving the problem. Importantly, this still involves a departure from the current policy. For example, with reference to the examples above, counter-solutions may involve mandatory counselling rather than banning cosmetic surgery, and offering the Syrian leader an amnesty to leave the country rather than launching an invasion. If Opposition teams choose to take this approach, the disagreement in the debate becomes which solution is better at fixing the problem identified.

### Accept the problem, but argue that the harms of the Government model are worse than the status quo:

This approach involves arguing that even if the current situation is problematic, the Government model would make things worse. Therefore, in the Syria debate, an Opposition team may argue that an invasion would kill thousands of people, destroy infrastructure and still fail to remove the dictator. In the cosmetic surgery debate, an Opposition team may accept that these procedures cause harm to society, while arguing that the harms of an unregulated black market (created by a ban) are more substantial.

## 2. Identify the Competing Principles

A principled argument is one that is not based solely on the practical outcomes of a proposal (what will happen), but instead considers the interests or rights in the debate (why what happens matters). In approaching a topic, it is essential to identify the competing principles that will be drawn upon in the debate. This principle is the foundation of your case and is generally the first argument made by the first speaker in each Opening team. Let's look at some examples:

### This house supports banning all recreational drugs:

- **Government Principle:** The Government has the obligation to protect people from their own harmful choices by restricting their freedom, in this case to consume recreational drugs.

- **Opposition Principle:** Individuals should have the freedom to make choices about their own body, including the choice to consume drugs for pleasure.

### This house supports banning hate speech

- **Government Principle:** Individual freedom of speech does not extend to speech that causes serious harm to others and undermines social cohesion.

- **Opposition Principle:** Individuals should have the freedom to express their opinions, regardless of how offensive these opinions are, and the correctness of an idea should be assessed through a free process of debate and discussion.

## Winning the Clash of Principles

Once you have identified and outlined your principle, it is important to keep a few things in mind to ensure that your principle wins:

- **Be Pre-emptive:** In outlining your principle, make sure you prepare for the opposition team's principle and pre-emptively explain why your principle is superior. So, for example, if defending banning hate speech, you will need to explain why the government interest in protecting people from harm is more important than unrestricted individual freedom to offend.

- **Be Specific:** Principles often have limited impact on a debate because they are expressed in a generalised way. For example, if discussing banning hate speech, do not simply argue that actions that cause harm should be banned. Explain why hate speech itself causes significant emotional harms to individuals (providing examples) and then explain why emotional harm is something that the government should care about.

- **Identify clear limits for your principle:** Debates often hinge on the exceptions to a principle. For example, if defending banning drugs, you may argue that bodily autonomy (the right to do what you want with your body) is an important right that should only be limited in instances of serious harm to individuals. However, in taking this approach, you need to consider whether you would also ban other addictive substances such as cigarettes and alcohol, which may also create harms. Ensure you have a clear idea of the exceptions to your principle and can differentiate similar situations if necessary.

# 3. Stakeholder Analysis

If you are struggling to come up with arguments during prep time, it is worth considering a stakeholder approach. This requires you to consider all of the different groups that may be affected by a policy, making it easier to develop arguments.

Let's consider the topic, "This house supports banning hate speech".  The stakeholders affected include:

- Victims of hate speech (who may benefit from this speech being banned);

- Members of extremist groups that spread hate;

- Members of the general public; and

- The Government.

To do this most effectively, it is worth identifying which groups are the most important in the debate and explaining why the impact of the policy is particularly significant for these groups. For example, if you are supporting banning fatty foods, you may argue that these products cause serious harm to children, who are vulnerable and need to be protected by the state. Therefore, the impact of a ban on this group is more important than the impact on healthy people, who would be denied the pleasure of occasionally enjoying a Big Mac,

It is important to avoid generalisations when discussing how particular policies would affect groups. For example, not all members of the general public would react the same way to hearing hate speech. Some people, who are more susceptible to racism, may be more likely to join extremist groups. Others may reject this speech as unacceptable. Others simply won't care at all! Therefore, make sure to analyse all of the different sub-groups when assessing the impact of a policy.

# WINNING FROM THE CLOSING HALF

## Preparation Time

The persuasiveness of Closing teams will be influenced by whether or not they have provided a new contribution (Extension) to the debate. An Extension is any new contribution to the debate (new arguments, new rebuttal, new examples etc).

To construct the most effective Extension possible in your preparation time, here are a few suggestions:

- **Identify a comprehensive list of arguments:** As noted earlier in the guide, the easiest type of extension is to identify a new issue or group that has not been identified in the Opening Half. This process is made easier if you have a clear idea in preparation time how you would structure the case in the Opening Half. In brainstorming these arguments, consider the advice for Opening teams listed above (such as considering the different stakeholders and identifying the competing principles).

- **Try to predict the key points of clash:** Often, the most effective extensions will target the biggest issues of clash in the Opening Half of the debate. Consider the obvious responses to the main arguments on your side of the motion and try to think of strong responses to these attacks that can distinguish you from your Opening team.

# During the Debate

It may be worth having a sheet of paper on which you list all of your ideas for Extensions. As these issues are covered, you may cross them off. Importantly, you should consider whether an issue has been comprehensively covered in the Opening Half or whether there remains scope for Deeper Analysis (i.e. making the logical links your Opening team failed to make).

Once you have established your Extension, it is crucial to deliver it in the most effective way possible. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Develop a clear label for your Extension:** In the BP adjudication process, it is often essential to have an adjudicator fighting for you to win. It is much more likely this will occur if you are extremely clear about your new contribution to the debate. Considering developing a short label (i.e. 'our extension will be that society's obligation to protect life outweighs the importance of deterrence' in the death penalty debate) that captures your new contribution and makes you memorable. Use this label early in the Member speech to ensure that this new contribution is not missed and reinforce it in the Whip speech.

- **Explain why your Extension is important:** Too often, teams do not do enough to explain why the new issue they have identified matters. Be very clear about the significance about your Extension or you may be dismissed in the adjudication as marginal to the debate. For example, if you are debating 'This house supports banning smoking' and your extension is about why this policy disproportionately harms the poor, explain why the poor are an extremely significant group that are an essential consideration in determining whether the ban should occur.

- **Clearly distinguish yourself from your Opening team:** In both the Member and Whip speeches, it is essential to clearly demonstrate that you are providing a new contribution to the debate. Be willing to explicitly note the new contributions you are providing and the ways in which you have added to your Opening team. Try to avoid spending too long summarising the entire debate in the Whip speech and ensure that the Extension is prioritised.

# THE BASICS OF ADJUDICATING

This Chapter is based on the rules for adjudicating British Parliamentary debates at the World Universities Debating Championships (WUDC). However, many of the principles discussed apply to adjudicating other styles of debate.

# Role of the Adjudicator

Adjudicators have three primary roles:

- **Deciding who won the debate;**
- **Deciding why the winners won; and**
- **Giving constructive feedback to the participants.**

## Approaching Adjudication

Adjudicators must be impartial. You must put aside any pre-existing bias when judging a debate. For example, if you are judging a debate on the motion: 'This house supports banning smoking', and you work for the tobacco lobby (or if you are simply a smoker), you should not allow your own views to influence the outcome. You should never allow factors specific to the speaker, such as his or her race, religion or gender, to influence the outcome.

Your role is to assess the arguments in the debate from the perspective of the ordinary intelligent voter. You are watching the debate through the eyes of someone who would not have any specialised knowledge of the debate, but who has a basic understanding of the issues outlined. Therefore, if you possess knowledge of the motion that you wouldn't expect the ordinary intelligent voter to possess, this should not influence your decision.

Ultimately, your role is to adjudicate the debate that actually occurred, rather than the debate you wanted to see. Avoid penalising debaters merely because they did not raise arguments you find compelling.

## Determining the Winner of the Debate

Debating is ultimately about persuasiveness. Your role is to assess the style of the speakers in the debate and the content of the speeches to determine which team was most persuasive. There are no hard and fast rules to determine which team has won the debate.

However, there are a number of factors that commonly affect persuasiveness:

- **Logic and Relevance:** Have teams presented logical, well-structured arguments that are clearly relevant to the motion?

- **Engagement:** Have teams responded to the arguments of other teams in the debate, including through using points of information to highlight deficiencies in the opposition case?

- **Role Fulfilment:** Have Opening teams set up a clear framework for the debate and outlined arguments that remain relevant? Have Closing teams provided an extension (a new contribution) to the debate?

- **Style:** Have speakers confidently presented their content and responded to POIs effectively?

Adjudication is not a science. Intelligent adjudicators often differ about the extent to which they found teams persuasive. Therefore, ensure that you do not attempt to follow a rigid approach to judging debates. Every debate is different and the reasons for results will differ.

# Assessing Individual Speeches

This section outlines some matters to consider when assessing an individual speech. In addition to deciding which team won the debate, an adjudicator must also assign scores to each speaker. This requires an adjudicator to assess the persuasiveness of each speech, which requires consideration of the 'content' and 'style' of each speaker. A detailed BP scoring range is provided at the end of this manual.

When you assess the content and style of each speech you will be making a subjective judgment. But you should try to be as objective as possible when you do this. The best way to do this is to consciously focus on certain considerations, which are detailed below. This is not a definitive list of considerations and they should not be applied rigidly.

## Judging Content

There are a number of factors you should consider when assessing the persuasiveness of content:

- **Logic:** Weak speakers rely on assertions and fail to detail the links required to establish a point. Strong speakers outline and substantiate a series of propositions that lead logically to a conclusion.

- **Sophistication:** This refers to the level of analysis given, not how fancy an argument sounds. The most sophisticated arguments identify and refute potential weaknesses.

- **Clarity:** A key element of an argument's persuasiveness is clarity. Clarity is often linked to structure. Speeches that are poorly structured are often difficult to follow.

- **Relevance:** Speakers that clearly highlight the relevance of their content to the motion and the outcome of the debate should be rewarded.

- **Prioritisation:** Even if arguments are well explained, a failure to prioritise the most important issues undermines the persuasiveness of a speech. Consider whether speakers have allocated time appropriately to reflect the significance of their arguments and have focused their rebuttal on the opposition's analysis, rather than merely contesting examples.

## Judging Style

Judging style is difficult. There is no consensus on what constitutes good style. However, there are some factors that you can take into account to help you judge style as objectively as possible. These include:

- **Control and engagement:** As a general rule, good style is defined by the ability of a speaker to control the room and engage with the other debaters, the adjudicator and the audience. A speaker with poor style might be nervous, disinterested or boring. On the other hand, a speaker with good style might be natural, interesting and commanding. Speakers with good style can accept POIs without sounding flustered.

- **Clarity:** Speakers that have poor expression, conflate arguments or are repetitive and confusing are unlikely to have persuasive style.

- **Appropriateness:** Good style depends to a large degree on how 'appropriate' a speaker is. Appropriateness is context dependent. For instance, a forceful tone may be most appropriate (if arguing for invasion of a recalcitrant regime) or a compassionate tone might be best (if describing a humanitarian disaster). It all depends on the subject matter of the debate, the relationship between the participants in the debate, the evenness off the teams and myriad other factors. Adjudicators should be aware that good style consists in part of adopting the right tone in the right circumstances.

## Panel Discussions

BP debates are often judged by a panel of adjudicators. Typically, this panel includes a 'Chair' and two 'Panelists'.

### Role of the Chair

The Chair has four primary responsibilities:

- **Running the debate;**
- **Facilitating the panel discussion;**
- **Finalising the scores and ranking for the teams;**
- **Delivering the oral adjudication**

### Running the Debate

Chairs should facilitate an environment where this discussion can take place. As such, the Chair should:

- **Welcome and introduce the teams:** whilst this is not essential, it does create a sense of occasion and ensure teams are aware preparation time is over and the debate has started. You are in control of the room once you announce the debate.

- **Timing:** most speakers will keep their own time. However, other teams will look to the adjudicator in determining when is appropriate for them offer points of information. As such, you should confirm how you intend to signal speaker times, and make sure those signals can be heard by everyone in the room.

- **Maintain order in the debate:** as debaters can often get quite fired up about their particular viewpoints in a debate, it is important that the adjudicator maintains a sense of order during the debate. Ultimately, the person speaking is entitled to speak with minimal interruption (obviously points of information are an acceptable interjection).

### Facilitating the panel discussion

The Chair's responsibility is to ensure that the different views within the adjudication panel are efficiently identified, and if possible, resolved by consensus. The aim is to facilitate a comparative evaluation of the teams on the basis of their overall contribution to the debate.

There are a number of different ways to facilitate an effective discussion. One approach is to begin by asking the Panelists to outline their rankings. At this stage, it may be possible that you agree on some/all of the rankings in the debate. If everyone has exactly the same rankings, it is worth having a brief discussion to ensure rankings are the same for the same or similar reasons.

However, often adjudicators will have different rankings. If this occurs, the Chair's role is to ensure all members of the panel have the opportunity to defend their position. Do not ignore the views of adjudicators you disagree with and remain open to changing your position.

Ultimately, if it is not possible to reach a consensus, the Chair should hold a vote to break the deadlock. If the Chair is in the minority, the Panelist/s should deliver the oral adjudication.

## Finalising the scores and rankings

After finalising the rankings for the debate (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th), the panel should then consider the team and speaker scores.

There is no single approach to scoring. One effective way to approach this process is to:

- **Determine the total scores** for the team that receives 1st position (keeping in mind the quality of the individual speeches and the overall quality of the debate);

- **Determine the margins** between the teams; and

- **Allocate speaker scores** for each team based on the total team score, differentiating between the individual speakers.

It is important to avoid conclusively determining your scores after each individual speech, as your evaluation of the speech may differ once it can be evaluated in the context of the debate as a whole.

## Delivering the oral adjudication

An effective oral adjudication has three components:

- **Rankings:** You should commence your adjudication by outlining the rankings. It is essential that you provide a comparative analysis differentiating the teams. For example, 'the Opening Government took first place because they outlined a clear policy and the most sophisticated analysis of [X]; the Opening Opposition took second place because they lost the main issue of clash in the Opening Half but still provided [Y] argument that was well explained and remained relevant, the Closing Opposition took third place … '

- **General Feedback:** It may be worth highlighting general feedback that applies across the debate (for example, a failure to offer POIs).

- **Individual Feedback:** Ask teams if they want individual speaker feedback and provide suggestions on how individual speakers could improve. Tailor your feedback based on the standard of the debate (don't destroy the confidence of novice debaters)!

## Role of the Panelists

After the debate, Panelists should formulate initial rankings and be prepared to outline their reasons for differentiating between the teams.

As with chairs, Panelists should be open to changing their mind if they are persuaded by the views of the other adjudicators.
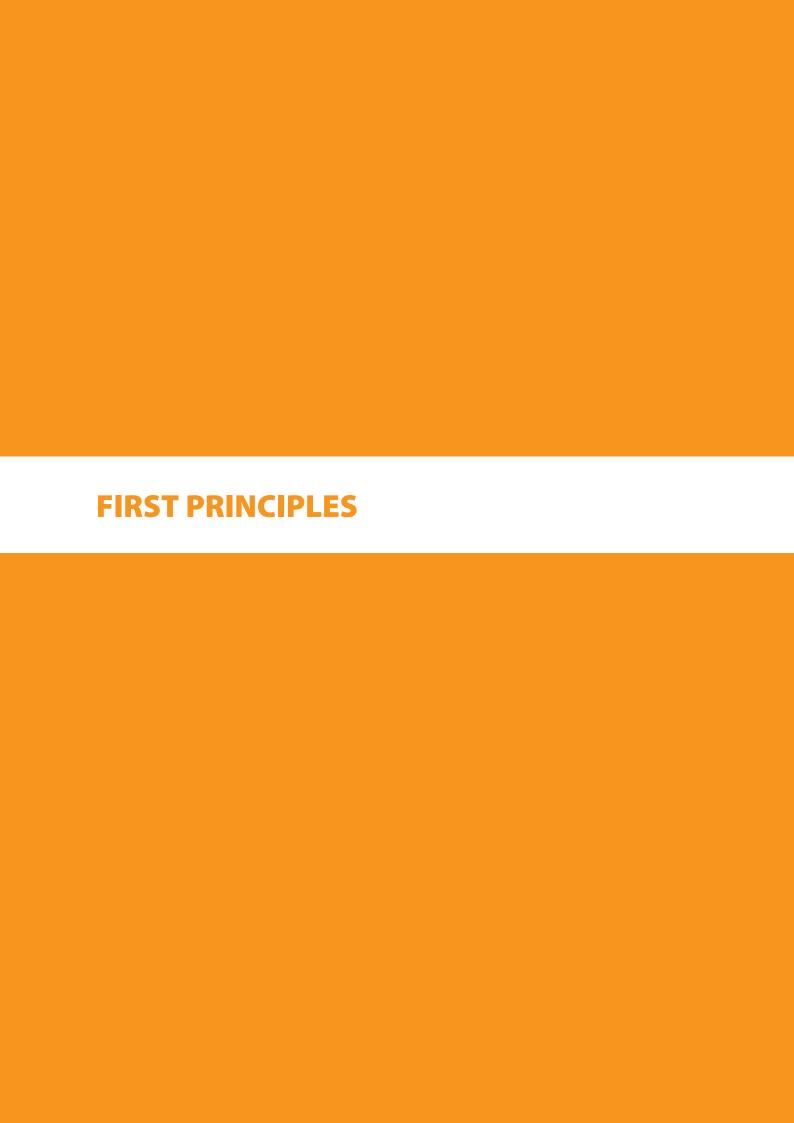
Finally, if the Chair is in the minority, a Panelist may be required to deliver the oral adjudication. Speakers may seek individual feedback from Panelists regardless of who delivered the oral adjudication, so prepare some individual comments during the debate.

# Taking Notes Effectively

In order to judge a debate and provide valuable feedback, it is important for you to take notes during the debate. Given the volume of information that will be presented to you, it is impossible to accurately assess proceedings without having notes to refer back to.

Here are a few suggestions to make your note taking more effective:

- **Write comments on individual speeches as they progress:** It may be worth highlighting specific strengths and weaknesses during the individual speeches, so that the individual feedback you provide is more effective.

- **Write comments on each team during the debate:** As the debate progresses, consider noting your initial impressions of each team's performance. This may assist in quickly arriving at your final rankings after the debate.

- **Track POIs:** Many adjudicators have a separate page where they track the number of POIs offered by each team. This assists in determining the extent to which teams have been active during the debate.

- **Use Bullet Points:** Unless you're an incredibly fast writer, you won't have time to write down everything that is said. Be selective about what you write down.

# FIRST PRINCIPLES

# GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION AND PERSONAL FREEDOM

## INTRODUCTION

Policy debates are usually about governments (rather than individuals or groups) taking action to solve major problems in society.

In policy debates, governments usually try to solve problems in one of three ways:

**Persuading people** (e.g. educating people about the harms of smoking)

**Discouraging people** (e.g. taxing cigarettes to discourage smoking)

**Forcing people** (e.g. banning the production of cigarettes or criminalising smoking)

While you should consider the practical outcomes of the proposal, an essential question is whether it is legitimate for the government to act in the proposed way. This should therefore be the first argument you advance in the debate. This requires an analysis of whether there is a principled justification for the government to intervene in the lives of its citizens.

So, when is government action legitimate?

## SMALL GOVERNMENT VS BIG GOVERNMENT

Broadly speaking, there are two schools of thought about when it is legitimate for government to influence the choices of individuals. They can be thought of as the two extreme ends of a spectrum from 'Small Government' to 'Big Government'. Both are theories about what the role of Government is or should be.

**The 'Small Government'** position is that individuals should have the maximum freedom to act. The government can only interfere with an individual's freedom when that individual is harming another person.

**The 'Big Government'** position is that the government can restrict an individual's freedom even when they are not harming another person. This might be when a person is harming themselves or when there is a greater good at stake, such as the protection of society or enforcement of morality.

Often one side in the debate will adopt a 'Small Government' approach (not favouring intervention) and the other side will adopt a 'Big Government' approach (favouring intervention).

**If you are on the 'Small Government' side,** you can justify your position by arguing that the individuals in question:

1. consent to the activity;

2. are best placed to know what is in their own interests; and

3. are not harming others.

**If you are on the 'Big Government' side,** you can justify your position by arguing that:

1. individuals do not meaningfully consent to the activity;

2. individuals do not actually know what is in their own best interests;

3. individuals harm others; and

4. there is a greater good at stake, such as community protection or enforcement of morality.

There is also a 'Middle Position' that aims to discourage bad choices while still allowing individuals freedom to make these choices. Commonly, this is achieved through 'sin taxes', which make harmful choices more expensive.

## KEY CLASHES

Often debates about government intervention and personal freedom involve the following clashes:

1. Are the individuals properly consenting to the activity?

2. Is the government or the individual better placed to assess what is best for the individuals?

3. Are the individuals harming others such that their freedom should be limited?

## CONSENT

In many debates there will be a dispute about whether an individual or class of individuals has properly consented to a certain activity. In these debates, the team with the most sophisticated analysis of consent will likely win the issue.

If you are arguing that someone consents to an activity, you should prove:

1. The person is informed of the risks of the activity

2. The person is rational, so that they can assess those risks

3. The person is free from an unacceptable degree of pressure that may compromise their ability to make a decision in their own interests

Consent arguments differ based on the nature of the activity being considered. It is essential to connect your consent arguments to the specific activity. A clever approach is the 'sliding scale analysis' where you can argue that the level of certainty that we need that people are consenting increases if the activity is risky (eg euthanasia or boxing) and decreases if the activity is less risky (eg signing a will).

## HARM PRINCIPLE

Both the 'Big Government' and 'Small Government' positions agree that individuals should not be free to harm others. This is known as the 'Harm Principle'.

If you are making an argument that an activity harms others, you should carefully explain:

1. **Who is being harmed.** This is important because not all objects may be morally worthy of protection. If the topic is 'This house would ban whaling', the Government would need to argue that whales are worthy of protection such that an individual should not be free to harm them.

2. **What kind of harm it is.** Similarly, not all kinds of harm merit restricting freedom. If the topic is 'This house would ban hate speech', the Opposition may argue that simply offending someone is not a kind of harm that justifies restricting individual freedoms. While physical harm is sufficient, emotional harm may not.

3. **How the activity causes harm.** You also need to establish a link between the activity and the supposed harm. If the topic is 'This house would ban fatty food', the Government may argue that fatty food causes obesity, but the Opposition could say that obesity is more influenced by genes and lack of exercise. The Opposition may also argue that the harm was actually caused by the individual's choice responsibility for themselves, rather than the fatty food itself.

4. **How much harm the activity causes.** You should establish that the harm is significant enough to justify intervention by government. On the Opposition side you can argue that the harm is not significant enough to justify a ban. For example, even if fatty food causes health problems, this is insufficient to restrict people's choices considering the happiness created by having the freedom to eat what you like.

# CRIMINAL JUSTICE

## INTRODUCTION

The four most common criminal justice debates are about:

1. what activities should be crimes;

2. who should be criminally responsible;

3. how the state should respond to crime; and

4. how post-conflict states should deal with mass atrocities.

## WHAT ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE 'CRIMES'?

A 'crime' is socially defined. And what is considered criminal changes over time. Practices once considered a crime are 'decriminalised' (such as homosexual intercourse in most countries). And practices once legal are 'criminalised' (such as rape in marriage).

Many policy debates are about whether a certain activity should be considered criminal. Topics include 'This house supports decriminalising recreational drug use' and 'This house supports legalising euthanasia'. In these debates, you should consider two questions:

1. Is it principally justified to criminalise the practice?

2. Does criminalisation have positive or negative outcomes?

### Principled justifications

Criminalisation limits individual freedom. A criminal penalty has significant implications for an offender, including a fine, time in prison and the stigma of being labelled a criminal. Therefore teams defending criminalisation need to justify limiting individual freedom and explain why the significant consequences for the offender are legitimate.

Government teams often justify criminalisation by arguing:

1. that the activity causes harm to others (Harm Principle – see above);

2. even if the activity only causes harm to the offender, that it is necessary to protect people from themselves (Big Government approach – see above); or

3. the activity is morally wrong.

If you are arguing that an activity is morally wrong, you need also to explain why morality is relevant to the criminal law. This can be justified by arguing that:

- people are generally happier when they are living in a society that upholds certain values; and

- the government has an obligation to criminalise practices that challenge these values.

For example, a practice such as bestiality (having sex with animals) is criminalised not just because it doesn't accord with the values we think are important, but also because it offends the principle than animals, as sentient beings (capable of feeling pain), should not be exposed to unnecessary harm.

Opposition teams can, of course, contest that the activity causes harm to others or take a Small Government approach. However, if the Government argues an activity is morally wrong, the Opposition can reply that:

1. the criminal law is not and should not be concerned with the enforcement of morality (because morality is contested/subjective and governments should leave choices about morality to individuals); and/or

2. the activity is not morally wrong (see the section below entitled 'Ethical Arguments').

## WHO SHOULD BE CRIMINALLY RESPONSIBLE?

Some debates focus on whether a particular individual or class of individuals should be criminally liable for their conduct. Topics include 'This house supports holding directors criminally liable for environmental damage caused by their companies' and 'This house supports holding communities criminally liable for domestic abuse within their community'.

In these debates usually there is a clear harm (such as environmental damage or domestic violence) and the main issue is who should be held responsible for that harm. Since there is often more than one individual or group that could plausibly be responsible, the debate is about who is more responsible. To make the case for imposing responsibility you should compare the two individuals/groups and ask:

1. **Who really caused the harm?**

   a. Is there a direct link between the person's actions and the harm?
   b. Or is the 'chain of causation' somehow broken?
   c. Who had the capacity to prevent the harm occurring?

2. **What was the state of mind of the individual/group?**

   a. Were they acting intentionally (meaning to cause the harm)
   b. Or recklessly (knowing the risk of harm and going ahead anyway)?
   c. Or merely negligently (not doing what a reasonable person would do in the circumstances)

**3.    Does either individual/group have a reasonable excuse?**

    a.    Were they acting in self-defence?

    b.    Or under duress?

For example, it is possible to argue that directors of a company should not be held responsible for environmental damage because they do not have direct control over the actions that caused the damage.  Furthermore, directors do not manage the day to day operations of a company and give control of this to managers.  Hence it would be unfair to hold them responsible for something they had no direct knowledge of.

However, it is possible to argue directors should be held responsible because they are ultimately responsible for a company's actions.  Directors of a company have an obligation to take steps to be informed about the activities they are undertaking, and so should be aware that there is a possibility of environmental damage.

## OUTCOMES OF CRIMINALISATION?

Even if it is principally justified for an activity to be a 'crime' or for a certain class of persons to be considered 'criminal', you should also consider the practical effects of the proposal. In assessing the practical outcomes of a policy, you should consider:

1. How will criminalisation shape the behaviour of people in society?

2. Will criminalisation have any harmful unintended consequences?

You should brainstorm as many groups as possible and think about how the proposal will affect them. If the topic was 'This house would criminalise recreational drug use', how would the proposal affect (a) drug addicts, (b) occasional users, (c) youth, (d) drug gangs, (e) pharmaceutical companies, etc. Put yourself in their shoes and ask, how would I respond to this policy?

## HOW SHOULD THE STATE DEAL WITH CRIMINALS?

Some debates are not about whether something should be a crime, but how to respond to criminal behaviour. Topics like this include 'This house supports the death penalty', 'This house supports the chemical castration of paedophiles' and 'This house supports mandatory prison terms for arsonists'.

Generally speaking, the aims of the criminal justice system are:

1. To protect the community (eg, putting criminals in prison reduces the risk they pose to society)

2. To deter further criminality (eg, severe consequences such as prison time prevents people from wanting to commit crimes)

3. To punish the offender (eg, punishing the offender can deliver justice for victims and preserve community order)

4. To rehabilitate the offender (eg, reforming criminals through counselling makes it less likely that they will re-offend)

## In approaching criminal justice debates, you should:

- Establish that your policy achieves one (or more) of the above aims of the criminal justice system; and

- Explain why the aims achieved by your plan are more important than those advanced by the opposing bench.

To establish that your policy achieves certain aims, you should be aware of the assumptions underpinning these aims. For example:

**Deterrence** is about potential offenders altering their behaviour, which assumes they:

1. are rational and weigh up the costs and benefits of their actions;

2. are fearful of the consequences of their action; and

3. contemplate getting caught.

**Punishment** is about delivering justice to victims, which assumes that:

1. the punishment can actually deliver emotional closure to victims; and

2. the state has a greater obligation to the victims of crime than other groups.

**Rehabilitation** is about reforming criminals and assumes that:

1. people are not inherently criminal; and

2. people are capable of reforming themselves.

# HOW SHOULD POST-CONFLICT STATES DEAL WITH MASS ATROCITIES?

Post-conflict States face unique criminal justice dilemmas. Post-conflict States are transitioning from violence to peace, oppression to freedom, dictatorships to democracy. How should the new system deal with crimes committed under the old system?

There are three approaches post-conflict States could adopt in responding to past atrocities:

**Retributive** approaches (such as prosecutions)

1. **Example:** the Nuremburg trials after WW2 to punish members of the Nazi regime for the Holocaust

2. **Advantages** include: (1) punishing offenders and delivering justice for victims, (2) creating a deterrent effect

3. **Disadvantages** include: (1) increased conflict if the outcome of the trials is controversial; (2) limited opportunities for victims to participate in proceedings and have their voice heard

**Restorative** approaches (such as truth and reconciliation commissions)

1. **Example:** the commission formed in South Africa post-apartheid

2. **Advantages** include: (1) they are more likely to identify the truth than trials, (2) they ensure that the voices of victims are heard in a non-adversarial forum

3. **Disadvantages** include: (1) they fail to ensure that perpetrators face significant consequences for their crimes, undermining deterrence; (2) they deny victims and their communities the chance to see their perpetrators paying for their crimes (assuming that amnesties are granted in exchange for truth)

**Forgetting** (choosing not to confront what occurred)

1. **Advantages include:** (1) confronting the atrocities may lead to more violence and instabilities, as old grievances resurface

2. **Disadvantages include:** (1) lessons are not learned, making it more likely that these crimes will be repeated

# ETHICAL ARGUMENTS

## INTRODUCTION

Ethics is about how we should treat others: 'What is the right thing to do?'

In debates, ethical arguments typically arise in two ways:

1. The topic concerns an activity that is supposedly ethically wrong (eg, 'This house would ban prostitution' or 'This house would decriminalise bestiality'); or

2. The proposal in the topic may be ethically problematic (eg, 'This house would torture terrorist suspects')

In both cases, teams often dispute whether the practice (eg, prostitution, bestiality, torture) is ethically justified. Debating about ethics is very difficult because it is often hard to articulate reasons why something that feels wrong actually is wrong. However, because it is so difficult, teams that can do this effectively stand out from the crowd.

## TYPES OF ETHICAL ARGUMENTS

There are two types of ethical reasoning you can use in debates:

1. **Categorical** reasoning
2. **Consequential** reasoning

**Categorical** reasoning considers morality from the point of view of certain duties and rights. Some actions are simply wrong, regardless of their consequences. There are some 'categories' of actions that will always be wrong because they violate a 'rule' of morality.

**Consequential** reasoning considers morality from the point of view of the consequences of an act. An act is justified if the benefits outweigh the harms. An act is ethically justified if it maximises the overall level of happiness in the community.

## CATEGORICAL ARGUMENTS

To make an ethical argument without focusing on the consequences of the act, you need to identify a moral rule that has been broken. Common moral rules used in debates are:

- The duty to respect human dignity

- The duty to respect all humans equally

- The duty to not take away a person's autonomy

- The duty to treat others as valuable (as an end in themselves) and not to use them in order to achieve something else (as a means)

The categorical approach says that if you believe in rights at all, you can't simply abandon them when it is convenient. The whole point of rights is that they cannot be traded away.

## ETHICAL ARGUMENTS IN DEBATES

There are many ways ethical arguments clash in debates:

- Both teams could use categorical arguments.

- One team could use categorical arguments and the other team could use consequential arguments.

- Both teams could use consequential arguments.

If both teams are using categorical arguments, you need to prove why the right/duty you are advocating for is more important than the right/duty the other team is advocating for. For example, if the topic is 'This house would ban prostitution' the teams could disagree about whether prostitution is ethically justified using categorical arguments. The Government might argue that prostitution is unethical because it violates human dignity – by using a person's body for pleasure in exchange for money the prostitute is treated like an object or a commodity like any other. The Opposition might argue that prostitution is ethical because it respects people's autonomy and lets them choose how to live their life – all people use their bodies in some way to earn a living (farmers, athletes and sculptors are all paid to use their hands) so why is prostitution any different?

In this scenario, there is a clash between two rights – the right to human dignity, and the right to autonomy – so each team needs to explain why its right is more important. One way to do this is to use a 'hierarchy of rights' argument. This idea is that some rights are more fundamental than others. For example, the right to life is more important than the right to freedom of speech. Why? If you have no life you cannot speak! Similarly, in our example above, the Government could say that human dignity is the most important right because dignity is what makes us human. The Opposition might argue that autonomy is more important because humans only have dignity because we are creatures that use reason, so the right to use our reason (ie, to act autonomously) is more important than any right to dignity.

If one team uses categorical arguments and the other team uses consequential arguments, you should try to explain why your system of ethics is better. If you successfully argue that a categorical system of ethics is better than a consequential system of ethics, then the consequential arguments of your opponent will be meaningless. For example, in the prostitution debate, the Government might use the categorical argument that prostitution violates human dignity. The Opposition might use the consequential argument that banning prostitution would drive it underground and, as a consequence, make

prostitution controlled by criminals which is more dangerous for prostitutes. These arguments do not clash because one is about rights and one is about consequences. Therefore the teams should argue that their conception of ethics is superior to their opponent's. The Government might say that governments the world over recognise the importance of human rights and prostitution violates the most essential human right to dignity. The Opposition might argue that rights do not really exist or are subjective and that governments should only be concerned with practical outcomes.

If both teams use consequential arguments, the team that best explains the likely consequences will usually win. For instance, in the prostitution debate, the Government could say that prostitution needs to be banned because if it does not ban it the government implicitly approves of the activity, which could lead to lower moral standards in society. The Opposition could argue that banning prostitution would be ineffective as it would simply drive the activity underground. The team that explains all the links in its arguments in the most comprehensive way will likely win this issue. In this example, it will probably be easier for the Opposition to explain how prostitution will continue to exist even if it is banned than for the Government to explain that allowing prostitution will lower moral standards throughout society.

# PROCESS VS. OUTCOMES

## INTRODUCTION

Many debates involve a clash between:

- The importance of following administrative or judicial processes; and

- The need to bypass process in order to achieve tangible outcomes.

Take the topic 'This house supports the targeted assassination of terrorists'. The Government would argue that judicial processes that ordinarily apply before the State is able to kill an individual (warrants, laying of charges, trial by jury, conviction, exhausting appeals) should apply even if it means that governments have less flexibility in how they conduct wars. This is because judicial processes are more important than national security outcomes.

The Opposition would argue that those ordinary judicial protections are not applicable (in specific cases or in times of war generally) because they place a great burden on States trying to protect their people. That is, national security outcomes are more important than judicial processes.

## EXPLAIN IMPORTANCE

On both sides of the debate, the most important thing to do is argue why the value you are advocating is more important than the value the other side is advocating. It is crucial to be specific.

Advocates of process need to:

1. Identify each individual process;

2. Explain the purpose behind each process; and

3. Explain why those purposes could not be achieved without having the process in place.

Advocates of outcomes need to argue that the specific process is not necessary for the achievement of its stated purpose. Two arguments that are often effective are:

1. That the government can restrain itself without formally adopting the process; and

2. That the government will (or is at least likely to) restrain itself.

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## INTRODUCTION

There are many types of international relations debates. Unfortunately, there is no substitute for having a strong knowledge of current events. However, this Chapter aims to provide a framework for approaching a common type of international relations debate: how to deal with a State acting outside accepted norms of behaviour.

Topics like this include

> *'This house would invade Syria' (to stop it killing its own citizens)*

> *'This house supports surgical strikes against Iranian nuclear facilities' (to stop it developing nuclear weapons)*

## PROBLEM-SOLUTION

As in all debates, it is essential to accurately identify the problem and propose a solution that will actually solve the problem. In international relations debates, it is particularly important to:

1. Be as specific as possible about the nature of the problem;

2. Outline the current approaches being used by the international community to solve the problem; and

3. Prove that the current situation cannot get better and may even get worse.

Once you have identified the problem, you need to propose a practical solution. Unlike most types of debates, details are extremely important. You should therefore explain:

1. **Who** (countries or organisations) will take the action

2. **What** type of action it will be

3. **When** will the action occur

4. **How** the action will be effective

5. **Why** the proposal is plausible

It is critical to explain why it is in the countries'/organisations' interests to take the action. If you cannot explain this, your case will not appear credible.

# EFFECTIVENESS

Probably the most important issue in international relations debates is whether the policy will be effective. The factors you need to consider in measuring effectiveness differ based on the type of strategy you are defending.

There is a range of options available to States for persuading countries to adopt a different course of action. Broadly speaking, States can use:

**Soft power,** such as:

- Public diplomacy
- Bilateral and multilateral diplomacy
- Amnesties

**Economic power,** through:

- Aid
- Sanctions

**Hard power,** such as:

- Coercive diplomacy
- Containment
- War

The four most common debating topics are about military intervention, economic sanctions, amnesties for dictators and negotiating with 'bad guys'. As a rule of thumb, military intervention will be effective if:

1. Intervention will defeat the existing regime's army

2. Supporters of the regime will either be defeated or abandon their support, avoiding a protracted civil war

3. There is a credible and superior alternative government that can take power

4. There are sufficient national/international resources to ensure the country can be rebuilt

Economic sanctions (eg, arms embargoes, foreign assistance reductions, export limitations, asset freezes, withdrawal of diplomatic relations) are a common foreign policy tool. But they have a mixed record. They tend to be effective only where:

1. there are clear aims (ie, what changes are being sought);

2. they are part of a broader package;

3. they are imposed by multiple states;

4. they are focused on those responsible for the problem (ie, key government officials); and

5. there is an exit strategy (ie, clear conditions for when they will be lifted).

If you are proposing amnesties in exchange for giving up power, this may prove effective if you clearly explain:

1. who will be granted the amnesties;

2. the significance of the leaders leaving power to achieving peace;

3. that the leaders will likely take the offer; and

4. what will happen afterwards.

Negotiating with pariah States (eg, North Korea) or organisations (eg, the Taliban) is fraught with difficulty. If you are arguing in favour of negotiation you should try to prove that both parties:

1. are willing to come to the negotiating table;

2. are willing to bargain in good faith;

3. have an interest in a negotiated solution; and

4. are capable of compromising (ie, they are rational and free from pressure that would prevent them from being seen to be negotiating with 'the enemy').

## PRINCIPLED JUSTIFICATION

In addition to explaining why your policy is effective, it is important to explain why it is justified in principle. These principles derive from international law, accepted norms of State behaviour and ideas about morality.

A military intervention, for instance, may be justified if there is:

1.      Just cause (ie, self-defence, defence of others, protection of innocents from brutal, aggressive regimes)

2.      Right intention (ie, the motivation is appropriate)

3.      Proper authority (ie, decision is made by appropriate authorities, according to proper process and is made public)

4.      No other option (ie, the state has exhausted all plausible, peaceful alternatives to resolving the conflict, including diplomatic negotiation)

5.      Probability of success (ie, the violence will not be futile)

6.      Proportionality (ie, the benefits of the action outweigh the costs)

You can see that the first three justifications (just cause, right intention, proper authority) are categorical reasons. The last three justifications (no other option, probability of success, proportionality) are consequential reasons. You can use this framework to provide a principled justification for any foreign policy tool – including sanctions, amnesties and negotiations.