



The Cambridge Union
Society Introductory
Guide to Debating



Introduction

The core ambition of the Cambridge Union Society is to spread the Art of Public Speaking and Debating. As a Society we are home to some of the best debaters in the world.

Every year our competitive debaters travel across the globe teaching public speaking workshops and giving speeches. In the last three years alone, our debaters have been able to travel to Botswana, India, China, USA and Germany, to name but a few countries.

The reason why our Society is one of the most successful of its kind in spreading the Art of Public Speaking is because of the extensive curriculum the Cambridge Union Society has in place. Every academic year the Debating Officers of the Union implement and teach a sixteen-module curriculum which takes individuals who are absolute beginners in public speaking and trains them to be some of the best competitive debaters in the world.

The purpose of this resource is to give a little taste of these skills, which hopefully should translate into a skill which can be applied both inside and outside the realm of competitive debating.

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What is Debating?

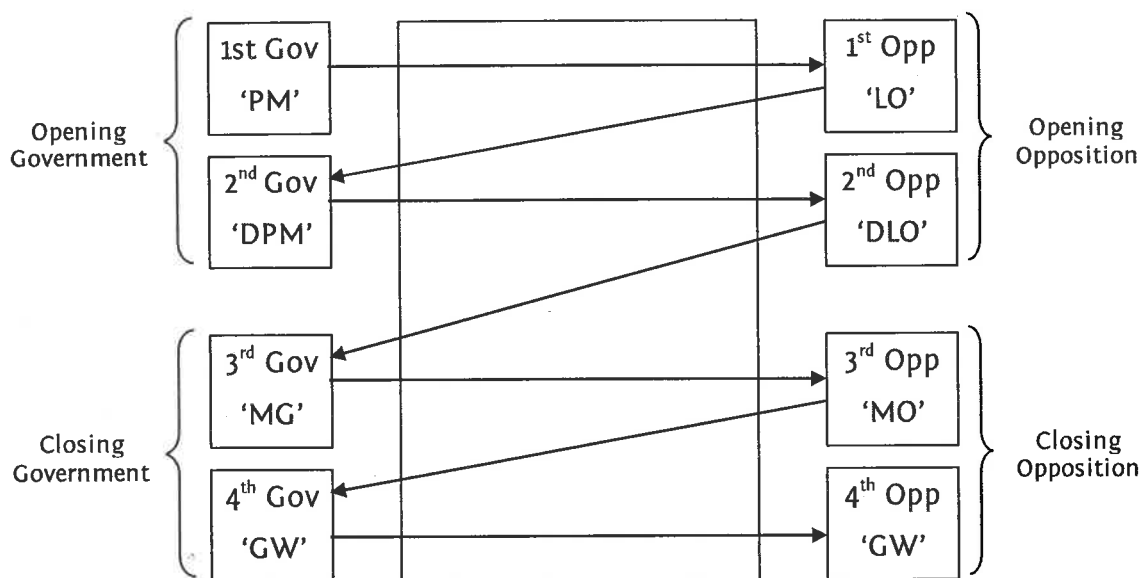
A debate is an extended argument in an organised setting, and can be thought of in a way similar to a game. All debates consist of teams, rules and adjudication. Like sports, debates can be had in competitions or more casually, and debaters require both training and practice to reach their full potential.

The best way to get debating in the future is to compete in a competition; the largest of its kind and arguably the best in the world is the Cambridge Schools Debating Competition, which runs annually and allows over 1500 participants to debate in front of experienced university debaters and receive invaluable feedback. The competition consists of regional rounds, held in schools across the country, and progresses to Regional Finals before the Cambridge Schools Finals Day, hosted in the historic Cambridge Union building, usually in February. We operate a generous bursary scheme, whereby entry costs are waived for schools which might not have had a history of school-level debating in order to widen access to the competition.

The structure of a British Parliamentary debate

The format we use almost invariably at the Union is the British Parliamentary (BP) format, which will be laid out below. It is modelled loosely on the debating style used in the House of Commons. The most unique feature of BP is that there are four teams in every debate, each team composed of two speakers. Two teams (four speakers) argue in favour of a policy while two teams (four speakers) argue against it. Each debater speaks only once and the sides (proposition and opposition) take alternating turns giving speeches, which usually last for five or seven minutes (it varies across competitions).

Debaters typically compete around a table. This is what the layout of a table looks like ('Government' is used interchangeably with 'Proposition' in debating):



Positions in the debate are assigned for each team when the topic (or 'motion') is announced (known as 'the draw'), and teams will have fifteen minutes after the announcement to prepare their speeches before the start of the debate. Each team has a specific role they need to fulfil in order to win the debate. The role depends on the position they have been assigned.

Side Government (or 'Government Bench')	Side Opposition (or 'Opposition Bench')
<p>Team: Opening Government 1st Speaker: 'First Government' or 'Prime Minister'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Defines</i> the debate, translating the motion into a concrete policy or idea • <i>Argues</i> two or three contentions supporting why the policy ought to be enacted 	<p>Team: Opening Opposition 2nd Speaker: 'First Opposition' or 'Leader of the Opposition'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rebuts</i> (points out the flaws in) the Prime Minister's arguments • <i>Argues</i> independently, introducing new concepts that may not have been brought up in the Prime Minister's speech
<p>Team: Opening Government 3rd Speaker: 'Second Government' or 'Deputy Prime Minister'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rebuts</i> the Leader of Opposition's arguments • <i>Argues</i> independently, introducing new concepts that may not have been brought up in the Prime Minister's speech. 	<p>Team: First Opposition 4th Speaker: 'Second Opposition' or 'Deputy Leader of the Opposition'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rebuts</i> the entire proposition's arguments • <i>Argues</i> independently, introducing new concepts that may not have been brought up in the Leader of Opposition's speech

<p>Team: Second Proposition 5th Speaker: 'Third Government' or 'Member of Government'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Extends</i> the debate, offering new arguments and analysis in support of the Government • <i>Refutes</i> any outstanding opposition points 	<p>Team Position: Second Opposition 6th Speaker: 'Third Opposition' or 'Member of the Opposition'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Extends</i> the debate, offering new arguments and analysis in support of the Government • <i>Refutes</i> any outstanding proposition points, especially their extension
<p>Team Position: Second Proposition 7th Speaker: 'Government Whip'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Summarises</i> the debate, offering a biased summary of the issues involved and showing why the proposition deserve to win. 	<p>Team Position: Second Opposition 8th Speaker 'Opposition Whip'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Summarises</i> the debate, offering a biased summary of the issues involved and showing why the opposition deserve to win.

Basic principles of British Parliamentary debate

In brief, your team's job is to convince the judges that:

1. The motion ought to be supported/opposed (depending on your side)
AND
2. Your team (as opposed to the other team on your side) has provided the best reasons why the policy should be supported or opposed

The motion will typically be phrased 'This House Believes' or 'This House Would'; the former generally indicates an idea or principle, whereas the latter discusses a specific policy which is to be enacted.

Like a political party that has joined a coalition government, your team has an interest in seeing a policy or idea supported or opposed, but also in making your team appear the most convincing to observers. As a result, the third speaker for each side ought to contribute new arguments (an extension), to distinguish her team from their counterparts on the same side. Similarly, the fourth speaker on each side ought to summarise the debate in such a way as to highlight not only why their side deserves to win, but the primacy of his partner's arguments in securing the win.

You have two main weapons to convince the judges of the strengths of your team:

- Substantive arguments: Arguments for or against a policy or idea.
- Rebuttal: Criticisms of the other side's arguments.

Most speeches will contain both substantive arguments and rebuttal. The exceptions to this rule are the 1st Government Speaker (Prime Minister) who will only provide substantive arguments, since nobody has spoken yet, and the summation speakers, who are not required to bring any new major arguments at all, but are expected

merely to summarise what has already taken place. At the beginning of a speech, debaters ought to outline the rebuttals and substantive arguments they wish to put forward; this helps the judge in making notes and therefore makes it easier to credit their material.

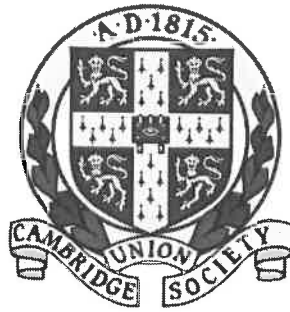
Points of information

A point of information (POI) is a question or comment made by a debater to a speaker on the other side of the motion. A debater may offer a point of information by rising while a speaker for the other side is speaking. Most competitions do not allow speakers to offer points of information during the first or last minutes of a speaker's speech and instruct judges to give time signals to indicate when POIs are allowed. The time in which no POIs are allowed is known as 'protected time'.

The debater offering the point of information should say something like, 'On this point' when they rise, so that their opponent and the judges are aware of their request. The debater giving their speech can either accept the point of information by saying 'I'll take your point' or decline it by saying 'No, thank you' or words to either of these effects. It is also acceptable to dismiss a point of information by waving one's arm in a downward motion, indicating that the offeror should take their seat.

If accepted, the offeror should ask a question or make a comment designed to challenge their opponent's argument. This point should not last longer than fifteen seconds (e.g. 'Isn't it true that nuclear weapons have kept peace between the great powers during the past sixty years?'). The offeror should then resume their seat and allow the speaker to a chance to respond to their challenge. Speakers may also interrupt the offeror at any time during the POI, during which time the offeror should also resume their seat.

Speakers should aim to take at least one point of information while speaking and offer at least two for every speech on the opposing side. No points of information may be offered to the other team on your side or to your partner.

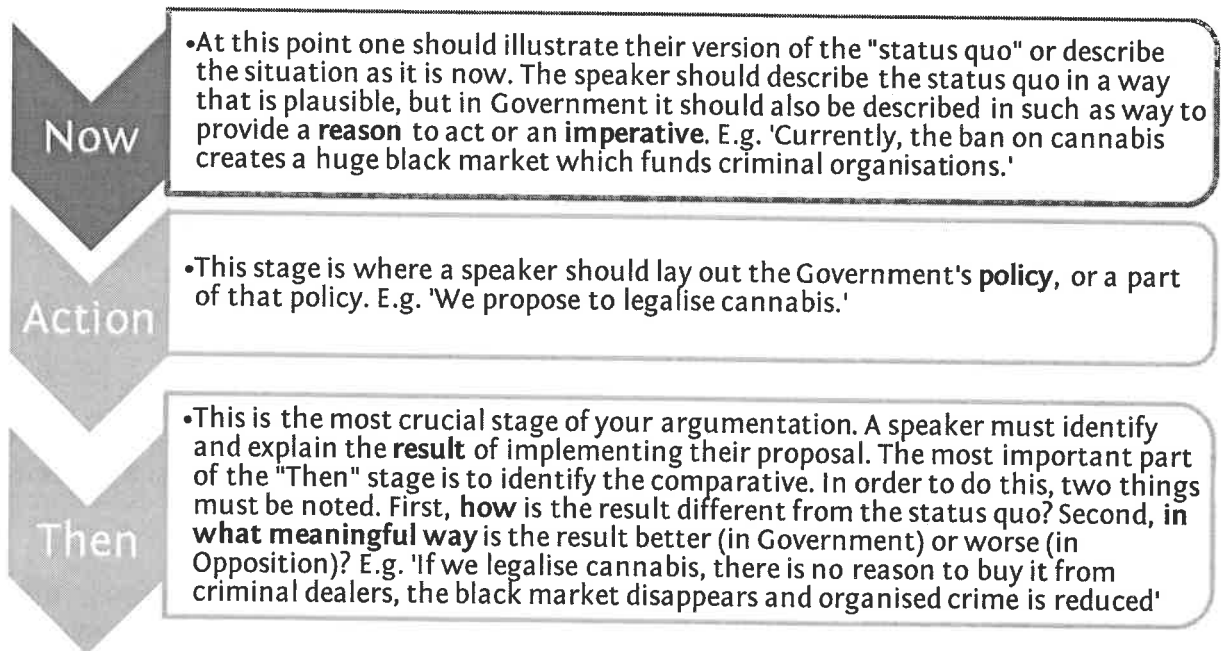


Content

All good debating speeches rely on having well-analysed, thorough arguments. Every debater must think about what they want to say in their speech to ensure they are persuasive.

What is particular about debating arguments is that no logical step can be taken for granted. Every part of one's analysis must be explained.

A model for good argumentation



The use of examples and evidence

From the outset, the use and relevance of examples when presenting an argument is perhaps the most controversial part of speechwriting and argument construction. For instance, in the NAT model of argumentation there is no mention of evidence whatsoever. Many individuals can construct arguments without recourse to evidence, examples or observations.

Examples are **not** free standing entities which **embody** an argument itself, but, rather, they are an extremely useful tool which should be used to **validate one's reasoning**.

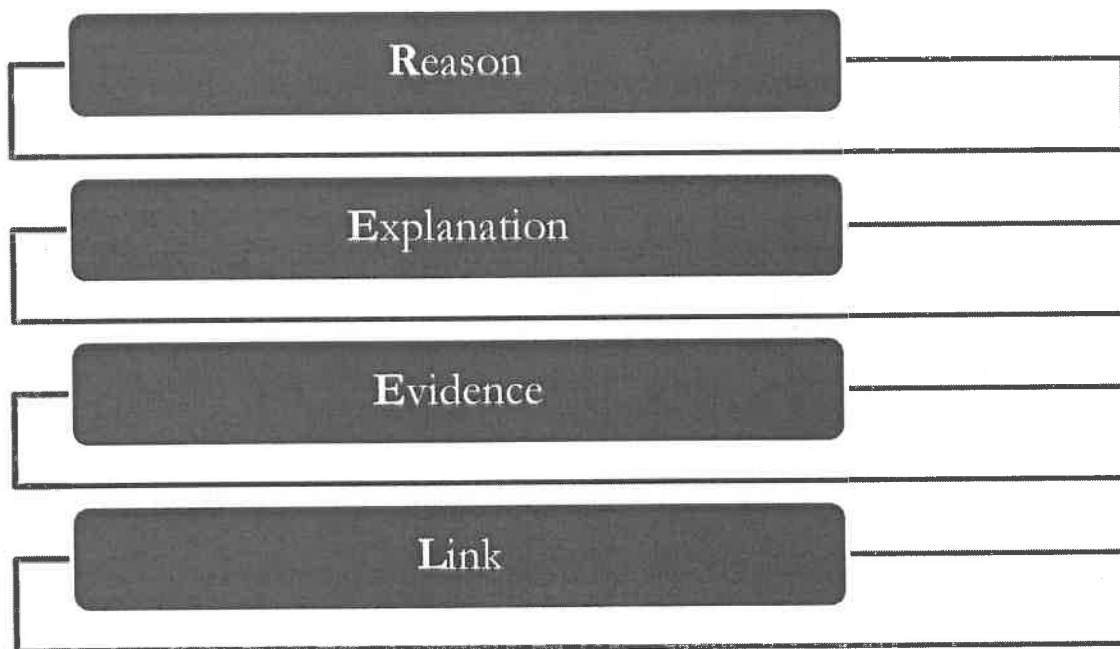
The relationship between arguments and examples can be explained as follows: whilst **arguments embody** reason, logic and theory to explain a given state of affairs, **evidence, examples and observations explain and elucidate** instances of how your model of reasoning which you present has actually come to pass. This is especially useful where your argument appears non-obvious to the casual observer

For instance, it would be insufficient to support your sanctions policy by simply claiming 'sanctions tend to work'. A more effective method would be to briefly explain a situation in which sanctions did work; for example, 'placing of sanctions on South Africa was effective in ending apartheid' would better-support your analysis on why sanctions work, especially if the reasons why the policy worked in your example correspond to why you say the policy will work in the current situation. This is where, sadly, some reading can be helpful. *The Economist* is somewhat ubiquitous on the debating circuit, and for good reason. Varying your reading, however, is also essential. The *BBC News* website and journals such as *Foreign Affairs* are also very useful.

- **Examples ought to validate your reasoning.** For this reason it is natural that they should often follow your analysis rather than precede it. This is not an absolute rule and there may be occasions where it is more appropriate to start with an example.
- **Examples, evidence and observations must be relevant.** Relevant examples may be either directly relevant or indirectly relevant.
 - For directly relevant examples, a speaker should not have to explain the connection between the relevance of the example and the analysis which surrounds it.
 - For indirectly relevant examples, a speaker should spend time explaining the connection between the relevance of the example and the analysis which surrounds it. Often this is done by drawing an analogy and explanation of context.
- **Do not overburden your speech with examples.** For instance, a speech which contains lists of statistics will never be persuasive and often cause the judge to be disengaged.
- **Prioritise your use of examples.** There may be many different examples which support your reasoning and point of view. In choosing the 'best' examples consider the following:

- Examples from recent history are generally more relevant than examples from the past
- Hypothetical examples are generally the least relevant and least persuasive examples
- Similarly useless are personal anecdotes
- Case studies which aim to prove a hypothesis are most useful when the relevant study recognises that it is not absolutely true; quantified doubt is often much more reassuring than case studies which claim absolute proof

Incorporating examples



The REEL method of argumentation is often the best way to incorporate more into one's claims, irrespective of the subject matter.

- **Reason.** This is simply a headline to the particular line of analysis. In order for this to be most persuasive, think of this as a politician's tagline. A listener should be able to listen to your **reason** and intuitively feel there is some important imperative to act.
- **Explanation.** To find an explanation for your reason, ask yourself the simple question 'why is this a good reason?' At this point, one can **incorporate** the NAT model of argumentation **within** the REEL model. Whilst deploying REEL, one can fall back to the simple NAT methodology at the explanation stage to provide further 'teeth' to claims and arguments.

- **Evidence.** Examples are extremely important. At this stage, individual speakers should deploy relevant pieces of evidence in order to be as persuasive as possible. For effective use of evidence, please see page 11.
- **Link.** The link should explain why the reason you put forward and the arguments you have given are relevant to the wider claim you are making. Links are often evaluative statements appealing to some intuition. It is stylistically appealing and important from a listener's point of view if a speaker does not leave it up to imagination, instead articulating the relevant **link** to their argument.

An example of the above structure in practice, taking a Government argument on the motion 'This House Would legalise prostitution':

- **Reason:** legal prostitution will be safer than illegal prostitution.
- **Explanation (incorporating NAT):**
 - **Now:** At this moment in time prostitution is illegal and is deregulated. As a consequence of this illegality it occurs naturally, without any controlling measures, from the state.
 - **Action:** If something is legal it can be regulated. Removing criminality from prostitution could result in state-regulated brothels in which there is compulsory contraception, legal protection and other such safeguards.
 - **Then:** If there is a legal prostitution sector, there will be no incentive for prostitutes to operate in the more dangerous black market. As a consequence, the dangerous black market in prostitution will come to an end.
- **Evidence:** An Australian study shows STIs were 80 times higher in the illegal sector of prostitution than in comparable legal sectors.
- **Link:** If the government can make something safer for all then it should.

I-A-E Arguments

Irrespective of the sophistication of the models presented above, good arguments are inherently lucid. Each individual may in very different contexts deploy, either consciously or unconsciously, their own varied form of argumentation. Perhaps you, as an individual speaker, prefer to speak without the rigidity of the models presented above.

The IAE model of argumentation is the most flexible form of argumentation. It presupposes the following:

The Anatomy of an Argument contains the following three things: an Idea, Analysis and Evidence.

The central tenet of this 'model' of argumentation is that, so long as an individual presents an idea substantiated with some form of analysis with the use of evidence, he or she will be presenting a cogent argument.

- **Idea.** The Idea refers to the concept or proposition that an individual has set out to prove. It might be a simple assertion that a given idea is good, or that an evaluative statement is on the balance of probabilities correct.
- **Analysis.** Analysis is the **mechanism** whereby you can explain why your central proposition is correct or logical or reasonable to the ordinary and intelligible listener. There are various things one ought to bear in mind:
 - In the vast majority of contexts it will be relevant to ask yourself the following: "Why does my proposition/idea/contention/proposal lead to X bad/good outcome"; "why is X good/bad?" and "why is X important in the context of competing considerations?"
 - When presenting a premise, you must challenge the premise by asking yourself "why?" Please note, that too often, speakers at the analysis stage of their argument in answering the question "why?" resort to "evidence" rather than a cogent and reasoned response. Of course, there are many scenarios where one's analysis is best illustrated by evidence rather than logic, but, a speaker should ensure there is as much logic in one's analysis as possible before resorting to evidence, for argument in which an audience may actively participate consistently proves more persuasive.
 - Irrespective of what is stated above, at some point a speaker must stop asking "why". The aim when speaking is to exhaust a reasonable level

of analysis before relying on purely knowledge-based criteria to prove one's point (i.e through observation and examples).

The importance of the I-A-E model of argumentation is not to provide a structure *per se* for one's speech, but rather to identify the three elements of the anatomy of an argument. If one uses these three elements in a clear fashion, he/she will be presenting a clear and cogent speech.



Style

Introduction

Style is a crucial factor in the persuasion. The most effective leaders in any organisation are individuals who are brilliant communicators; one only needs to look at the public speaking skills of virtually every Head of State in the world to see this to be the case.

From the outset it should be noted that speaking styles can vary drastically between different individuals. Irrespective, speakers with vastly different speaking styles can be equally persuasive and, in turn, equally stylistic. No two speakers will have an identical speaking style. It is also important to note that, when considering what counts as good style, you must at all times be asking yourself the question 'who is my audience?'

The aim of this guide is not to teach a **single good speaking style**. Rather, it is to highlight the various elements which help form the **unique** speaking style everyone naturally has. Once you have come to learn the various elements of speaking style you should be able to identify possible weaknesses in your own style and target the specific areas you wish to improve upon.

Volume

There are three important points to consider about the volume at which you speak:

- **Your first priority is to ensure you can be heard.** Variations in volume, loud or quiet, can have certain rhetorical effect. That said, the **most** important function of volume is trivially simple: you must ensure your audience can hear what you are saying.
- **You must be aware of the effect of your volume upon your tone.** Volume conveys to your audience what the **tone** of your speech is. As a consequence, if you do decide to vary your volume, you should also note that you are varying your tone.
- **Variations in volume are key tools of emphasis.** The most important stylistic device to emphasise a particular point is to vary the volume of your speech.

Raising your voice at a crucial point, for instance the conclusion, draws specific attention to the importance of what you are saying and makes it more persuasive. The converse, however, is also true; if you speak at a consistently loud volume, you are unlikely to be able to rely upon this technique.

Speed

There are two important points to consider about the speed at which you speak:

- **Ensure that you speak at a reasonable pace.** It is a basic fact of human biology that we believe we speak slower than we, in fact, do. As a consequence, individuals usually speak **incredibly fast** (especially when they are nervous) rather than at a reasonable pace which is easy to follow. At the Union, we often **record our own speeches and listen to them** to overcome this simple defect in style.
- **Speed is vital to keep your audience engaged.** The speed at which you speak must fit the subject matter which you are discussing. Altering your speed at the right time will highlight important elements of your speech. For example, after giving a vital statistic you can briefly pause in order to allow the audience to digest its significance.

Engagement

A speaker must ensure that they engage with their audience. You must make them feel the speech you are delivering is tailored to them rather than simply organised ramblings of things you are interested in. There are various ways in which this can be done:

- **Make eye contact.** By looking an individual in the eye and making eye contact, you are much more likely to get him or her to listen to what you are saying. Eye contact can be daunting but it is vital in order to hold a listener's attention. If the audience is a sufficient distance away such that it would not be obvious, it can help to focus upon the exact middle between the eyes of audience members, rotating between different individuals.
- **Note taking.** One of the easiest ways in which to ensure you engage is to write your speech in note form rather than as an exact transcript of the words you intend to say. As a consequence, you will not rely on the paper in front of you for your content but naturally become more conversational, and thus more engaging.
- **Do not go into 'automatic mode'.** Often, individuals who are giving a presentation simply remain in 'automatic mode' and aim simply to get

through their presentation without engaging either with their own material or with their intended audience. You should ensure you avoid doing this by recognising the audience's presence. Simply pausing for a question can be enough to ensure your audience is kept on their toes.

Performance

Any speech in any context involves an element of performance. At the end of the day it is very unlikely that the way in which an individual presents him or herself during a speech will be the way in which that individual actually acts in his/her everyday life. As a consequence, you must recognise that there is an element of performance in public speaking. Here is a short, non-exhaustive list of some dos and don'ts:

- Do not sway whilst speaking.
- Keep your feet planted firmly into the ground whilst speaking. One slightly eccentric yet oddly effective strategy adopted by some of our members is to stick a small piece of Blu-tac between the sole of your shoe and the floor as a kinaesthetic cue to stop moving.
- Although gestures used in moderation can be helpful in emphasising specific important moments, excessive gesticulating is off-putting and will detract from your overall point.
- Do not slouch.
- Do not look at one specific point throughout the entire duration of your speech.
- Do not use filler words such as "umm" or "ahhh". These are vocal tics useful in conversation in order to make it clear that you have not finished speaking, but they have no place in public speaking, serving only to make you appear unprepared and unconfident. Consider simply pausing instead, which makes you appear more in control of your material and of your audience.
- Do not 'up-speak' (this is when you finish a statement as if it were a question).

It is impossible to come up with an exhaustive list of things individuals can or cannot do to enhance the performance element of their presentation. A simple exercise, as noted above, is to record your speech with a video or audio recorder, and appraise the performance as if it had been delivered by somebody else.

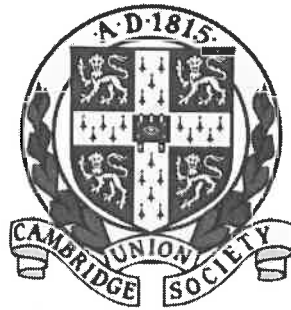
Implementation

When planning your speech, it is essential not just to structure your arguments (what you are going to say), but to structure your style-skeleton (how you are going to say it).

One of the most effective ways in which you can control your use of the various style components identified above is to deploy a style map. These can act as pointers to yourself to remind you to change your styles at the appropriate moment. To develop a style map for any given speech, simply write next to each point in your speech which elements of the style skeleton you will deploy when saying that particular point).

Upon deciding to deploy a particular stylistic element, you must ensure that you strike the correct balance. A speaking style that is constantly changing is as bad as one that stays the same indefinitely. The power of stylistic effects diminishes with excessive use.

The importance of understanding the various components of a stylistic speech is very simple: if you can identify the elements of a speech that makes it worthwhile to listen to you can ensure that your presentations deploy the relevant stylistic conventions to make your speech excellent to listen to.

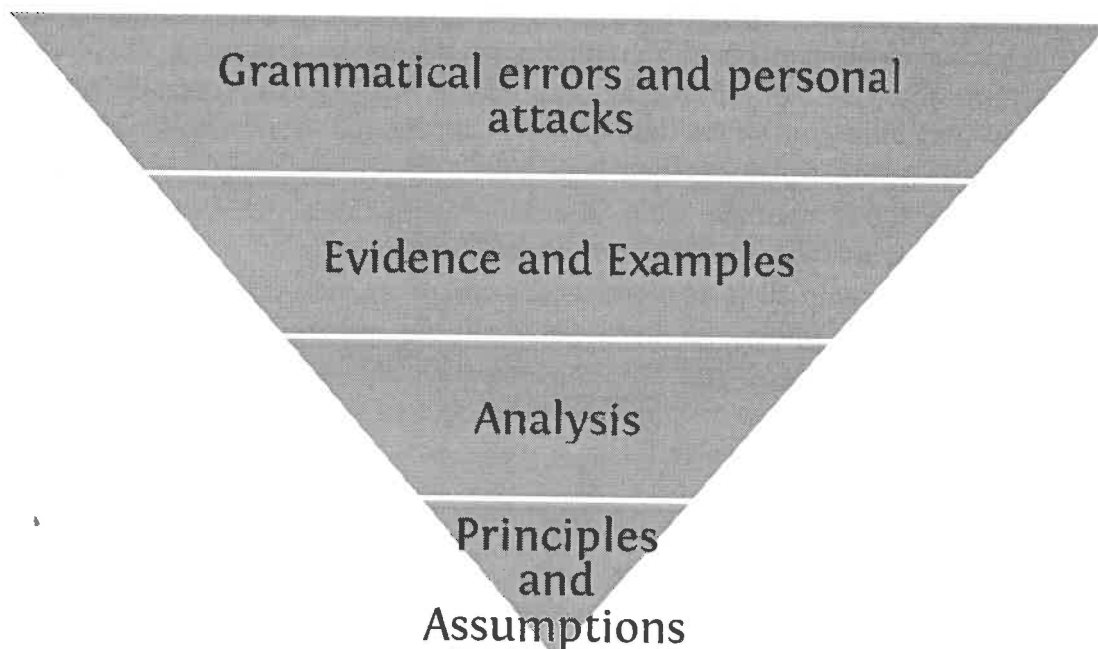


Rebuttal

Winning a debate requires that the arguments your team makes are better-constructed and more important than those of the other teams. We have already looked at how you can make well-constructed arguments. However, showing that your arguments are better than others is assisted by showing that the other side's arguments are flawed, in other words by responding to the arguments of the other side.

Debating can be analogised to a competitive version of Jenga in which teams have to build towers whilst simultaneously taking bricks from the other team's tower to make them fall. Rebuttal is destructive material aimed at knocking down what the other side has said, while your substantive points are constructive material, or your 'bricks'.

The rebuttal reverse-pyramid



The rebuttal pyramid is a framework for identifying what material in your opponent's speech will prove to be the most efficient targets of attack. It is a

pyramid in that if you attack those things on the bottom, your opponent's speech will collapse, whereas the higher-level components will be less likely to damage the thrust of your opponent's material. This is because the higher-level elements are only relevant if the lower-level elements hold true. It is reversed in that, unlike an ordinary pyramid, there are far more higher-level components than lower-level components.

- **Principles and assumptions.** When your opponent couches one or even more than one argument on a single or set of foundational principles, questioning or disproving these allows you to destroy their entire argument, or possibly even their entire speech. This will likely only stand if your opponent has neglected to flesh out their principle, because principles are the parts of a case debaters will tend to hoard and defend like gold, given how vulnerable they can make a speech. For instance, if you are debating the motion 'This House Would Ban Smoking' in the Opposition, and the Prime Minister spends his entire speech talking about how people have the right to do what they like with their own bodies, you could tackle the principle upon which he has relied, namely the principle of 'bodily autonomy'. If you can convince the judge that the principle is wrong (and admittedly this is incredibly difficult with such intuitively sensible concepts as bodily autonomy), you win, and you need not take down any of his analysis or evidence flowing from that principle.
- **Analysis.** Attacking the argument at its analysis is easier but also more difficult. If you can demonstrate that the analysis is illogical or implausible then you heavily damage the credibility of the whole argument. This is the most common sort of rebuttal by experienced speakers. However, it's usually not a fatal blow; be aware that speakers can rebuild their analysis by giving other reasons or explaining their logical links in a different way. For instance, taking the above example again, another way to rebut the Prime Minister's arguments would be to point out that we infringe upon people's right to bodily autonomy in all sorts of situations where we view it as more important to protect their safety, for instance when we require individuals to wear seatbelts in cars. Here, you are rebutting their analysis by pointing out that they have assumed that people having the right to do what they want is more important than anything else.
- **Evidence.** It is always easy to dispute evidence presented in support of opponent's arguments, but can be a waste of time; your opponent will typically be able to repair the chain easily by providing an alternative piece of evidence which proves the same thing. For instance, if the Prime Minister in the above case were to make a different argument and refer to a 2009 study to argue that the NHS would save £3.2 billion from lung cancer cases which would not materialise because of his policy, stating that either a) the figure

was actually only £3.1 billion, b) the study had a seriously faulty methodological approach or c) the study was entirely fictional would all be inefficient approaches. This is because, even if the evidence is removed, the basic argument still seems plausible.

- **Grammatical errors.** Don't go there.

Attacking analysis

The Now-Action-Then model outlined on page 6 can be very useful in generating rebuttal, whether you are arguing against the Government or Opposition. If the argument behind 'Now-Action-Then' can be generalised as 'There is a situation Now which, if our Action is applied, will Then result in a situation which is better (Government) or worse (Opposition) than before', it can be seen that a reversal of this framework creates opportunities for proving your opponent wrong. A non-exhaustive list of examples:

- **Now is not now.** Your opponent has mischaracterised the status quo, thus making it seem more (if they are Government) or less (if they are Opposition) important for change to be implemented than it really is. For instance, let us suppose you are trying to rebut the argument 'there are many immigrants around taking all of our jobs, so if we impose a £10 fee on immigrants attempting to enter the country, there will be fewer immigrants'. One method of attack would be to claim that there are not as many immigrants around as the speaker claims; in reality, only 10.8% of the population consists of immigrants, and this is far lower than many countries such as the US, Canada and Spain. Hence, there is little reason to change the status quo.
- **Now is not bad.** Your opponent, if you are in Opposition, has failed to explain why his/her conception of the status quo is bad. For instance, in the above example, another way to rebut the same immigration example would be to concede that there are many immigrants, but to question why this is a bad thing.
- **Action is impossible.** This is fairly self-explanatory, but if your opponent proposes something impossible, you should call them up on this because the results they claim will appear cannot appear if their mechanism does not exist. For instance, if the Government tried to solve the Eurozone crisis by giving every European member state citizen ten thousand euros each, they would be correct in that the action would create a better situation than the status quo, but this means nothing if the action cannot be accomplished.
- **Action will not lead to then.** Your opponent has failed to explain why their action creates the 'then' situation they envisage. If we take the immigration example, you could claim here that £10 fees are insufficiently high to deter immigrants, and so the action they propose will be ineffective.

- **Then is not better/worse.** Your opponent has failed to prove that the changed 'then' situation they envisage is either better (if they are in Government) or worse (if they are in Opposition) than the status quo. This can be done by highlighting unintended consequences of their action which make the 'then' worse, or by explaining why intended consequences are actually bad things. For instance, if we take the immigration argument, a way of doing the former would be to point out the detrimental effects of monetising citizenship, and a way of doing the latter would be to argue that immigrants have a beneficial impact upon the country which would be lost if the 'then' were to be lost.

It is important to remember, when making rebuttal, that even though you may be making seemingly contradictory claims in rebuttal, you can nonetheless make them fit together with the phrase 'even if'. For instance, you may be claiming in one piece of rebuttal that the immigration argument is wrong because 'now' is being described inaccurately and is not as bad as is claimed; in a second you may be claiming that the same argument is wrong because 'now' as described by them is not at all a bad thing; and in a third you may be claiming that the same argument is wrong because their 'action' will never lead to the 'then' described by them. It may seem contradictory that you are at the same time claiming that the same situation is not bad, but also not as bad as they claim, but also criticising them for failing to change that situation. But if you use 'even if', you can solve these problems. For instance: 'immigration is not actually a bad thing, so there is no reason to change the status quo; but *even if* it were a bad thing, they describe the status quo inaccurately, thus failing to successfully demonstrate that it is as bad as they say, thus not giving us a reason to change it; but *even if* there were a good reason to change the status quo, they fail to do so because their action does not lead to the situation they desire.' All of your rebuttals now independently tackle the entirety of the argument such that, even if your opponent rebuilds the damage done by one (for instance by successfully showing that immigration is a bad thing), the argument is still fatally wounded by the other two (because they still have not shown that immigration is as bad as it needs to be to change the situation, and because they still have not shown that their policy will change the situation).



Extension Speeches

The extension speech is the 3rd speech offered on both sides of the debate and is often the hardest to do well.

What is the Role of the Extension?

In order to win a British Parliamentary Debate, you must not only show that your side won the debate, but that your team of two provided the most important positive contribution to the debate as a whole. This requires that you ensure your material is distinct from what the Opening team on your bench has brought.

Ways to Extend

Ideally, what you would like to do in extension is to provide a new framework to view the debate which is a change from what the opening half on your side brought but is not contradictory with them. In a debate with the motion 'This House Would Legalise Prostitution', for instance, the Opening Government might have argued that a legally-regulated industry might be safer for the workers within it and that this is why the Government bench should win. In extension, you might, instead of looking the debating looking at consequences alone, look at the right of prostitutes and customers to freely contract into commercial sex. It is not just principled arguments which can be made in extension – other things can be equally as important:

- New facts which are particularly important and affect a lot of the debate
- New pieces of analysis which have wide-ranging implications
- Argumentation about an interest-group that has not yet been considered
- New ways of looking at the principles

Even if you cannot find any of the above in extension, a plain new argument, which focuses on the key issue of the debate – or an argument which defines what you think is the key issue in the debate, will often suffice for a new innovative extension that can win your team the debate.



Extension Speeches

Last speakers give a different kind of speech. Their job is to offer a summation of the debate. Ostensibly, they look back and tell us what happened in the debate. In reality, a useful comparison might be with very biased news coverage. Watching a left-wing and right-wing network reporting the same event, you might see them reach totally different conclusions, despite the fact that both ostensibly offer a neutral perspective.

The important thing to remember is that a summary speaker is free from the need to add new material and instead, has the main objective of providing a holistic view of the debate.

Here are some typical ways of delivering a summary speech:

Areas of Clash

In a debate, there will be various arguments made, usually along particular lines that both Government and Opposition are arguing. Although speakers in the debate may not have explicitly identified this, it is a summary speaker's role to articulate the debate in this way. Identifying what the main contention is in the debate and showing why your side (and importantly your team's contribution) has won the debate is often one of the best ways to structure a summary speech. Summary speakers typically identify two 'areas of clash' within their speeches. To ensure you focus on what this contention is, and do not descend into simply repeating arguments from both sides in a list fashion, speakers often ask two questions which they feel central to the debate and proceed to answer them.

Case Construction / Deconstruction

Summary speakers are in a good position to view the debate and identify what must be proven for your side to win and the other's to lose. Once the summary speaker has identified what the burden of proof in the debate was, he or she can look at why his/her bench satisfies this and in particular why your teammates contribution was vital. For instance, in a debate with the motion "This House Would Legalise Prostitution", a summary speaker can argue that two things need to be proven for the Government to win: that there is a right for individuals to engage in commercial

sex and that this would result in a good outcome. Using the burden of proof approach would allow a summary speaker to analyse this burden whilst focussing less on what the opposition bench said and more on what your own team has said.

Important points to remember in a summary speech

- Summary speakers should always ensure that they support the extension speech delivered by their partner! Summary speakers must explicitly rebut the arguments the opposing team have made against the extension and if no such response has been made, point this out.
- Summary speakers should not contribute new material to the debate but can provide new analysis or new ways of conceptualising things already discussed. Explicit new material is discouraged and will be looked down upon. However, new material in response to material already on the table is not damaging and is encouraged.
- Both summary speakers (but Government especially) must remember to do rebuttal and deconstruct the material just presented by the extension speaker on the opposite side. Often, these extensions can be debate winning and responding to them can be the most important thing a summary speaker does in the debate.

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