

POLICY DEBATE HELP

What is Policy Debate?

Policy debate is basically an argument over a policy question. Each team is made up of two people. One team takes the Affirmative side, while the other team takes the Negative. These sides will be chosen by the instructor.

What Does the Affirmative Team Do?

The affirmative team proposes a change in policy by basically arguing that the status quo is not working and the policy should change. In their 1AC (Affirmative Construction), they will list the harms (or problems) with the status quo backed by research and evidence. They then present a plan that will address the problem. Following the plan, the team will discuss how their plan fixes the problems (harms). These are called advantages. The advantages are backed by evidence which should prove how the policy change will fix the problems/harms. Sometimes additional advantages are offered. The burden of proof is on the Affirmative team. You can think of it as if the status quo is innocent until proven guilty. They MUST prove it guilty.

What Does the Negative Team Do?

During the debate the Negative team must think quickly to rebuttal the arguments set forth by the Affirmative team. Their job is to prove that the status quo is not broken and therefore no changes should be made. They do this by having all their research organized and ready to pull from at a moment's notice. As they listen to the 1AC, they take notes on their flow sheet. The rest of the debate they will cross examine the opposing team and then give their own speeches which will not only attack the Affirmative's case, but also defend the status quo.

See page 154-155 in the Introduction to Policy Debate textbook (by Christy Shipe) for details on the structure of the debate. You can also watch many videos online that help you learn more about debate as well as how to prepare, research, present, use a flow sheet and more! Check out youtube videos for help!

POLICY DEBATE FLOW SHEET

1 AC	1 NC	2 AC	Negative Block 2 NC / 1 NR	1 AR	2 NR	2 AR

TEAM POLICY OUTLINE FOR 1 AC

Introduction & Resolution

Observation I- Definitions (pg 78)

- o list the resolution's key terms and the definitions

Observation II- Harms (pg 85)

- o List the problems with the status quo
- o Each harm must include a tag line, a quote, the source of the quote, and the team's commentary

Observation III- Plan or Solution (pg 90)

- o Mandates – these are the laws that would have to change in order to enact your plan
- o Agency –the government or private agency who is responsible for administering your plan
- o Funding –how will your plan be funded?
- o Enforcement –How will the laws be enforced?

Observation IV –Advantages (pg 95)

- o Here you will prove how your plan works to change the harms.
- o Make sure to first solve all the harms of the status quo exactly
- o Name any additional advantages
- o Each Advantage will have a tag line, quote, the source of the quote, and the team's commentary.

Conclusion

*Page numbers are from the Intro to Policy Debate text