Introduction to Lincoln-Douglas Debate  
Preseason Release #1 by Chris Jeub



Lincoln-Douglas debate’s namesake comes from Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas from the 1860s. Most refer to Lincoln-Douglas as “LD” debate, or perhaps “values” debate. This preseason document introduces you to the most exciting competitive event of Lincoln-Douglas Debate. We are going to cover:

* Simple Explanation of Lincoln-Douglas Debate
* The Reason for Lincoln-Douglas Debate
* Leagues and Resolutions for Season 19
* Resources for Members
* Note to Parents
* Sample Download

# Simple Explanation of Lincoln-Douglas Debate

Lincoln-Douglas debate resolutions are published by participating leagues. Students planning to participate in tournaments will prepare in their schooling to write affirmative and negative cases responding to the resolution they will be debating. At the tournament, postings show which side the students will be on. They enter the room, introduce themselves to the judge or panel of judges, and then go through speeches to commence the debate round. The judge renders a balloted decision and awards speaker points to the debaters.

# The Reason for Lincoln-Douglas Debate

As stated, the “Lincoln” and the “Douglas” in the name from LD are Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas. The two competed for the senate seat of Illinois in 1858. As part of their campaigning they scheduled a number of one-on-one debates throughout Illinois. The debates became quite popular, attracting thousands of people to gather and hear the two politicians argue over political issues of the day. Slavery — or, at least, whether Illinois should be neutral in the divisive issue of the times — was one such issue that separated the candidates. Lincoln lost the election, but historians credit the Lincoln-Douglas debates as training grounds for Abe’s successful run for the presidency which followed.

In the same spirit, Lincoln-Douglas debate students participate in one-on-one debates for judges. Most leagues differentiate from the *political* nature of the original debates and focus instead on the *values* of the debate. Some areas of the country and some collegiate leagues adopt “Lincoln-Douglas Policy,” meaning they adopt policy resolutions within a one-on-one format.

Monument believes there is much to be gained from learning value debate. The league assigns a resolution of value, meaning there are reasons both sides can give to justify the side they are arguing. The debaters persuade the judge to either affirm the resolution (that is, declare it is *right*) or negate the resolution (declare that it is *not right*).

At the time of this release, we are riding on the coattails of Season 18. The following value resolutions were run last year, along with an explanation of how they appeal to *values*:

* “Resolved: Nationalism ought to be valued above globalism.” The affirmative gave reasons to embrace national pride, while the negative gave reasons to embrace care for all nations.
* “Civil Disobedience in a democracy is morally justified.” The affirmative will come up with scenarios which will justify a civil disobedience to unjust laws, and the negative will come up with the opposite.
* “Resolved: Preemptive warfare is morally justified.” The affirmative showed where striking first when facing imminent threats were justified, and the negative showed where such strikes were not morally justified.

We’ll get to Season 19 soon, but for now, pause and reflect on what debaters learned from this activity. You can imagine the discussions that followed these debates. All three resolutions challenge the conscience of the debaters, pushing them to embrace values that transcend conventional wisdom or even stated law. Students will explain complex philosophical dilemmas and advocate for wise decision making based on values they articulate. Lincoln-Douglas debate trains young people to not only *do* what is right, but to give a reason for what they choose. Arguably, there are few better activities that encourages a student to think through the choices they make from day to day than Lincoln-Douglas debate.

# The Structure of Lincoln-Douglas Debate

LD debates are one-on-one timed sessions over the course of approximately 45 minutes. Here’s how the round unfolds:

1. **Affirmative Constructive (AC)** - 6 min.  
   The affirmative gives a prepared six-minute speech presenting her case to the judge. This is followed with a three-minute cross-examination.
2. **Negative Constructive (NC) + First Negative rebuttal (1NR)** - 7 min.  
   The negative builds a case of his own within the seven-minute timeframe, but also leaves time to rebut the affirmative’s case. This is followed with a three-minute cross-examination by the affirmative.
3. **First Affirmative Rebuttal (1AR)** - 4 min.  
   The affirmative refutes the negative’s speech within four minutes.
4. **Second Negative Rebuttal (2NR)** - 6 min.  
   The negative refutes the affirmative’s speech within six minutes.
5. **Second Affirmative Rebuttal (2AR)** - 3 min.  
   The affirmative has the last word on the debate within three minutes.

Notice that each speaker gets the same amount of speaking time and the affirmative gets the first and last word. Both sides get to lead (ask) and follow (answer) cross-examination.

Lincoln-Douglas debate is “value” debate: philosophical in nature, not political or necessarily factual (or truthful). Students are tasked to analyze the resolution within the framework of a value. They have a burden to prove how their value best upholds or negates the resolution, depending on which side they are on (affirmative or negative).

At the time of writing and publishing this preseason document, I am at the Stoa National Invitational Tournament of Champions (NITOC) in San Diego. The resolution Lincoln-Douglas debaters at this tournament are running is the same as the one mentioned above: “Resolved: Preemptive warfare is morally justified.” There are many Monument Members here at NITOC who have been prepped throughout the year with weekly downloads for competition. They have been delivering cases and opposition briefs that have kept them primed week-in and week-out.

In fact, there are several different cases and applications debaters can run. It is no wonder that so many Monument Members are here at the grand-finale tournament of the year for their league. Check out some of the titles of our releases, all dealing with the resolution on preemptive warfare:

* “To Preempt or Not to Preempt” (INFO) (7/3/2017)
* “National Security” (AFF) (8/14/2017)
* “Life” (NEG) (8/21/2017)
* “Anti-value of Tyranny” (AFF) (8/28/2017)
* “Suicide Mission – Life” (NEG) (9/4/2017)
* “Prevention” (AFF) (9/11/2017)
* “Categorical Imperative” (NEG) (9/18/2017)
* “Oxygen Mask – Self-defense” (AFF) (9/25/2017)

And that was just through September! We continued releasing all the way through April, getting kids ready for competition with cutting-edge materials on the topic.

We are doing the same for Season 19 with releases for NCFCA, NSDA, as well as Stoa leagues. Let’s get into the details of Season 19.

# Leagues and Resolutions for Season 19

There are several leagues that students participate in. These leagues establish their speech and debate events, the rules for each, and the resolutions Lincoln-Douglas debaters will be debating. Monument Members are allowed access to source material written specifically to NCFCA, NSDA, and Stoa. There are unique characteristics between NCFCA and Stoa (two of the largest homeschool leagues) and the NSDA (the largest league in the nation, including both homeschool, private and public schools). Take note:

* National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) adopts two resolutions they run in September-October. The first is the same every year but allowed only for novice debaters (certain restrictions apply), the second for varsity debaters written and released in August. The rest of the year’s resolutions are divided into two-month topics (November-December, January-February, March-April, and a topic specific to Nationals in June).
* National Christian Forensics and Communications Association (NCFCA) and Stoa (a Greek term, not an acronym) adopt separate resolutions that are run all season long. Both leagues announce their resolutions at their national tournament. Stoa comes first in May, NCFCA in June.

As you can imagine, the issues and values resolutions cover can get overwhelming, but don’t get too far ahead of yourself. Focus on the league you are competing in and the dates of your tournaments. Set your eyes on those resolutions and your preparation should go smoothly. In fact, memorizing your resolution should be the first task in your preparation.

At the time of this release, the following resolutions are set for the coming academic year:

* **NCFCA**: Resolution to release in June 2018. The resolutions on the ballot for Season 19 are:
  + Resolved: When in conflict, rationalism ought to be valued above empiricism.
  + Resolved: That competition is superior to cooperation as a means of achieving excellence.
  + Resolved: When in conflict, governments should value fair trade above free trade.
* **NSDA**: The novice resolution is “Resolved: Civil disobedience in a democracy is morally justified.” The varsity resolution for Season 19 will release online on August 8, 2018. The rest of the year typically release on the 1st of the month prior to the month of competition.
* **Stoa**: Resolved: Criminal procedure should value truth-seeking over individual privacy.

You only need to study the resolution that is offered by your league. Some students participate in more than one league, or they venture out to another league for a tournament or two. This can be done, but you’ll be studying a totally different topic. This kind of fun is reserved only for expert debaters.

Unless, of course, you utilize the power of your Monument Membership. Tons of time and effort is saved with our resources.

# Monument Member Resources

Monument Writers consist of championship debaters and sometimes their coaches. They are a team of professionals who publish cases and opposition briefs for debaters to utilize in their rounds. We call this source material, prepared documents that students can use to help validate their claims within rounds. Our authors are paid to do the heavy lifting and research, pull it together in a “brief,” and Monument publishes the material in an organized fashion for members to access.

Here’s how the Monument Member receives source material at **MonumentMembers.com**. You receive a weekly email every Monday morning at 7:00 a.m. The email lists all Monument releases for that week. For Semester 1, we are releasing three Lincoln-Douglas documents every Monday, one for each of the three leagues we cater to. Simply click through the email link, download your material, and get to work. Semester 2 we focus solely on NCFCA and Stoa leagues, but our writers may venture back into NSDA depending on the resolutions released in the spring.

If you missed the email, or if you want to reach back into the archive for the year, simply visit the Lincoln-Douglas debate category on the website. We plan 40 releases for NCFCA and Stoa, 20 releases for NSDA, plus a few bonuses along the way. Be sure to check out the “Quick Links” page under debate. We list all current downloads in one area to make it easy to download the source material.

Beware: *Study the material!* Some debaters merely download the material and file it away for later. These debaters are seldom in final rounds at tournaments. The purpose of the source material is to “model” the champions, not “copy” the champions. Take time to read through the material, touch it up to meet your needs, and get to know what the Monument Writers have already studied. They spent hours and hours to prepare the document, so give them the respect of spending some minutes studying what they prepared.

If you form the consistent habit of studying the download every single week, there will be nothing stopping you from crushing it at the next tournament. You will know more than the best of them! But it takes the habit of studying the downloads and knowing the material.

# Note to Parents

Lincoln-Douglas debate is a competitive sport, and I bet you want nothing more than your kid to walk across the stage and win. I mean, really…this is your kid, right?

I know this feeling more than most, leading ten of my own children through speech and debate activities since 1996. Our trophy shelf is packed full, and my family owns four national titles from two different leagues. But honestly, trophies are just plastic and metal. The leadership and communication skills that my children apply to their lives help them soar into their futures. It’s because of speech and debate!

There are very tangible advantages to your child’s success in speech and debate. My most recent graduate, Tabitha, joined a speech competition for a local VFW and earned a $2,500 cash award. Her older brother Noah is set to graduate with a bachelor’s degree before turning 20, and his degree is paid for. This is similar to the next older Jeub, Micah, who made a presentation to his technical school and earned a scholarship that help cut off 30% of his total tuition.

I’m just one parent. There are thousands of parents, just like you, who want the best for their kids. You have a small window of opportunity to make sure your child succeeds in speech and debate. This is why we create Monument Memberships and the most helpful source material for them. They will most certainly have an impact in their lives and to the world they enter.

I ask you to put the routine of Monument Memberships to work. Set aside an hour of time every Monday for your child to focus on the source material we release. The policy debate material is a given, but there are other downloads that will be helpful. We release coaching material, videos, and other event resources that will keep your child on the cutting edge of preparation.

New to Season 19 is a special parents portal that will help you keep a quick-n-easy eye on what’s available. This portal lists all our current source material along with a short summary of what was released. Some of the documents we release in one week can be dozens of pages long, so a short summary is invaluable. Look over your child’s shoulder and make sure he or she is reading and understanding the content.

If your child applies the consistent discipline of accessing the Monument resources every week, there is nothing that will stop him or her at tournament time. You will certainly see your kid proudly take the awards home to you.

# Sample Download

The following sample download was written by Tobias Park, an excellent debater and writer for the Monument Member team. The download was written specifically for the NCFCA Season 18 resolution, “Resolved: Nationalism ought to be valued above globalism.” As the introduction explains, Tobias wants to affirm this resolution, comparing his position to parents masking themselves before aiding their child on an airplane. Tobias argues that we should value nationalism above globalism for similar reasons.

Tobias — along with over a dozen other champion debaters — provided negative cases as well as more affirmative cases that gave other reasons. Members downloaded these cases (and articles and briefs, too) to help prepare them for competition. As a Monument Member, you get top-quality source material that helps train you for competition.

This preseason download is free, but spending the extra amount to receive downloads every week throughout your year of competition will help prepare you for excellence. Don’t miss out on your opportunity to succeed.

# [Join MonumentMembers.com](https://monumentmembers.com/join)

Purpose of Government  
Affirmative Case by Tobias Park



At first glance, oxygen masks may not appear to have anything to do with the purpose of government or the resolution. However, as this case explains in more detail, they demonstrate an important principle: that it is essential to put priority on helping yourself before focusing on others. Using this analogy, this case aims to convince the judge that the debate should be centered on the purpose of government, and that this purpose of government is essentially to uphold nationalism.

This case portrays nationalism as a government focusing on looking after its own citizens, while a government that values globalism places priority on the whole world at the expense of the country’s own interests. Then, since both of these choices involve the government, the case argues that we are trying to decide what the role of government is in society, and that the best way to do this is to examine the purpose of government (hence the value of “Purpose of Government”). It then goes on to prove with two contentions how nationalism is the main purpose of government while globalism is not.

The applications of the Paris Climate Accord and the Ireland Economic Bailout show that nationalism is recognized as the primary purpose of government and that globalism causes a government to neglect its own citizens and fail this purpose. Come back to these applications at least once in your rebuttal speeches to remind the judge how they prove the ideas in your case.

If the Neg tries to replace your definitions with others that have different meanings, stand your ground. Your definitions, especially the definition of nationalism, are important, so make sure you can defend them. The Neg may also try to argue that some governments do not exist to protect their citizens, but rather to protect the government at the expense of the citizens (an extreme example of this may be North Korea). Argue that these governments are the exception to the rule and that, as you explained in the case, the recognized intended purpose of government is to protect the interests of its citizens. Debate your case and don’t get pulled into the Neg’s paradigm.

Purpose of Government

On any commercial airplane, you’ll find oxygen masks stored in the ceiling in case of emergency. Let me ask a hypothetical question: If you and a young child were flying together when the oxygen masks suddenly deploy, would you follow instructions and do your assigned job of putting on your own mask first, or would you put a mask on the child’s face first? You might be tempted to put priority on the child; however, Omid Safi, a columnist for “On Being,” explains,

*Quote* “So if the adult passengers try to put on the mask on the children first, they may well pass out before they have put the mask on the children.”[[1]](#footnote-1) *Unquote*

So, in this scenario, the others on the plane become secondary to the primary purpose of protecting your **own** well-being. We cannot even begin to consider aiding others before we first help ourselves. Because this same principle applies to the resolution, I stand *Resolved: Nationalism ought to be valued above globalism.*

# Definitions

Collins English Dictionary defines **nationalism** as:

“The doctrine that national interest, security, etc. are more important than international considerations.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

The Free Dictionary defines **globalism** as:

“The policy or doctrine of involving one's country in international affairs, alliances, etc.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

Essentially, nationalism places first priority on one’s own country, while globalism puts the emphasis on other countries.

# Resolutional Analysis

# Now let’s look at some resolutional analysis. In this debate, we are asked whether a society should value a policy of nationalism or globalism. In either of these scenarios, the government is the actor. In other words, it would be the government’s job to uphold either nationalism or globalism, since both involve policies that would have to be adopted by the government. As a result, we must look primarily at the government and its role in society. The basic question is: should the government uphold nationalism or globalism?

# Value

My value is **Purpose of Government**, which I define as, “The duty for which a government exists to perform.” I believe “purpose of government” is the highest value in today’s debate round for the following reason:

## Value Link: Role of Government

As I mentioned, this debate is directly concerned with the role of government in society. The best way to determine whether the role of government is to uphold nationalism or globalism is to go back and examine the purpose of government.

# Contention 1: The Intended Purpose of Government is to Uphold Nationalism

Similar to how your duty with the oxygen masks is to secure your **own** well-being first, the duty of government should be to look after its **own** citizens. Former Senator Arlen Specter once stated,

*Quote* “The fundamental purpose of government is to protect **its** citizens.”[[4]](#footnote-4) *Unquote (bolded for emphasis)*

Founding Father Thomas Jefferson also said,

*Quote* “The purpose of government is to enable the people of a nation to live in safety and happiness. Government exists for the interests of the governed, not for the governors.”[[5]](#footnote-5) *Unquote*

In other words, the whole reason a government is created in the first place is to look after its **own** citizens, **not** to protect the interests of other countries. Governments exist for the intended purpose of protecting and promoting the interests of their own citizens. To say it plainly, government’s purpose is to uphold nationalism.

## Application: Paris Climate Accord

President Obama sought to involve the U.S. in promoting globalism with the Paris Climate Accord, which aimed to reduce emissions and global warming.[[6]](#footnote-6) However, the agreement would have drastically raised energy bills for Americans, reduced U.S. GDP by more than $2.5 trillion, and cut about 400,000 jobs by 2035.[[7]](#footnote-7) In May 2017, President Trump pulled America *out* of the agreement **in the name of nationalism,** according to an article from *Americans for Tax Reform*:

*Quote* “At a press conference in the White House Rose Garden President Trump stated that in order to fulfill his **solemn** **duty** to protect **America** and **its** citizens, ‘The U.S. will withdraw from the Paris Climate Accord.’”[[8]](#footnote-8) *Unquote (bolded for emphasis)*

President Trump acknowledged that the inherent purpose of government is to protect the concerns of its citizens, and that globalism, which harms these interests, directly obstructs this purpose. This leads me to my 2nd contention:

# Contention 2: Upholding Globalism Is Not the Purpose of Government

Now don’t get me wrong— I’m not saying we should completely neglect the interests of the rest of the world. We should care about international matters to a reasonable extent, but not at the expense of our own nation. Just as assisting passengers in airplane emergencies is important but secondary to helping ourselves, reaching out to other nations is important but a secondary goal, and only possible if our own country is well. On the contrary, if government places first priority on other nations ahead of its own citizens, it fails its purpose and harms the society under its jurisdiction.

## Application: 2010 Ireland Economic Bailout

A good example of this is the 2010 Ireland Economic Bailout, in which Ireland bailed out of the European Union under pressure from other countries to do so.[[9]](#footnote-9) However, while the bailout helped other nations, it harmed the citizens of Ireland. According to Business Insider:

*Quote* “If you cannot protect your own then what good is your government? This is the question Europeans ultimately have to be asking themselves today….Their governments do not exist to protect them. This Irish “bailout” is not helping the people of Ireland. It is helping to protect the interests of **foreign** bankers. In the case of most Irish citizens it is in fact making matters worse.” [[10]](#footnote-10) *Unquote (bolded for emphasis)*

Because the bailout harmed the interests of the people, the Irish government failed to fulfill its inherent purpose of providing for the citizens it was instituted to help! As far as the Irish were concerned, their government proved effectively useless. Just as we cannot put an oxygen mask on our neighbor before first securing our own well-being, likewise we cannot place the interests of other nations above our own. Instead, government must put priority on its inherent purpose of protecting the interests of its own citizens.

Opposing This Case

# Definitions

This entire case rests on the idea that nationalism is defined as a policy that your nation’s interests are more important than other nations’ interests. However, while this definition is technically valid, there are other accepted definitions which define nationalism in a slightly different way. For example:

“An extreme form of patriotism marked by a feeling of superiority over other countries” –Oxford Dictionaries[[11]](#footnote-11)

“The feelings of affection and pride that people have for their country” –Cambridge English Dictionary[[12]](#footnote-12)

“A feeling that people have of being loyal to and proud of their country often with the belief that it is better and more important than other countries” –Meriam-Webster Learner’s Dictionary[[13]](#footnote-13)

If nationalism is only “a feeling of affection,” the Aff’s argument that upholding nationalism is the purpose of government is weakened considerably. In your NC, replace the Aff definition with one of these definitions to prove that nationalism isn’t quite what the Aff says it is, and is thus not the purpose of government.

# Value

To attack the value of “Purpose of Government,” point out that it is not always valuable to pursue the purpose of a government because different governments have different goals. For example, the purpose of dictatorships are not to help the citizens, but to benefit the dictator or the government at the expense of society.

Furthermore, argue that it is also not a good idea to make nationalism the purpose of government because following a country’s interests can lead to results that are not reasonable or valuable, depending on what the interests of that country are. For example, as the early colonists were settling in America, the interest of King George was to oppress them with unfair taxation and restrictions.

Finally, if you successfully replace the definition of nationalism as described above, you can argue that the 1st contention no longer applies and that the impact is that the value is non-unique. Neither side of the resolution achieves the purpose of government, so it shouldn’t be the value for the round.

# Contentions

Again, if you change the definition of nationalism, you can argue that the 1st contention no longer makes sense. Furthermore, if you defeat the Aff’s value, you can argue that both contentions no longer matter to the round since we are not even talking about the purpose of government anymore.

If you want to attack the contentions head-on, look closely at what is being said. The Aff is essentially arguing that a nation should only care about itself. In your rebuttal, try to portray nationalism as a mindset in which a nation becomes overly-selfish.

1. Omid Safi, On Being, “Put On Your Own Mask First: The Safety of Self-Care”, published April 7, 2016, available online at <https://onbeing.org/blog/put-on-your-own-mask-first-the-safety-of-self-care/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Collins Dictionary, “Definition of ‘nationalism’”, available online at <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/nationalism> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Free Dictionary, “globalism”, available online at <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/globalism> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Arlen Specter, BrainyQuote, “Arlen Specter Quotes”, available online at <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/arlenspect167604.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Thomas Jefferson, AZQuotes.com, available online at <http://www.azquotes.com/quote/371390> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Camila Domonoske, NPR: National Public Radio, “So What Exactly Is In The Paris Climate Accord?”, published December 2015, Updated June 1, 2017, available online at <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/06/01/531048986/so-what-exactly-is-in-the-paris-climate-accord> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Justin Sykes, Americans for Tax Reform, “Obama’s Paris Agreement: All Cost and No Benefit for the U.S.”, published May 31, 2017, available online at <https://www.atr.org/obamas-paris-agreement-all-cost-and-no-benefit-us> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Bruno Waterfield, The Telegraph, “Ireland forced to take EU and IMF bail-out package,” published November 22, 2010, available online at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/financialcrisis/8150137/Ireland-forced-to-take-EU-and-IMF-bail-out-package.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The Pragmatic Capitalist, Business Insider, “If It Can’t Protest Its Citizens, Why Does Government Exist At All?”, published November 30, 2010, available online at <http://www.businessinsider.com/if-it-cant-protest-its-citizens-why-does-government-exist-at-all-2010-11> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Oxford Dictionaries, “Definition of nationalism in English”, available online at <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/nationalism> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Cambridge English Dictionaries, “Definition of ‘nationalism’ –English Dictionary”, available online at <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/nationalism> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Merriam-Webster Learner’s Dictionary “nationalism”, available online at <http://www.learnersdictionary.com/definition/nationalism> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)