



# LD BASICS

From *"The Ultimate Lincoln-Douglas  
Debate Handbook"* written by **Marko Djuranovic**

## ***Basic Structure***

- **Debaters have to argue for each side of the resolution several times during a tournament.**
- **L-D debate resolutions are statements that either explicitly assert or strongly imply conflict between two competing courses of action.**

# An LD Round looks like...

- **AFFIRMATIVE CONSTRUCTIVE**  
– (6 minutes)
- **NEGATIVE CROSS EXAMINATION**  
– (3 minutes)
- **NEGATIVE 1st Preparation Time**  
– (maximum 3 minutes for whole round)
- **NEGATIVE CONSTRUCTIVE**  
– (7 minutes)
- **AFFIRMATIVE CROSS EXAMINATION**  
– (3 minutes)
- **AFFIRMATIVE 1st Preparation Time**  
– (maximum 3 minutes for whole round)

- **1st AFFIRMATIVE REBUTTAL**  
– (4 minutes)
- **NEGATIVE 2nd Preparation Time**  
– (whatever time remains from the 1st segment)
- **NEGATIVE REBUTTAL**  
– (6 minutes)
- **AFFIRMATIVE 2nd Preparation Time**  
– (whatever time remains from the 1st segment)
- **2nd AFFIRMATIVE REBUTTAL**  
– (3 minutes)

**LASTS ANYWHERE FROM 38 TO 42 MINUTES**

# **AFFIRMATIVE CONSTRUCTIVE**

## **– (6 minutes)**

### ➤ **The Affirmative**

- Presents a prepared speech**
- Sets the scope for arguments**

# **NEGATIVE CROSS EXAMINATION**

## **– (3 minutes)**

### ➤ **The Negative**

- Poses questions**
- Gets them answered**

# **NEGATIVE'S 1ST PREPARATION TIME**

**- (maximum 3 minutes for whole round)**

## **➤ The Negative**

- Collects thoughts**
- Prepares for upcoming speech**

# **NEGATIVE CONSTRUCTIVE**

## **– (7 minutes)**

### ➤ **The Negative**

- Presents prepared speech**
- Responds to the Affirmative's speech**

# **AFFIRMATIVE CROSS EXAMINATION**

## **– (3 minutes)**

### ➤ **The Affirmative**

- Poses questions**
- Gets them answered**



# Affirmative 1st Preparation Time

– (maximum 3 minutes for whole round)

## ➤ The Affirmative

- Collects thoughts
- Prepares for upcoming speech

# 1st Affirmative Rebuttal – (4 minutes)

## ➤ The Affirmative

- Responds to the points raised
- Defends case by addressing the criticisms

# Negative's 2nd Preparation Time

– (whatever time remains from the 1st segment)

## ➤ The Negative

- Collects thoughts
- Prepares for upcoming speech

# Negative Rebuttal – (6 minutes)

- **The Negative's last speech.**
  - Responds to latest arguments
  - Offers summary
  - Offers why he should win

# Affirmative's 2nd Preparation Time

– (whatever time remains from the 1st segment)

## ➤ The Affirmative

- Collects thoughts
- Prepares for upcoming speech

# 2nd Affirmative Rebuttal

## – (3 minutes)

### ➤ The Affirmative's last speech

- Comments on most important issues
- Reiterates why deserves to win

# At Conclusion Of The Round

- **Students leave the classroom**
- **Judge fills out the ballot**
  - **a sheet of paper the judge uses to mark the winner of the round**
  - (hopefully) explains why the winner won**
  - assigns speaker points**
  - does not disclose the winner**

# Tournament Scoring & Advancement

- Debaters with highest number of wins advance
- Results in a final round to determine the tournament champion
  - ❑ Speaker points total is used as a tiebreaker
- (Most) tournaments end with an awards ceremony where winners receive trophies



# Affirmative Constructive Speech Format

## I. Introduction

- A. Attention grabbing remark
- B. Resolution
- C. Definitions
- D. Interpretation (optional)

## II. Observations / Framework

*(the value/criterion goes in this section)*

- A. First observation
- B. Second observation

## III. Contentions

- A. First contention
- B. Second contention
- C. (optional additional contentions)

## IV. Conclusion

- A. Summary

**LASTS 6 MINUTES Affirmative**

# Negative Constructive Speech Format

## I. Introduction

- A. Attention grabbing remark
- B. Resolution
- C. Definitions
- D. Interpretation (optional)

## II. Observations / Framework

*(the value/criterion goes in this section)*

- A. First observation
- B. Second observation

## III. Contentions

- A. First contention
- B. Second contention
- C. (optional additional contentions)

## IV. Conclusion

### A. Summary

- ★ When writing the Neg case, much of the introduction is sometimes omitted.
  - Many simply begin with, "I negate the resolution, "resolved: ...".
- ★ followed by any alternative definitions as required.

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# The Introduction - Opening

- This portion of the constructive may be brief.
- begins with an opening remark or quotation which is sympathetic to your point of view.
  - ❑ From historical figure, author, philosopher, etc.
- Follow this with a remark which presents the resolution,
  - ❑ "because I agree with ...author of the quotation... I affirm the resolution, Resolved: ....".
- Repeat the resolution for the judge's clarification.

# The Introduction - Definitions

- present the definitions of the terms
- eliminates ambiguity or uncertainty about interpretation of the resolution.
- Important many times to specifically explain your interpretation of the resolution after defining the terms,
  - ❑ "therefore the resolution requires ..." or "is asking us to consider ...".

# Where should you start?

- Find out the **resolution**
- Analyze a resolution by defining its **key terms**
- Determine specific **sentence format** that was used to create the resolution

# KEY TERMS

- Resolution Key Terms determine the topic of the debate and its limitations
- Sources
  - Black's Law Dictionary
  - Oxford's Collegiate Dictionary
- Define terms as a whole and not just their individual words

# SAMPLE RESOLUTIONS

- The United States has a moral obligation to mitigate international conflicts.
- A society has a moral obligation to redress its historical injustices.
- When in conflict, the letter of the law ought to take priority over the spirit of the law.
- When in conflict, globalization ought to be valued above national sovereignty.
- When in conflict, a business' responsibility to itself ought to be valued above its responsibility to society.

# FOUR TYPES OF RESOLUTIONS

- I. Use of a specific evaluative term to link a concept or an action to a desired goal
- II. Assertion of obligation, usually a moral one. A limit is sometimes specified
- III. Assertion that some action is compatible – or not – with a certain value
- IV. Weighing of two values or courses of action against each other within a specified limit



# I. Specific evaluative term links concept/action to desired goal

## ➤ Underlying Question:

- Does the act in question achieve the desired goal by meeting the criterion provided by the evaluative term?

In the US,	federal control	is the best way	to improve public education.
(LIMIT)	(ACT)	(EVALUATIVE TERM)	(DESIRED GOAL)

## II. Assertion of obligation

### ➤ Underlying Question:

- Does the agent in question have a (moral) obligation to carry out the specified act on some specified object?

The US	has a moral obligation	to promote	democratic ideals	in other nations.
(AGENT)	(DUTY)	(ACT)	(OBJECT)	(LIMIT)

# III. Some action is compatible – or not – with a certain value

## ➤ Underlying Question:

Does the act under consideration clash with a certain value?

Civil disobedience	in a democracy	is morally justified.
(ACT)	(LIMIT)	(COMPATIBILITY WITH VALUE)

## IV. Weigh 2 values/courses of action

### ➤ Underlying Question:

Should some specified value outweigh another specified value?

\*\*Sometimes within a limited set of circumstances

Rehabilitation	ought to be valued above	punishment
(VALUE 1)	(WEIGHING)	(VALUE 2)
in the US criminal justice system.		
(LIMIT)		

# What type is this resolution?

Culture	ought to value	Assimilation	over	Multiculturalism

# What type is this resolution?

Culture	ought to value	Assimilation	over	Multiculturalism
(LIMIT)				

# What type is this resolution?

Culture	ought to value	Assimilation	over	Multiculturalism
(LIMIT)	(WEIGHING)			

# What type is this resolution?

Culture	ought to value	Assimilation	over	Multiculturalism
(LIMIT)	(WEIGHING)	(VALUE 1)		



# What type is this resolution?

Culture	ought to value	Assimilation	over	Multiculturalism
(LIMIT)	(WEIGHING)	(VALUE 1)	(WEIGHING)	

# What type is this resolution?

Culture	ought to value	Assimilation	over	Multiculturalism
(LIMIT)	(WEIGHING)	(VALUE 1)	(WEIGHING)	(VALUE 2)

IV. Weigh **2** values/courses of action

# What type is this resolution?

Culture	ought to value	Assimilation	over	Multiculturalism
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IV. Weigh **2** values/courses of action

# DEFINITIONS

- **Decide which terms you need to define**
- **Generally not a process that many students find exciting**
- **Make your definitions fair to your opponent**
- **On the surface, finding definitions doesn't sound hard...**

# **Resolved: Civil disobedience in a democracy is morally justified**

- **Civil Disobedience**
- **Democracy**
- **Morally Justified**

# Unfair Definitions

➤ the product of prematurely made arguments

➤ Reasons this happens:

Debater afraid to help opponent

- Bad habit of looking for definitions that specifically aid position \*\*Most common

Poor Research

- Do not realize definition unfair
- Not aware of alternate definitions

# Unfair Definition Example

***Resolved: The United States has a moral obligation to mitigate international conflicts***

If a negative were to insist that the term *to mitigate* means “to resolve,” that would be an unfair definition.

Such a formulation makes the affirmative’s job very difficult because it creates a policy-like burden – and a very unrealistic one at that. The crux of the resolution is the question of whether the US has any moral obligation to help, like an international Good Samaritan, not whether it has the duty to resolve the conflicts, like a world policeman.

# Avoid Unfair Definitions

- **Watch for definitions from advocacy groups with a particular “bend” or a “set agenda”**
  - ❑ **Use definitions from established dictionaries like Webster’s, American Heritage, Black’s Law or Oxford’s**
- **Use the same set of definitions in your affirmative and negative cases**
  - ❑ **The practice of having one set of definitions when you are debating the affirmative and another one when you are debating the negative goes against the very nature of debate as an activity.**