

## Rebuttals

Rebuttals: on the fly speeches where you respond to opponent's case/arguments.

You craft them during prep time based on what opponent said.

Aff gets two rebuttal speeches: 1AR (after NC) and 2AR (after NR, last speech of round).

Neg rebuts at end of NC (after AC) and also gets an NR speech (after 1AR).

Recall that it's AC, NC, 1AR, NR, 2AR.

That is when you will be using these skills.

Be gracious and professional. Pretend you're on a world stage debating these important issues. Remember the reason you're debating: Not just to win, but to glorify God.

Refer to your opponent as "my opponent" or "the negative" or "the affirmative." Leaving the names out keeps it impersonal.

Your responses provide the judge with reason to disagree with your opponent with each part of your opponent's value, criterion, and contentions. This is called "going down the flow." (You don't have to go in order though.)

\*\* In the **1AR**, don't use the whole time to attack though. Debate your case, meaning, Attack every point WHILE substituting with each of your points, thereby continuing to build up your case. Don't just explain why they are wrong – explain why they are wrong and your case is right.

\*\* It is not enough to say "My opponent's wrong." Bring it all back to the resolution!

**Strategies for Responding to your opponent's VALUE:** Breaking the value is stronger than anything in debate.

**#1 Circularity (mentioned earlier):** Some people actually do use a **word from the resolution** as their value. Round about? Value is reason for your side, so if value is your side, you're literally telling the judge, "Vote for nationalism because of nationalism. You should choose nationalism because nationalism." !?! Doesn't make any sense. If I told you, you should eat chicken feet because you should eat chicken feet, would you eat chicken feet? No, you need a different reason. Circular arguments don't say anything.

This is a very important fallacy because many people commit it. Sometimes, their value is so similar to their side that it is essentially the same thing, and it is circular. It's not the same thing, but it's similar enough where people might sometimes treat it as the same and you can run circularity.

***Example of circularity: Whatever is less dense than water will float, because such objects won't sink in water.***

#2 “My Value **subsumes** your value”: Does your value include your opponent’s value? My value is better because it *includes* theirs. For example, human rights (life, liberty, and property) subsumes life! Life is included within the value of human rights.

#3 “My Value **supersedes** your value”: My value is just simply better than your value.. Because...

Examples: value of **winning the war** vs **winning the battle**. Winning the war is just better!

#4 “My Value is **foundational** to your value”: If we need it first, it’s more important. (WATCH OUT WITH THIS – OPPONENT CAN SOMETIMES FLIP THIS INTO A MEANS-TO-END ARGUMENT AGAINST you)

**Means to an end:** If their value is a means to achieving your value, your value is more important – a value, by definition, is the END GOAL. Grandma analogy: Do you value the road leading to Grandma’s house (means), or Grandma’s house (end)?

Ex: “My opponent’s value of safety is simply a means to achieving my value of human rights. The only reason we want safety is because it leads to the protection of human rights; thus, human rights is more important.”

#6 **Problems:** problems with the opponent’s value. Maybe it's too vague?

#7 I can **achieve** my value better (esp. if you have the same value!!)

### **Strategies for Responding to your opponent’s CRITERION:**

#1 The **criterion does not lead to or go with his value**. His value and criterion conflict. Try to show this and break that link.

#2 Unclear/**vague**—The purpose of the criterion is to make it clearer and concrete.

#3 Problems—Are there flaws you can find?

#4 The **criterion does not fit with the case**. Cases are built on links, so try to break the links.

#5 The **criterion is redundant**—does not add anything useful to his case

### **Strategies for Rebutting Opponent’s Contentions:**

Many of these logical fallacy examples are from [logicallyfalicious.com](http://logicallyfalicious.com).

#1 Look for **Fallacies**—an illogical flow in his argument:

a. Emotional appeal - trying to win just by making people feel bad – only on emotion, not on logic. For example, *Power lines cause cancer. I met a little boy with cancer who lived just 20 miles from a power line who looked into my eyes and said, in his weak voice, “Please do whatever you can so that other kids won’t have to go through what I am going through.” I urge you to vote for this bill to tear down all power lines and replace them with monkeys on treadmills.* No evidence to back up his claim – only emotion.



b. Red herring - a distraction from the issue. Example:

*Mike: It is morally wrong to cheat on your math test, why on earth would you have done that?*

*Ken: But what is morality exactly?*

*Mike: It’s a code of conduct shared by cultures.*

*Ken: But who creates this code?...*

Ken distracted from the issue of cheating on his test by beginning a talk about morals. He's avoiding the issue.

c. Circular reasoning, again.

d. Straw man. Exaggerate your opponent's argument to be weaker or more ridiculous than it really is, then attack it. Example: Senator Smith says that the nation should not add to the defense budget. Senator Jones says that he cannot believe that Senator Smith wants to leave the nation defenseless. Senator Smith didn't say that; Senator Jones took his original argument, exaggerated it into something stupid, then attacked the stupid argument. But that's not the argument that was made. It's unfair and dishonest.

#2 My contentions are more **Reasonable and Necessary**—Judges should be voting on the resolution. Which debater showed me better—nationalism or globalism? Show that yours are more reasonable and more necessary.

#3 Contentions don't support his argument/position or don't prove anything worthwhile, or work against opponent's arguments

#4 Gaps in logic. At bare minimum, opponent needs to show that value is highest and his side leads to value. If he doesn't do that in contentions or elsewhere, you can point it out and utterly destroy his case (because if value isn't highest or his side doesn't lead to value, there is no logical reason to vote for him)

**Pick at your opponent’s Examples:**

**-If opponent used example to show why fair trade is good/bad: Is this *really* an example of fair trade? Or was this actually free trade? / If opponent used example to show why free trade is good/bad: Is this *really* an example of free trade? Or was this actually fair trade?**

Show that his examples do not support his point or side

**-Did this example *really* lead to/harm their value like opponent said it did?**

*Example: Pretend that Aff uses the example: "Paris Climate Accord harmed human rights!"*

*Then Neg responds: "Paris Climate Accord harmed prosperity...but prosperity is not a human right. This is not actually an example of free trade harming your value, so it does not apply."*

**-Show that information is missing in his example or story that is not the WHOLE story. **If it was meant as a positive example: Were there any negative consequences to this example that they didn't mention?** / **If it was meant as a negative example: Were there any positive consequences that they didn't mention?****

*Example: Pretend Neg uses the example "Singapore punishes their criminals very harshly, and so nobody commits any crimes. Therefore, Singapore shows that harsh punishment = good!"*

*Aff responds: "Well, yes Singapore punishes criminal very strictly, but they are too severe; the result is that they beat people just for spitting gum on the street...that is way overkill. So this is example is actually not a good thing, because I would not want to live there."*

**-2 IMPORTANT THINGS TO LOOK FOR: DOES THE EXAMPLE ACTUALLY SUPPORT HIS SIDE? DOES THE EXAMPLE ACTUALLY SUPPORT HIS VALUE???**

**-Was that bad thing actually bad? Or was it good? / Was that good example actually good? Or was it bad?**

-Show that his examples are irrelevant

-Ineffective

-Wrong

-Extreme

-Show how the example actually supports your side

-Provide a counter-ex. Or multiple counter-examples to his example— “Yes, it was true in that case... but it is not always true. In this other example, it didn’t happen.

-Correlation is not causation. If I eat waffles and it rains, doesn't mean my eating waffles made it rain.

Pick **at your opponent’s Use of Quotes** (usually don't bother unless the quote is central):

- a. Not a credible source
- b. Taken out of context
- c. Doesn’t relate to the main issues here

TURN **your opponent’s argument around to make it work for you!!**

“My opponent argument that.... is a great one; in fact, it supports my case even better than his own!!...”

**No significance to his case. So, what? Doesn't support his position**

**Vagueness...**

### **Defeating the Definitions**

You and your opponent must agree on one set of definitions. If you feel that his definitions could harm you, or that his arguments fall apart under your definitions, you will want to replace his definitions with your own. There are several arguments that you can use to do this:

- My definitions are from a more credible source
- My definitions more accurately reflect how the terms are used in the real world
- My definitions are more fair to both sides

Trick: have 3 definitions which support your position. This can be very effective.

Don’t get into a definition debate unless you feel it is necessary!

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### **Identify, claim, warrant, impact**

-Every argument in your rebuttal needs a identify, claim, warrant, impact.

Identify: In about one sentence, tell judge which argument you are responding to. Don’t go overboard (he said this, and I said that, and he said this, and now I say...) just say “he said this, and my response is” or something like that.

Claim: What you are saying – your argument summed up in one sentence.

Warrant: Support your argument with logic and evidence. More than one sentence.

Impact: So what? Who cares? Why does it matter? About 1 sentence. Sometimes, if the impact is really obvious, you can leave this out (if warrant was “opponent’s position makes everyone die”, then it’s already obvious why we should care and that that matters).

**This is called 4-point refutation. These four things are essential to any rebuttal argument.**  
**If you’re missing just one thing, the argument doesn’t make sense.**

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