

ad hominem. A logical fallacy in which one attacks the individual rather than the argument presented.

Aff. Many debaters refer to their Affirmative Case or affirmative strategy simply as their Aff.

affirmative. The pro side of the topic in most American formats of debate.

a priori. A phrase that designates an argument as the most important in the round. Typically, this arises when one team believes that the other has violated a rule of the game, such as topicality or fiat abuse. Some debaters will identify certain substantive issues, such as those related to morality, as a priori impacts.

ballot. The form used by judges to declare the winning side of an academic debate. Many ballots also provide space for judges to rate the effectiveness of debaters, offer constructive criticism, and render a reason for decision.

British Parliamentary (debate). *Also BP.* The most prevalent style of debate for colleges and universities around the world. It is the format practiced at the World Universities Debating Championships. The event features four two-person teams, each receiving an ordinal ranking of first, second, third, or fourth at the conclusion of the round. Topics and sides are assigned for the debaters fifteen minutes prior to the start of the debate.

cards. Quoted evidence used by debaters. The word is a holdover from the days when debaters physically cut quotations and glued them to index cards.

case. Generally refers to the story told by the affirmative team during the first affirmative constructive.

closed out. A scenario in which the final two remaining teams in a competition hail from the same institution.

congress. *Also congressional debate, student congress.* An American debate format usually limited to high school competitions. Students are assigned to chambers (consisting of ten to thirty members), debate multiple bills or resolutions over the course of several hours, follow parliamentary procedure, and are individually ranked against all other members of the chamber.

constructives. The first set of speeches in a debate round. Key features: they are longer than rebuttal speeches, new arguments are allowed, and the arguments are developed and explored.

cross-examination. *Also cross-x, CX.* The period of time following a constructive speech in which the opposing team may ask questions of the speaker. It is generally not considered part of the flow.

Crossfire. Similar to cross-examination. It is the time set aside in Public Forum for clarification. It differs from cross-examination in that both teams may ask questions AND what transpires in crossfire *may* be included in the flow by judges.

cutting cards. The act of turning a published article into usable quotations for a debate. The phrase is a holdover from the days when debaters physically cut quotations and glued them to index cards.

drop (an argument). *Also dropped (argument).* Failure to respond to an opponent's argument.

ethos. The speaker's credibility in the mind of the judge or audience.

fiat. Grants the affirmative team the power to assume the action called for in the resolution or in its plan would actually go into effect if the judge votes affirmative. This allows debaters to focus on the merits of the resolution (or plan) rather than questions over whether government leaders would ever enact such an idea.

flow. *Also flowing, flows.* The notes of what transpired in a debate round or the act of taking those notes. It usually refers to a very specific method of taking notes that allows participants to track the arguments in a debate as they progress throughout the round. The term derives from the linear way of thinking about arguments found in most American debate formats (policy debate, Lincoln Douglas debate, public forum, National Parliamentary Debate).

forensic. *Also forensics.* The study of rhetoric or argumentative discourse. It is often used as a term to encompass the academic and competitive discipline of speech, debate, and interpretation of literature.

frame. *Also framing.* The act of shaping how the judge or audience views, weighs, or perceives different issues.

framework. Refers to how judges should evaluate the round. What types of arguments matter and what types do not matter? What roles ought debaters play? See also theory.

front line. The prewritten first line of responses to an opponent's arguments. Debaters often prep front lines to potential arguments that their opponents might run and place them on prewritten blocks.

judge. In an academic, competitive debate this is the person assigned to determine the winning and losing debater/teams.

kick (a position or out of a position). *Also kicking, punt, punting.* The act of conceding that a major argument is no longer relevant in the round. Affirmative teams might kick an advantage or harms story. Negative teams might kick a topicality argument, disadvantage, counterplan, or kritik.

lay judge. A judge who lacks formal training in academic debate.

Lincoln-Douglas (debate). *Also LD.* An American format of debate, primarily practiced by high school students. It is a one-on-one format of debate, meaning that one student is assigned to argue in favor of the topic and a second student is assigned to argue against the topic. Traditionally, this format focused on exploring the values or principles that guide decision-making in our society.

line-by-line. The point-for-point discussion on an argument. When viewing the flow of a debate round, one can see the various lines of argument that occurred. The line-by-line refers to examining each line of argument in turn.

motion. The broad topic to be debated in parliamentary debate formats. Example motions include: This house supports the use of corporal punishment. This house would withdraw all military troops from Afghanistan. This house would ban the personal possession of firearms. It is similar to the resolution in most American formats of debate.

national circuit. High school tournaments in the United States that draw competitors from across the nation or a geographic region. Students who do well at these tournaments are often rewarded with qualifying legs for the Tournament of Champions hosted by the University of Kentucky.

negative. The con side of the topic in most American formats of debate.

overview. Students sometimes use overviews to frame their argumentative positions in the mind of the judge relative to other arguments and advocacies.

paradigm. The lens through which one views debate. Judges hold different views about what debate should look like, what is acceptable and not acceptable, the types of arguments that should be run in debate rounds, and how debates should be evaluated.

parliamentary (debate). *Also parli.* A categorization of debate events primarily found at the college level. A key feature of parliamentary debate is that it is extemporaneous in nature, meaning that topics are usually announced fifteen or twenty minutes before the start of the debate. A second defining feature of parliamentary debate is a prohibition on using quoted evidence during speeches.

policy (debate). *Also cross-examination debate, CX debate, team debate.* An American debate format practiced in both high school and college. The format consists of two two-person teams assigned to opposite sides of the resolution. The early speeches in the debate round are (usually) heavily built on lengthy quotations, with most of the analysis, depth of discussion, and framing of issues coming in later speeches. Traditionally, it was defined by a specific policy proposal or plan presented by the affirmative team.

power wording. The act of marking a piece of evidence in a way that designates which portions will be or were read by the speaker. Usually accomplished through one (or several) methods (boldface and underline and/or highlighted text) to show which portions of the text were read during the speech.

prima facie. A Latin phrase meaning “on its face.” Within academic debate it refers to whether, at first glance, a debater has presented a coherent argument or case.

public forum. *Also PF, PUF, PuFo, PFD.* A predominantly American event practiced at the high school level. It consists of two two-person teams. Discussions focus on current events and change monthly. In general, it’s focus is on public speaking. In the debate landscape, it is akin to consumer math in a landscape that includes geometry and calculus (Lincoln Douglas debate and policy debate)

reason for decision. *Also RFD.* The judge's explanation for how he or she determined the winner of a debate contest.

rebuttals. The last set of speeches in the debate. Key features: they are shorter than constructive speeches, new arguments are not allowed, and the arguments of both teams are summarized and compared.

resolution. *Also res.* The broad topic to be debated. It is usually set by a governing organization such as the National Speech & Debate Association or the Cross Examination Debate Association.

roadmap. The order in which arguments will be addressed, provided by the speaker to the other participants before his or her speech begins.

round. A single matchup between two debate teams. Tournaments consist of multiple preliminary rounds (usually 4, 6, or 8) prior to identifying the top teams that advance to elimination rounds.

shell. The bare-bones version of an argument. It is developed enough to make sense when taken at face value but leaves significant room for development in later speeches.

signpost. *Also signposting.* Verbally identifying where the speaker is on the flow.

signposting. *Also signpost.* The act of verbally identifying where the speaker is on the flow. Usually done with an alpha or numeric identification in conjunction with a tagline.

speed. The rate at which a debater speaks. Generally, it is used to refer to the tactic of speaking at an incredibly high rate of delivery.

spread. *Also spreading.* The number of arguments presented against an opponent and/or the number of individual responses to a specific argument. Generally, it is used to refer to the tactic of placing a large number of arguments and/or responses on the flow. It is often, but not necessarily, accompanied with speed. Colloquially, many simply use the term spreading as a substitute for any combination of talking fast and/or giving multiple responses to an argument.

status quo. *Also SQ, squo.* The present system. The way things are now.

stock issues. The core elements required to build a compelling case. The stock issues are generally considered to be required elements in order for the affirmative to present a prima facie case. In policy, an affirmative case contains five core elements (or stock issues): significance, harms, inherency, topicality, and solvency. In Lincoln Douglas debate, the stock issues could refer to the value and criterion as the building blocks of a principles-based case/values-based case.

student congress. *See congress.*

tag. *Also tagline.* A one-sentence summary of a piece of evidence or analytical response.

voters. *See voting issue.* The impacts of any procedural or rule of the game argument. They are the explanation for why an argument will win a debate round. In policy debate, voters usually reference the impacts of a procedural argument such as the rules of the game, fair competition, or educational benefit. In other debate formats, debaters will usually use the term voters to refer to any winning argument in the debate.

voting issue(s). *See voters.* The elements considered by judges to determine the outcome of a competition. The things they evaluate when ascertaining a student's contributions, effectiveness, and so forth.