

THE DEBATE KIT AFFIRMATIVE TEAM STRATEGY

DON'T KNOW WHERE TO GET STARTED?
THIS PACKET WILL TAKE YOU THROUGH
SEVERAL IDEAS YOU'LL WANT TO CONSIDER
AS YOU BUILD YOUR AFFIRMATIVE POSITION.



Yo, I'm Jill!

I live on macha green tea lattes + nerdy lesson planning sessions.

I'm on a mission to flip the script on how we teach today's writers, so...

I provide secondary ELA teachers with the **resources + mindset** they need to make the **writing process** more **relevant + applicable** for today's learners and tomorrow's leaders.

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AFFIRMATIVE POSITION

PREPARING TO DEBATE

1 The FIRST STEP in your position as the Affirmative Team is to develop a **PROPOSITION**, or *a statement that is open to interpretation by both teams*; it will serve as the guiding light of your argument. To accompany the proposition and *to ensure that all parties understand the nature of the argument and its limitations*, you must also **DEFINE THE TERMS** contained within the statement.

2 STEP TWO involves the establishment of **PRIMA FACIE**, or the *minimal requirement to support the proposition without refutation*. Prima facie is Latin for “at first sight.” So in another words, *your argument, at first sight, must hold up*. By establishing a solid case at the start, you ensure that a debate will take place and can then begin setting up your offensive for winning the exchange. By establishing a **PRIMA FACIE CASE**, you automatically *shut down or minimize any prior presumptions* that the present system is adequate **AND you uphold your burden of proof** that a change is necessary.

3 STEP THREE: In order to establish Prima Facie, you must support this foundation with solid claims. These *claims* are called **STOCK ISSUES** and they serve as the *crux of your argument; they MUST be supported by reasoning and evidence*. As you begin your research, begin to categorize your evidence around these issues (see next page).

STOCK ISSUES

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT CLAIMS TO DEVELOP YOUR ARGUMENT.


HARM the problem

- To address harm, consider the following questions:
 - Is there a problem caused by the present system that merits the attention of policymakers?
 - What problem(s) is the current system causing?
 - How is the present system harming society?
 - Who/what is being harmed and why?

SIGNIFICANCE the extent of the problem

- To address significance, consider the following questions:
 - Is the problem caused by the current system important enough to dedicate the time and energy to? Is it worth the effort?
 - To what extent is it causing hurt? How “big” of a problem is it?
- Two ways to EXPOSE the SIGNIFICANCE of the harm:
 - **Quantitative Evidence**
 - SOCIAL harms resulting from the present system
 - i.e. current system is inhibiting citizens’ right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness
 - Violation of core VALUES
 - Threatens fundamental values of HUMAN DECENCY
 - i.e. the death penalty deliberately takes the life of a human being
 - **Qualitative Evidence**
 - NUMERICAL data (empirical data/statistics) that reveals any of the following:
 - the presence of a large number of examples involving the harm nationwide
 - i.e. a multitude of deaths per year as a result of the problem paired with trend data indicating that this number is on the rise
 - a high level of cases involving harm
 - i.e. current system is causing a spike in unemployment rate
 - a drop of some sort as a result of the harm
 - i.e. current system is causing a drop in participation percentages

STOCK ISSUES *continued*

INHERENCY  the current system is the (inseparable) source of harm

- With this claim, your goal is to prove that the causes of the problem cannot be eliminated without the acceptance of the new proposition/overhaul of present system.
- To address inherency, consider the following questions:
 - Is the problem caused by the current system built into the structure itself? Does the problem lie within?
 - Is the problem an essential/natural part of the current system?
 - Can you prove that removing the current system will remove the harm?
 - Does the harm exist BECAUSE of the system?
 - Can you prove that the harm is UNIQUE to the system itself? (i.e. if it is replaced, will the harm go away?)
 - Does the present system naturally cause inefficiency, duplication, waste, and/or inertia merely because it exists?

SOLVENCY  ability of plan to solve the problem

- With this claim, your goal is to prove that the installation of the proposition will solve the problem that the current system is causing.
- To address solvency, consider the following questions:
 - Will the proposition fix the problem? How? How can you prove this?
- **Strategies for illustrating solvency:**
 - Reveal the WORKABILITY of the plan
 - Compare the proposed plan to other, similar plans that have worked in the past; this comparison is called an ANALOGY.
 - Compare to similar, smaller scale plans that worked, say, at the local/state level to show likelihood of same plan succeeding at national level
 - Compare to other countries who have used similar plans to their benefit
 - Compare to pilot programs that have been tested
 - Compare to national programs that have existed in the past but were ignored, put off, or repealed
 - Reveal that CHANGES IN ATTITUDE will increase effect of plan
 - Sometimes people keep the present system because they know it benefits them
 - i.e. poor people remain poor because there are others who benefit from charging high prices, paying employees below minimum wage, denying credit to blighted areas, etc.
 - Provide the INCENTIVES for those who adopt the new system, thus changing their attitude about the old one

STOCK ISSUES *continued*

ADVANTAGES  benefits that accompany change

- With this claim, your goal is to highlight the benefits that go along with the acceptance of the proposition for change to the present system.
- To address solvency, consider the following questions:
 - Who will benefit from the new plan? Maximize your reach!
 - What perks will result from the installation of the new plan?
 - How will the country progress as a whole?
 - How do these advantages compare to the advantages of the present system? How can you posit these advantages as “better” than that of the status quo?
 - How will the new plan enhance the individual citizen, the citizen’s family/work life, the community in which the citizen lives,
 - How will the new plan simplify the procedures the citizen currently goes through regarding the topic?
 - Do the advantages of the new plan outweigh the disadvantages? How can you prove this?

AFFIRMATIVE POSITION

PREPARING TO DEBATE

4 **STEP FOUR** consists of checking the **STRENGTH** of your **RESEARCH** and the power that lies in your argument as a result. As you present the claims listed above, you **MUST** accompany **EACH** with **PROOF**, *which consists of evidence and sound, logical reasoning*.

- **Questions to consider when evaluating sources for inclusion in your argument:**
 - Does this information directly relate to my position on the topic?
 - Is the information contradictory in any way to my point?
 - Where might I insert this information to make my point most effectively? How can I use it to my advantage?
 - Under what claim does this information fall? Does it relate to the case itself or my plan to improve?
 - Is the source reliable? Does his/her/their opinion “matter” when it comes to your topic? (i.e. a literature professor’s opinion in the medical field might hold less pull than a doctor’s...know who you are seeking the information from and their relevance).
 - Could the source be challenged by my opposition in terms of bias?
 - i.e. a biased source is likely to provide biased information in favor of their opinion as opposed to a neutral party...
 - the NRA clearly has one-sided views regarding gun control, so this source could easily be challenged by the opposition!
 - Use RAVEN to help you:
 - **R** – reputation of source
 - **A** – source’s ability to observe the issue
 - **V** – vested interest of source
 - **E** – expertise of source
 - **N** – neutrality (or lack thereof) of source