

THE DEBATE KIT ROUND 1 SPEECH SAMPLE



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.

© 2021 edPioneer Consulting, LLC

This is solely considered a work of JillPavich.com edPioneer Consulting, LLC. The thoughts + ideas expressed in this resource are those of the author; the points expressed here are her own. The information shared here is for education + learning; the author is not responsible or nor does she guarantee any set of academic outcomes as a direct result of using this resource. For classroom use only.

By accessing/downloading this resource, you give Jill Pavich consent to contact you hereafter regarding matters directly related to its content. You also agree to the JillPavich.com Terms of Use.



jill@jillpavich.com



facebook.com/jillbpavich



[@jillpavich](https://instagram.com/@jillpavich)



© 2022 edPioneer Consulting, LLC All Rights Reserved

PROPOSITION:

That the federal government should increase the consequences for young criminal offenders by trying more juveniles as adults.

ROUND 1: FIRST AFFIRMATIVE CONSTRUCTIVE (SUMMARIZED BELOW)

- Introduction
 - Attention-getter
 - Thesis Statement
- Relevant History
- Harms/Significance
 - Current System is harmful because it is not strict enough; kids aren't taking the penalties seriously, so they repeatedly commit offenses thereafter. (+Evidence to Support)
 - Adult crime? Adult time Mentality (+Evidence to Support)
 - "Get Tough" Approach—necessary in a modern world where kids have more access to violent weapons (+Evidence to Support)
 - *Anticipated Claim of the opposition—Brain Development*; Counter = Piaget's theory that as early as age 11 teens can understand consequence
- Overview of the Plan/Advantages
- Conclusion

ROUND 1: FIRST NEGATIVE CROSS-EXAMINATION

To support his idea that teens should do the adult time for adult crime, my opponent mentioned psychologist Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development, which labels several stages where a developing youth becomes capable of understanding concepts in certain ways. My opponent noted that adolescents ages 11 and up are capable of recognizing the future and its consequences according to Piaget, but he failed to point out that Piaget also indicated that some people attain this phase of cognition much later developmentally or, in some cases, not at all (King's Online Psychology Network). Therefore, teens can't be expected to serve adult time on account of underdeveloped brain function.

ROUND 1: FIRST NEGATIVE CONSTRUCTIVE SPEECH

Consider the following scenario: a teenager is influenced by his friend's spur-of-the-moment decision to rob a nearby convenience store. The young man does not go through the formal decision-making process; instead he chooses to go along with the criminal plan. If he declines, he risks being rejected by his peers; he does not problem-solve ways to get out of the sticky situation either, as an adult is more apt to do; as he prepares to commit the crime, he is enticed by the "adventure" of it, meanwhile failing to weigh the consequences of his actions either because he's inexperienced or because his ability to see the future is weak. This common situation is consistent with a teenager's inability to make a mature decision though he has a semi-mature mind at age seventeen.

My name is ___ and I will be speaking to you today on behalf of the Negative Team. We believe that the Federal Government should NOT increase the consequences for young criminal offenders by trying them as adults because: the current system already provides harsh enough punishment for these adolescents; by changing the current system, we risk the safety of our very own citizens; and the expenses of increasing consequences would put an irreversible strain on society.

Early in American history, juvenile offenders were capable of understanding their crime, they could be convicted and suffer full consequences, just as an adult would. Eventually, however, the juvenile court system was established. By 1909, special facilities were created to “rehabilitate” rather than “punish” adolescent criminals. In doing so, the justice system had hoped that more tailored treatment would cure them of these antisocial behaviors so they could have a second chance at life. But today, the standards for youth criminal proceedings have tightened once again; penalties include longer incarcerations where “youth are categorically treated as adults when they are charged with crimes” (Scott & Steinberg, 2008), just as they were centuries ago.

Before I discuss the benefits of the current system, I'd like to continue to argue against some of my opponent's previous points. In his speech, the opposition mentioned that juveniles should suffer the penalty for committing adult crimes, just as grown-ups do. As my partner indicated, teens can't be expected to serve adult time for a crime they committed under the guidance of a non-adult brain. Therefore, to penalize them further for actions they cannot necessarily control is unfair and unrealistic.

Specifically, research suggests that teens lack what is called “future orientation,” which means they are more likely to focus on the present tense as opposed to the future (American Psychological Association). In the same sense, youth are less capable of perceiving risks and gauging consequences, which is why teens are more well-known for risky behavior such as speeding, unprotected sex, and binge drinking. The source of these risky decisions? Science indicates that teens are less capable of controlling their impulses and have poorer self-management skills than the average adult (Academy of Medical Psychology).

In fact, recent research indicates that the frontal lobes of the adolescent brain, those located in the prefrontal cortex, play a central role in governing our advanced thinking processes of planning ahead, regulating emotions, controlling impulses, and weighing consequences. Thus, immature behavior on a teen's behalf is largely outside of his control because the hard-wiring of the brain is simply incomplete (Academy of Medical Psychology).

My opponent also claimed today that treating more juveniles as adults will help reduce crime, but the current system is actually doing a better job at rehabilitating these offenders than the adult system ever could. Today, juveniles convicted in criminal court received much longer sentences than juveniles retained in the juvenile system. According to an article in the publication, *Psychology Today*, the longer a delinquent is exposed to the behaviors of other delinquents, the more likely he or she is to adopt that behavior. Therefore, “putting delinquents into detention with other delinquents leads to criminality, making them 7 times more likely to commit a crime later in life than someone who was not exposed to the harshness of the adult justice system” (*Journal of Psychology and Psychiatry, 2008*). If we try more teens as adults, we would be raising the likelihood for repeat-offenses by these youth, which only hurts them rather than helps them. Ultimately, this would endanger the safety of future society, which our government is obligated to protect.

Now I would like to highlight the effectiveness of the current system. As of now, the existence of juvenile courts gives youth a second chance at life following their sentence. The goal of juvenile systems is to rehabilitate these young offenders, whose behavior is believed to be malleable. The treatment they receive in these facilities can be invaluable to their improvement. Adult justice systems, however, focus more on punishment as opposed to rehabilitation because adults are less susceptible to behavior treatment. Also, juvenile parole aims to effectively reintegrate former offenders into society whereas adult parole does not (Juvenile Court Department of King County Superior Court).

Furthermore, the current system that places juveniles among their own ranks works in the favor of their future. Adult court systems allow public access to criminal records, which can set a former criminal up for failure in the workplace. Juvenile facilities, on the other hand, limit public access to criminal records, again, because it is believed that their behavior is changeable. If opportunities are accessible, it could lessen their likelihood of turning back to crime (Juvenile Court Department of King County Superior Court).

The current system is clearly working. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, juvenile crime is at its lowest level since 1987; it fell 30% between 1994 and 1998 alone. The rate for juvenile arrests in relation to violent crime is down. Numbers dropped 36% from the peak year of violent youth crime in 1994.

Moreover, the stakes of the system are already high enough. In Vermont and Kansas, for example, juveniles as young as age 10 are being tried in adult courts. Isn't this consequence enough? What will the rate drop to next if the Affirmative Team's proposal to increase consequence is accepted? Think about it.

Once again, the juvenile system works. There is no need to up the stakes where more youth are tried in adult courts. A 1996 Florida study found that youth transferred to adult prisons had approximately a 30% higher repeat-offense (recidivism) rate than youth who stayed in the juvenile system (National Report for Juvenile Offenders and Victims, 2010). There is no need to risk the loss of these facilities if they are working better than the system that the Affirmative Team is proposing.

In sum, the adult justice system not only arrests juveniles like Andrew Woodward, but it arrests their development.