## How To Prepare To Argue Negative

**FORM VERSUS CONTENT:** The biggest mistake new debaters make is becoming overwhelmed by the **content** of the debate instead of focusing on the FORM. A nationally-competitive debate team, like NYU, will research between 5,000 and 10,000 articles on the new debate resolution each year. NO DEBATER memorizes, learns or is even familiar with every card in the file. That is not the point. Evidence is a tool not a goal. Your goal is to learn HOW to use evidence by understanding WHEN to read it, recognizing what positions to read evidence against and organizing evidence and arguments to present them as persuasively as possible to your judges. In many team sports like soccer, basketball, and baseball, the coach develops plays. The trick is to execute those plays against your opposition. The files and the blocks we will help prepare for you are your playbook.The only evidence you should try to familiarize yourself with are your case (the 1AC) and your core negative strategies.

**HOW DO NEGATIVE TEAMS CHOOSE THEIR ARGUMENTS?** In most rounds, the pairing will come out and the negative will search the CEDA wiki for information on what the opponent’s case is or seek them out directly for the information. Once we know the aff, the coaches will inform the debaters of the preferred methods of attacking the affirmative. These attacks will make up the negative strategy for the debate. The first negative will read short forms of the off-case positions called “shells” and opening arguments against the case as dictated. Depending on the plan and the rate of delivery of the team, you will read 2-5 off-case positions and one or two case attacks (against solvency or advantages generally). In the 2NC/1NR (the negative block), the team will divide up their points of attack and make in-depth responses to the 2AC with evidence and more analysis on the various positions.

**WHEN AND HOW DO WE PREPARE THE STRATEGY FOR A GIVEN DEBATE?** Before the round starts unless there is no disclosure, the 1NC will put together with the coaches help all of the opening arguments called SHELLS so they don’t need to spend any prep time.Aside from the shells, each negative file includes answers to the likely arguments and extensions for key aspects--for Disadvantages (link, uniqueness and impact extensions), for counterplans (answers to perms, solvency extensions), for critiques—(link extensions, answers to perms, impact extensions, alternative solvency extensions). Pick out 1 or 2 pieces of evidence in each area to incorporate into your speech as answers to the 2A. You can then search for additional answers during the round depending on what arguments they make. Before The 2NC, the neg team will reconfirm who is taking what positions and prep the answers they need to make using the overviews and extensions in the file. If you are reading a position and you don’t see an an overview for the negative block, you need to write one that explains your impacts and links for the judge. Since the neg is answering the arguments made in the 2AC. **IT IS VITAL THAT YOU FLOW YOUR OPPONENT’S ARGUMENTS AND NOT JUST RELY ON THE COPY OF INFORMATION YOU RECEIVE.** Notice: We didn’t say the 2N should read through their entire position, try to understand exactly what it means, and then find the file. **THAT IS NOT HOW DEBATE AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS FUNCTIONS.** You must learn to trust your files.

**HOW TO USE NEGATIVE FILES?** During the 1AC, finish locating the shells, cut and paste them into a new word document entitled (**1NC vs. Aff Team with the initials of their last name, tournament name and round #**). Repeat this naming process for all of the other speeches in the debate. Time is of the essence so don’t get involved in your partner’s cross-x, just prep your answers. If you are not sure what type of case it is, what the plan does, what their biggest impact is, or what the role of the ballot is, have your partner ask those questions in cross-examination while you are locating the correct files. If you locate the correct file while your opponents are still reading that position, make a note on your flow reflecting a page/tab for each offcase you read and the number of answers you are making on each portion of the case. Your partner should transpose your blocks onto the flow if you are flowing on the computer or back-flow your arguments (meaning write them once for themselves and once for you) if you’re flowing on paper. It should take you less than 3 minutes to finalize all of your shells since they were selected before the round started. By the time cross-examination is over, you should be ready to stand up and give the judge your roadmap. If you are ready before the end of the cross-x, spend time looking over the answers so you will have a better understanding of them.

**WHAT IS A CORE NEGATIVE STRATEGY?** Your coach will help you determine your core negative strategy (the negative positions you will read as a default in each round unless told otherwise by your coaches) but this year it will likely consist of 1 Disadvantage (Presidential Powers, CMR or Politics), 1 Kritik (Capitalism or Biopower), and 1 counterplan (Executive Restraint). Whichever ones are chosen are the positions that you should get to know so you understand how it links to most affirmatives and what the biggest impacts are. All of these positions can be found in the **Master Set of Novice Files** on the dropbox if you would like to read them over. You can read over the 1NC shells to help you get ready. If you understand your case and your core negative positions, you will be able to explain to the judge why you are winning the debate and why your opponent’s arguments won’t defeat you. If you don’t understand those basic concepts, your chances of success are very low.

**WHAT DO WE DO IN THE 2NC AND 1NR?** As a team, you must divide the block. The 2NC handles the bulk of the arguments and the 1NR handles the OTHER major positions. So if the strat was Topicality, Disadvantage, Cplan offcase and solvency and advantage attacks oncase, the 2N might take Disadvantage, Cplan and Solvency while the 1NR takes topicality and the advantage attacks. The reason more is covered in the 2NC is that it’s 9 minutes as opposed to 6 minutes for the 1NR.

**TWO IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES:**  It is NOT ok for the 2N to “touch” on the positions the 1NR is taking. It is absolutely wrong. Don’t worry the positions are not considered dropped if they are not in the 2NC. Either speaker can address them. The 1NR NEVER takes prep time. They do not listen or flow the 2NC since that speech is entirely about arguments they will never discuss nor do they listen or participate in the cx of the 2NC by the 2A. All 12 minutes is spent getting the 1NR arguments ready. Since 12 minutes is more than the prep time either team receives for the entire debate round, that should be more than enough time to get the 1NR all set.