# Basics of Affirming

## HOW DEBATE WORKS

**INTRODUCTION**

Debate is a great game and we’re glad you want to be part of it. Initially, there will seem like it’s a lot of terms and a lot of reading because we are highly organized and everything is put into specific FILES. Once you talk with the coaches and get a feel for what’s really happening the process won’t seem very intimidating at all.

**OBJECT OF THE GAME**

The object for the affirmative is to prove their case. When you are on the affirmative, whoever Is designated the first speaker for your side will read the speech verbatim that was prepared by coaches and senior teammates. A negative (neg) team’s job is NOT to prove their case, but to disprove the affirmative’s (aff) case. Therefore, the neg presents a set of arguments that respond to the affirmative’s themes. The 2nd affirmative then rebuilds the aff arguments by providing a set of responses to negative using a combination of your own analysis, prepared answers from the extension section of the affirmative file and the evidence in the rest of the dropbox.

**HOW DOES THE DEBATE WORK?**

The debates are two on two. The teams debate a specific resolution. Your coach will give you the specific wording but it deals with whether the US should change its energy policy. Every person in the debate gives a long speech (called a constructive), a shorter speech (called a rebuttal), and serves as witness and questioner during separate cross examination periods. Each team has 10 minutes of prep to use during the round. Additionally, here is the order of speeches are the times.

1st affirmative constructive (IAC): 9 minutes

cross-ex by the 2nd negative (2N): 3 minutes

1st negative constructive (INC): 9 minutes

cross-ex by the 1st affirmative (1A): 3 minutes

2nd affirmative constructive (2AC): 9 minutes

cross-ex by the 1st negative (IN): 3 minutes

2nd negative constructive (2NC): 9 minutes

cross-ex by the 2nd affirmative (2A): 3 minutes

1st negative rebuttal (INR): 6 minutes

1st affirmative rebuttal (IAR): 6 minutes

2nd negative rebuttal (2NR): 6 minutes

2nd affirmative rebuttal (2AR): 6 minutes

**HOW DO I USE THIS FILE?**

Debate is about being prepared for as many arguments as possible that your opponents may present. Right now, your coaches and senior team members are developing blocks for this affirmative case. We hope to generate up to 200 pages before the first tournament but you won’t need those in each round. For now just focus on pages the 1AC and the 2AC blocks. We will explain how and when to deploy the rest as the tournament gets closer.

## WHO DOES WHAT WHEN

This is a quick primer for novices so they understand their roles at each step in the debate. Most importantly, have fun and relax. This can be a wonderful activity. Each debater gives a long speech (constructive), a short speech (rebuttal) and serves as witness & questioner during separate c-x periods.

BEFORE THE ROUND

Make sure you have a copy of your 1AC, 1N shells and extensions for your major positions before you get into the vehicle to leave for the tournament. Write down things you have questions about so you can ask coaches. Don’t worry about reading every sheet of paper. Debate is more about learning the process than the specific arguments until you become more experienced. When you arrive at the tournament, your coaches will handle registration while you and your teammates head to a central meeting area or a designated prep room. Once there, you should :

1-Make sure that your affirmative case, extensions, negative shells and extensions are all where you expect them to be so that you can prepare.

2- Spend 10 min reading your basic aff & neg positions aloud in the room where your squad is prepping.

3-Pre-flow your arguments (meaning write down the major points of your 1A, 1N and the predictable parts of your 2A and 2N/1NR on your hand-written or typed flows).

4-Review the nuances of the major arguments with your assigned coach

TYPES OF ARGUMENTS

Teams that debate use one of three styles; performance, policy or critical. As a squad, we have a large number of critical arguments and several policy options that we will deploy depending on the judge and the team you are debating. If anyone asks you what type of team you are before the round, answer “we run policy and critical arguments based on what makes strategic sense.”

PREPARING FOR THE ROUND

Pairings will be released showing which side of the debate you are on (affirmative or negative). You and your teammate will be listed by school and last initial so if Ali Na and Kevin Park are debating for NYU they would be listed as NYU NP. If your partner is sick or late, you might have to debate by yourself (called maverick) for a round. The pairings will also show who your judge is and who your opponents are. This is all VERY IMPORTANT information to tell your coaches as soon as you begin prepping. For example: after looking at a pairing, a clear transmission of key data to your coaches would be: “We’re aff in room 317, debating West Virginia with Willie Johnson in the back of the room.”

If you are affirmative, your coach will give you a few pointers for how to approach the debate and some suggestions for the specific judge if we are familiar with that person. Remember to get your plan text back before reading the 1AC. If you are negating, the coach will review the strategy to use in the round once we see the opponent’s plan text and learn their advantages. Each negative round, you have a selection of tools in the toolbox. Your choices of off-case arguments include topicality, disadvantages, critiques, and counterplans. Your choice of case arguments will be frontlines (meaning a series of cards and analytics) that answer solvency or their advantages. Most of the time you will have to write out the OVERVIEWS for the 2NR and 2AR. Always remember that the judges vote on those final two speeches so it is much more important where you finish than where you start. In most cases, look through your files and you’ll find answers to positions in the back.

## Format for the Round

**SPEECH TIME (MIN.) PURPOSE WHAT ARE OTHERS DOING?**

1st Affirmative 9 the 1A reads a prepared case. 2A is reviewing the pre-flow

Constructive (1AC) no ad-libs, READ IT AS PREPARED 1N and 2N are flowing the 1AC

focusing on the overt structure

(taglines, numbers, author, dates) rather than the evidence

2N CROSS-Xs the 1A 3 Clarify their positions The 1N is getting their shells

Set up your neg positions. organized

**(ANNOUNCE THE NUMBER OF OFF-CASE POSITIONS AND WHERE YOU ARE GOING ON-CASE PRIOR TO THE 1NC. THIS IS CALLED “GIVING A ROAD MAP AND EVERYONE DOES IT AFTER THE 1NC)**

1NC 1st Negative 9 the 1N reads the shells of 1A and 2A are flowing or reading

Constructive (1NC) prepared off-case arguments jumped files. 2A should be getting

and case arguments out answers.

DON’T USE PREP TIME. 1A should think of questions.

1A CROSS-Xs the 1N 3 Clarify the nature, number of 2A is prepping their speech

neg positions and the 2N is making sure that all evidence

status of cplans and critique was read completely as planned

alternatives (condo, dispo, unco) and organizing extensions

**(ANNOUNCE THE ORDER YOU WILL ADDRESS THE OFF-CASE POSITIONS AND THE ON-CASE ATTACKS PRIOR TO THE 2AC).**

2nd Affirmative 9 Puts a block of 6-10 args on each 2N & 1NR are flowing and

Constructive (2AC) off-case and 2-3 ans on each case preparing answers to the positions

Argument (MAX 3 MIN PREP) they are each taking in the block

1N CROSS-Xs the 2A 3 Clarify number of responses and 2N is prepping answers

any special offense (TAs, perms) 1A is writing out 1AR extensions

2nd Negative 9 The first part of the neg block. 1NR DOES NOT FLOW OR LISTEN

Constructive (2NC) Selects up to 3 positions to argue. TO THE 2NC. They spend all 9 min.

(MAX 5 MIN PREP) prepping 1NR answers to the other

positions that the 2AC didn’t cover.

2A CROSS-Xs the 2N 3 Try to poke holes in 2N’s args. 1NR finishes prepping.

**(no more cross-examination)**

1st Neg. Rebuttal (1NR) 6 2ND part of neg block. 1NR USE NO PREP FOR THIS SPEECH handles only remaining positions. 2N, 2A are flowing. 1a preps

1st Aff. Rebuttal (1AR) 6 Win back 2-3 2AC answers on each 1N & 2N should identify 1AR

position based on neg coverage. mistakes on positions they took

(drops, cops, tops) Decide what to go for. 2NR should (Max 4 min prep) start writing an overview while the

1A preps.

2nd Neg. Rebuttal (2NR) 6 Give an overview with impact 1N, 1A and 2A are flowing.

calculus and line-by-line coverage 2AR should start writing overview

(use remaining prep time) while the 2NR preps

2nd Aff. Rebuttal (2AR) 6 Give an overview with impact Everyone else should be flowing.

calculus and line-by-line coverage

(use remaining prep time)

**AFTER THE ROUND**

**DECORUM**

Immediately after the last speech, walk over and shake hands with your opponents. This is not optional. If it was a good debate, it’s ok to say “good debate” or some equivalent. If you have an issue with the judge or another debater, explain the situation to your coach in private. Don’t mention it in public. I don’t care if you are angry about something that happened in the round or upset about how you did, you are an ambassador from NYU and will exhibit decorum and the highest sense of sportsmanship in your behavior.

Next, ask the judge if they need any evidence. If not, begin putting all of your papers away and make sure the other team has returned all your evidence to you.

**INTEL**

When you are affirmative, it is the 1A’s responsibility to note the other team’s code (their last names & school), what off-case arguments they presented, the exact text of any counterplans or kritik alternatives they presented, and the exact wording of any T violations. If you have not copied these down during the debate, ask them for their positions and do it immediately following the debate. Record the judge’s name and the decision as well.

When you are negative, it is the 1N’s responsibility to note the other team’s code (their last names & school), the exact plan text they presented, and the advantages they ran. Record the judge’s name and the decision as well.

If the team president or evidence czar has created a specific round report, both debaters should assist in completing those after the debate.

**DECISION**

The judge will take a certain amount of time to make a decision and will then reveal the decision to you (in 95% of cases).

After the decision, always ask three questions:

1) what could I do to improve?

2) how would you have handled \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(insert whatever their best argument was in the round or the argument you lost on if you lose)

3) what did you think of the decisions we made in the final rebuttal as far as time allocation or argument choice?

Whether you agree or not, write down the answers to each question.

For debaters who are serious about being successful, I tell them to keep a championship book that contains their collection of notes from all of the tournaments. Coaches can review it with them after each tournament or every two tournaments to identify trends, correct errors and establish objectives that will accelerate your growth as debaters.

**COMMUNICATION**

If they weren’t with you when you got your decision, go to the room where your assigned coach was judging or another specifically-designated meeting place and inform them of how you did and if you need answers to a specific position. You can text or call your coach with the decision as well.

## How to Use The 2AC Answers File

**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 the evidence by understanding when to read evidence, 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, football and baseball, the coach works with the team by developing plays and understanding offense and defense. In the game, 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.

**WHAT IS A CORE NEGATIVE STRATEGY?** We’re not going to spend a lot of time on the negative here because this is about the 2AC but here’s a quick summary. 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). 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. 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.

**WHEN AND HOW DO WE USE THIS FILE?** The easiest way to explain the 2AC is that it’s a HEAR & REACT SPEECH. You hear the opponents say something, you react by locating a document that responds to it and then you read those collection of documents in your speech in an organized manner. As you know from the earlier portion of this document, the debate begins with the 1A reading a pre-written case in the first constructive (1AC) and the negative reading their rudimentary elements of their strategic attacks in the first negative constructive (1NC). All of that will occur without any prep time. While the neg is reading its positions, the affirmative will have access to either a flash drive with the positions on it that they get before the speech or a paper version of the arguments that you will be able to pick up and read as they finish each page. **IT IS VITAL THAT YOU FLOW YOUR OPPONENT’S ARGUMENTS AND NOT JUST RELY ON THE COPY OF INFORMATION YOU RECEIVE.** As the negative reads its position, you should determine first what type of argument it is: PROCEDURAL (TOPICALITY, PLAN FLAW, FRAMEWORK), DISADVANTAGE, CRITIQUE, COUNTERPLAN OR CASE ATTACK. Procedurals, disadvantages, critiques, and counterplans are referred to as **off-case positions.** These are positions that don’t directly attack the case. Most teams before the 1N starts will give you a speech order called a “roadmap” in which they will tell you how many off-cases they will read. (3 off and solvency means they would be reading three different offcase positions and then attacking “on-case” your observation that your plan solves. The 2AC should first determine as quickly as possible what positions are being read and then select the correct files to read in response. Notice: We didn’t say the 2AC 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.

Your coaches and senior debaters have heard the arguments you’re debating against hundreds, if not thousands of times. We’ve considered all of the angles it could take and provided you with answers that will defeat it. Trust your blocks and let them do the heavy lifting for you.

**HOW TO USE THIS FILE:** This file contains **blocks (**sets ofanswers) to over 90 of the most likely positions that your opponents might read divided into sections: Topicality (T), Counterplan (CP), Critiques (K), Disadvantages (Disads), and case answers. The off-case positions are identified by subject matter (e.g Anthropocentricism, Biopower, Capitalism) or by author (Agamben, Bataille) based on how most teams categorize them.They are already set up in “debate-speak” meaning you don’t have to do anything except read them once you’ve located the right file. During the 1NC, start locating your blocks, cut and paste it into a new word document entitled (**2AC vs. Neg Team with their initials, tournament name and round #**). 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 position it is, what authors it uses or how it applies to your case, 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 of how many answers you are going to read and write a short description (e.g 1. nl would mean my first answer was no link). 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 locate all of your blocks you need since they are mostly in this one file so by the time cross-examination is over, you should be ready to stand up and give your 2AC. 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. At the end of your partner’s c/x, , take one minute of prep to double-check with your partner if there was anything important that came out of c/x that needs to be mentioned. You should use no more than 3 minutes of prep for the 2AC. No one votes on the 2AC so save the balance of your prep time for later in the debate. The other two minutes can be spent familiarizing yourself with the answers you are about to read, adding additional answers at the bottom of the block**,** if you noticed something about their argument that you wish to address andpre-flowing your arguments.

Sometimes, we will know what the likely positions are that opponents will read and you can just review the blocks we suggested before the round.

**SOME FINAL NOTES OF SPECIFIC FILES**

**1--If you can’t find specific answers to the position you need, please use the generic answers that have been prepared for you.**

**2--For some of the topicality arguments which are less common, all you have Is a counterinterpretation and a definition. You will need to add in a few more answers in the round so here are 4 more:** 4-default to reasonability, our affirmative is clearly a reasonable example of the topic. 5. Their interp is arbitrary and self-serving. Ours provides the best scope for debate. 6-Ground checks- we defend against instrumental disads and abstract critiques, our interp turns all their ground arguments 7. Their interp encourages abusive PICs because we have to defend massive amounts of the topic, we’d never be able to defend every tiny subsection and program and would lose on miniscule net benefits, destroying aff ground.

## SUMMARY

This year, the nation’s colleges voted to debate the War Powers Act which delineates powers between the President and Congress in times of conflict. In approaching this resolution, most teams will specify two things: a) the type of War Power they will discuss (targeted killing; indefinite detention; offensive cyber operations; or introducing US Armed Forces into hostilities) and b) the type of restriction they will defend (e.g. judicial, statutory or both). For this affirmative, NYU has chosen to discuss restricting indefinite detention by closing black sites also called “black jails”. Intercollegiate debate teams use one of three styles; performance, policy or critical. As a squad, we have several policy options and a number of critical arguments that we will deploy depending on the judge and the team you are debating. This affirmative is written as a combination policy and critical affirmative with both types of impacts included.

For years, the US has maintained prisons outside of its borders at places like Guantanamo Bay (Gitmo). One of the reasons is so the government can claim that these locations are not subject to US laws and, by extension, the prisoners are not afforded the legal protections and rights they would have in the US. While some may find this egregious, the deeper secret is the divide within these privileges. According to reports from observers and former prisoners held in Gitmo and Bagram, there is a separate building off-the-beaten path within the facilities that the US does not acknowledge where many prisoners are tortured, beaten and subjected to extensive personal humiliation and torment. Our affirmative problematizes the ways the government uses black sites by considering how it undermines our moral leadership on other global issues like proliferation and the logic of violence of the actions itself which include torture that lead to dehumanization and ongoing forms of violence leading to perpetual war. Depending on how you want to deploy the affirmative, the biggest impact of the case is either extinction, total war or dehumanization.

In the simplest terms, we argue that black sites should be closed for policy and moral reasons. We chose this area based on our summer research, the number of different ways the affirmative could be run, the ease of understanding for newcomers and the likelihood that it would be topical regardless which resolution the community decided to vote on. The pan defends action by Congress (statutory restrictions).

This 1AC is very long and it will take considerable practice for even our best debaters to get it in. For that reason, this version has the text bolded and underlined for the most part. Each team will need to highlight their own based on strategic choices and limitations. Please remember that the coaches can work with you to highlight down the affirmative and make it more manageable without hurting the potency. This particular affirmative includes all of our best stories and is referred to as the “Big Stick” version of this case. Smaller modules can be found on the dropbox as of September.

If this version of the affirmative doesn’t appeal to you, an inventive team can have fun with this case in several ways:

1. They could decide to just read policy impacts and defend that proliferation is bad;
2. They could show clips from the movies Imagining Argentina and/or Smokin Aces II: Assassin’s Ball and make the affirmative a performance affirmative
3. They could defend the idea that the round is a Truth Commission to serve as a hearing on the actions of the US FG (we have good solvency cards for this story).

Whatever you pick, you will learn a great deal and be a better debater in the end. Good luck. Have fun.

## 1AC

### Observation 1: