

A Summary of Steps in Preparing a Debate Case

(For more detailed information, refer to *Some Elements of Debate*.)

1. **Type of Resolution**

Is it a resolution of fact, value (opinion), or policy (requiring a plan)?

2. **Analysis**

- A. Do you know enough about the topic generally, or do you need to do research first? (Do your general research now.)
- B. Of the arguments:
 - i. What are the arguments in favour of the resolution?
 - ii. What are the arguments against the resolution?
 - iii. What are the key issues in the debate?

3. **Definitions**

- A. Which terms need to be defined?
- B. How should they be defined (dictionary definition, specialized definition referring to an authority, giving your own personal definition)?
- C. What short summary of the resolution will you use?

4. **Plan** (if a policy debate) (Even if you are on the Opposition, prepare Details of the plan, such as a skeleton plan; this will aid your criticism of the Government plan.)

- A. Cost
- B. Timing
- C. Personnel
- D. Mechanism
- E. Consequences and Alternatives

5. **Material** (You should already have done your general research; this is the time to organize your material and identify areas that need further research.)

- A. What additional facts do you want information on or evidence of?
- B. Where should you look? (Library clipping files, *Canadian News Facts* [an index to news stories], newspaper indexes, magazines, specialized books, dictionaries of quotations, *Hansard*, asking an expert)

6. **Preparing Your Speech**

- A. Meet with your partner and divide up your points
- B. Organize your arguments:
 - i. What needs to be said in your introduction?
 - ii. What order should you make your points in?
 - iii. How will you summarize your speech?
 - iv. What will be your conclusion?

7. **Writing Your Speech**

- A. Write your speech, either word for word or merely using point form
- B. Edit it, so that no time is wasted.
- C. Reduce it to point form and put it on index cards.
- D. Rehearse, by yourself, in front of others, and with your partner(s).

8. **Prepare Rebuttal Points**

Identify the answers and the supporting facts to reply to the probable arguments that you identified in Step 2 above.

Brian Casey January 1983, Revised October 1984 Revised by John Filliter in December 2002