



Appendix 2 – Debate Glossary¹

add-on: n. An advantage of the affirmative plan usually presented in the 2nd Affirmative constructive speech and independent of whatever advantages were presented in the 1st affirmative constructive.

advantage: n. An advantage is a description used by the affirmative to explain what beneficial effects will result from its plan.

affirmative: n The team in a debate which supports the resolution. This team presents the affirmative case (see below).

affirmative cases: n. This is generally used to refer to the part of the affirmative position which demonstrates that there is a need for change because there is a serious problem (harms) which the present system cannot solve (inherency) but which is none the less, solvable (solvency). The affirmative’s case provides a specific plan to solve the problem.

affirmative plan: n. The policy action advocated by the affirmative.

agent (or Agent of Change): n. The actor that the affirmative or the resolution calls for to act. The agent in the resolution is usually the United States federal government. Affirmatives can specify specific agents within the federal government, such as Congress or the President to implement their plan.

agent counterplans: n. A counterplan which argues that the plan you are implementing through one agent of change, should instead, be implemented by another agent of change.

anarchy: n. A counterplan which argues that the government should dissolve itself rather than carry on any resolitional action or other action. Some teams argue this action can be by the United States alone and others argue that all government should dissolve.

a priori: n. literally, prior to. Usually an argument which indicates that a particular issue should be resolved before all others. Frequently used to argue that procedural concerns such as topicality should be considered before substantive issues such as advantages.

attitudinal inherency: n. this type of inherency identifies an unwillingness of those in power in the present system to take corrective measures to solve the harm cited by the affirmative.

¹ Adapted from the National Debate Project’s Policy Debate Manual, by Dr. Joe Bellon, Director of Debate at Georgia State University.



bipartisanship: n. This is a political disadvantage which argues that the affirmative plan will disrupt bipartisan working relations within the Congress making it more difficult to enact other important policies. The argument could also be made the opposite way. The negative could argue that the plan will spur bipartisan cooperation and therefore cause bad policies to be enacted. Also "Bipart" (see disadvantages and political disads).

budget deficits: n. A generic negative disadvantage which argues that the spending of government funds on a new program will break the political will which holds the budget freeze on line, impacting in massive economic disruption.

burden of proof: n. 1) The requirement that sufficient evidence or reasoning to prove an argument be presented 2) the requirement that the affirmative prove the stock issues.

circumvention: n. This is a type of argument which argues that certain actors will attempt to avoid the mandates of the plan. Because it argues that the plan will be avoided, it is a type of solvency argument which implies that the plan will not be able to solve the problem the case cites as the harm.

citation: n. Specific information on the source of evidence regarding publication, date of publication, page excerpt, and the author's qualification. Also known as "cite."

clash: vb. To respond directly to an opponent's argument.

comparative advantage: n. Arguing that the desirable benefits of the plan in contrast to the present system. For example, if the affirmative argues that their case simply decreases racism, but does not solve it completely, they are arguing that compared to the status quo, the plan makes things better.

competitiveness: n. 1) The quality of a policy which makes the policy a reason to reject another policy. 2) a situation where one policy is mutually exclusive with another policy or is more preferable alone than in conjunction with another policy. It is traditionally expected that a negative prove a counterplan to be a competitive alternative to the affirmative plan.

conditional counterplan: n. conditional counterplans are counterplans that the negative presents, but the negative can remove it as their advocacy at any time in the debate.

constructives: n. The first four individual speeches of the debate. Arguments are initiated in these speeches and extended in rebuttals. They consist of the first affirmative constructive (1AC), the first negative constructive (1NC), the second affirmative constructive (2AC), and the second negative constructive (2NC). These speeches are interrupted by cross-examination periods of each speaker.



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contentions: n. 1) A major point advanced or maintained in a debate. 2) a subdivision of an affirmative case.

context: n. 1) The relationship of the evidence read in the date to the original source material. It is expected that evidence read in a debate will be consistent with the meaning of the evidence as it is written in the original source. 2) a standard for evaluating topicality arguments which is used to determine if the definition offered in the debate is consistent with the meaning of the term in relationship to authors who write about the subject matter of the topic or, to determine if the definition offered in the debate is consistent with the meaning of the term in relationship to other terms in the resolution. adj. contextual.

contradictions: n. This is a type of fallacy in argument. It merely says that the two or more arguments presented by one team cannot be true because they disprove each other. Example: having one team present arguments that prove that U.S. hegemony is both good and bad.

co-option: n. the influence of outside parties hampering an agency's efforts to carry out its instructions.

counterplan: n. a counterplan is proposed by the negative as an alternative method of solving the same problem cited by the affirmative or as an alternative which goes beyond the affirmative's plan. It is generally thought that a counterplan should be competitive. That means that it should not be possible or desirable to adopt both the affirmative plan and the negative's counterplan. vb. to employ the negative strategy of presenting and defending a competitive program to solve the affirmative need or advantage.

counterplan advantages: n. benefits which result from the adoption of the counterplan.

Critical Legal Studies (CLS): n. a field of legal scholarship which argues that the United States legal system while formally appealing with its guarantees of equal rights and individual rights, remains, in fact a system which serves the elites and denies access to the poor.

critique (also "kritik"): n. an argument that the assumptions or language of an issue are the first consideration (or an "a priori issue") in a debate. The effects of a policy should be considered only after one has decided if the assumptions and/or language of an argument are philosophically or morally acceptable. Frequently, the critique argues that—since the plan is not truly enacted as a result of the debate—the impact of the language, philosophy, or political strategy used in the round is more "real" and more important than any other argument in the round.

cross-examination: n. This is a three minute period which follows each of the constructive speeches in which a member of the opposing team directly questions the most recent speaker.



cut evidence: vb. a term used to describe the process of compiling evidence from books, magazines, articles, etc. This involves copying the portion of text that you desire to use citing, and tagging the text as evidence.

debatability standard: n. a topicality standard which argues that as long as the definition provides fair grounds for debate, it should be accepted.

disadvantages: n. A disadvantage, sometimes referred to with the shorthand phrases "DA" or "Disad," is an undesirable effect of a plan. A negative team runs a disad to show that adoption of the plan is going to cause more problems than it will solve. In order to prove a disadvantage, a negative team must prove several things. First, they must link it to the affirmative plan. Second, they must be able to prove it is unique to the affirmative plan, and third, they must prove that the impact of the disadvantage is bad enough to outweigh the affirmative advantages.

discursive impact: n. Derived from the word discourse, this argument usually says that the language used within the debate is more important than the issues debated. Discursive impacts are usually claimed by critiques.

dispositional counterplan: n. Dispositional counterplans are counterplans that the negative presents, that the negative can not abandon at anytime. The negative is forced to defend the counterplan if the affirmative chooses not to read any theory arguments or permutations against the negative. Dispositional counterplans are often compared to "conditional" counterplans.

existential inherency: n. This kind of inherency argues that if the affirmative can demonstrate a massive problem exists then the affirmative has met the burden of inherency by showing that the present system is not solving it.

evidence: n. quotations which tend to prove or provide grounds for belief; also, broadly, the reasoning which tends to prove.

extending an argument: v. Bringing an argument up again in speeches after which they were initially presented. This sometimes involves reading new evidence to further explain or support the initial argument. Arguments that are not extended are considered "dropped" and are not supposed to be considered by the judge when deciding the round.

extra-topical: adj. A portion of an affirmative plan that falls outside the resolution. Different from non-topical plans, which do not fall under the topic at all, extra-topical plans are plans that are partially topical, but also have a part that is non-topical.



Feminism: n. a generic negative argument which says that whatever policy or value presented by the affirmative entrenches the "mindset" of patriarchy. Patriarchy is a social system which relies upon authoritative power structures. The negative argues that this system of governance should be rejected. The argument is frequently used to prove that even granting feminists power is not good if the feminists also support the patriarchal system.

field context: n. a topicality standard that says it is better to have a definition which is derived from the writings of experts on the subject of the resolution.

fiat: n. Fiat is a term used to describe the process that allows us to debate an affirmative plan as if it were adopted. This four letter word is much disputed in debate theory as to what it actually means, what powers it gives the affirmative, and what powers the negative has to implement a counterplan. For a quick reference, it would be best to think of it as a little spark of imagination which allows us to pretend a judge could adopt the affirmative plan (and perhaps the negative's counterplan) if he/she choose. vb. to implement a plan over any objection — a power granted to advocates of change.

floating PIC (Plan-Inclusive Counterplan): n. This is a counterplan that is not formally read by the negative, but is merely implied by the negative critique. Many critical arguments seem to imply that an alternative action to the plan would be taken either immediately or at some point in the future. It is called "floating" because the implicit nature of the counterplan makes it easy for the negative to alter the implied action, making it a moving target.

flow: vb. to take notes of the debate, argument by argument in a linear fashion. n. referring to a flow sheet.

flow sheet: n. paper used to keep track of the arguments in a debate.

Foucault critique: n. This critique, which is based on the writings of Michael Foucault (pronounced "foo-ko"), usually advocates individual resistance to regulation and criticizes the idea of government reform. Foucault was concerned that when society regulates what is and is not acceptable behavior people are locked into particular ways of thinking and acting. For example, laws define deviance and thus create groups of people who are considered "abnormal." He argued against the idea that power is held only by those at the top. Instead, he claimed that all people have power.

generic arguments: n. arguments, usually negative, that are general and apply to a wide range of affirmative cases or plans.

generic disadvantage: n. A disadvantage designed to link to most affirmative plans on the topic.



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grammatical context: n. a topicality standard that argues that when searching for the best definition we should find one which is derived from the relationship of words in a consistent grammatical form with other terms in the resolution.

impact: n. the good or bad results of an affirmative case, counterplan or disadvantages (see significance). n. the consequences of an argument, including theoretical arguments, which make the argument important in evaluating the debate.

independent advantage: n. an advantage that can justify adoption of a plan even if the other advantages may not be true.

inherency: n. the cause of a problem's existence, the proof that the problem will continue, and the barrier preventing current programs from solving a problem.

intrinsicness: adj. used to describe a type of argument in which the affirmative illegitimately adds an action onto their plan that was not originally advocated by the aff.

jurisdiction: n. This is an argument often used in topicality discussions that assumes the resolution provides limits on the judge's power. This argument states that if the plan is not topical, the judge has no power to fiat the plan and as such, a nontopical plan could not be voted for because the plan is outside the judge's authority.

kritiks: see critiques. Also known as "the K."

link: n. That component of a disadvantage which shows how it is caused by the Affirmative plan.

masking: n. an argument that says the affirmative plan leads everyone to believe the problem is being solved, when in fact the plan will fail to solve and prevent other solutions from being enacted. Frequently used as part of critique arguments such as CLS, CRT, and Foucault. (see CLS and critiques).

mutual exclusivity: n. one competitiveness standard that the counterplan and the affirmative plan cannot co-exist.

negative block: n. the 2nd negative constructive and the 1st negative rebuttal; the two negative speeches in the middle of the debate.

net benefits: n. A competitiveness standard stating that the counterplan alone is a superior policy to adoption of both the counterplan and the affirmative plan together.



Objectivism: n. based on the philosophy of author Ayn Rand, the argument says individual freedom is the most important value. All government regulations innately infringe on individuals and are therefore evil. Only complete freedom from government controls can allow the human race to achieve its full potential.

performance: n. a type of debate that abandons the concept of debate as policy-making and focuses on the activity's ability to cause change in our society. Performance debates usually do not include plans, and may incorporate music, videos, and other forms of expression into speeches.

permutation: n. a type of argument used by affirmatives to illustrate non-competitiveness of counterplans, a legitimate permutation includes all of the plan and all or part of the counterplan. Affirmatives argue that, despite the texts of the plan and the counterplan, if it is possible to imagine the coexistence of the two plans, then the negative has not illustrated why the resolution should not be adopted. (see competitiveness)

philosophical competition: n. a standard of competition for counterplans which argues that since the two plans under consideration have different philosophical approaches they are exclusive of one another.

PIC: see "plan-inclusive counterplan"

plan-inclusive counterplan (PIC): n. A counterplan that substantially replicates the plan mandates, with only minor changes. In this sense, the counterplan "includes," or contains, most of the actions taken by the plan.

plan mandates: n. the resolitional action specified in the affirmative plan.

plan-meet-need (PMN): n. an argument claiming that a plan does not solve the need. Usually a subdivided and structured argument presented in second negative constructive.

plan-spike: n. a part of a plan designed to aid the workability of the plan or diminish its disadvantages.

policy-making: n. a philosophy that debate rounds should be evaluated from the perspective of pseudo-legislators weighing the advantages and disadvantages of two conflicting policy systems.



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political disads: n. (see disadvantages) these are arguments which indicate that the political consequences of passing the plan will lead to impacts which will outweigh the case.

political capital: n. the amount of good will a politician can muster to get policies enacted. In debate this argument says passing the plan will consume so much political capital that those enacting the plan will have to sacrifice other important issues on their political agenda. The capital expended passing the plan sacrifices the capital necessary to get other policies passed.

political focus: n. the ability of political leaders to concentrate on the particular issues. In debate, the argument says that passing the affirmative plan will require so much energy and time, that policymakers will be unable to get other more important issues passed.

political popularity: n. the approval rating of a politician. In debate, the argument considers the public approval of the plan. If the plan is unpopular, policymakers will lose credibility making it nearly impossible to pass other more important plans. If the plan is popular, it may boost the credibility of policymakers, making it easier to get other less desirable plans passed.

postmodernism: n. Although the various people who write "postmodern" theory don't really agree on what it means to be "postmodern," there are a couple of common elements of postmodernism. Postmodern authors often claim that we cannot know what is and is not true because truth is a product of culture. They often indict scientific reasoning, especially the argument that only science can tell us how to view the world. Many postmodern authors claim that policymakers focus too much on solutions, when they ought to be investigating the philosophical and linguistic nature of the problem instead. Critiques based on postmodern philosophy usually point out the ways in which the affirmative relies on faulty assumptions about truth.

posthumanism: n. see "postmodernism"

preemption or preempt: n. an argument designed to respond to another argument that has not been made, but is anticipated.

presumption: n. the assumption that a system should be adhered to unless there is a clear reason to change it.

prep time: n. the time allotted to each team for getting ready for their speeches once the debate has begun.



proliferation (or "prolif"): n. the acquisition of nuclear weapons by an increasing number of countries in the world. When either team talks about "proliferation," they are generally referring to the possibility of one or more countries getting access to nuclear weapons who do not currently have nukes. Sometimes, "prolif" is a generic disadvantage which claims that the expansion of nuclear weapons capability to more countries is increased or decreased by policies supported by the affirmative. The consequences under either condition are increased instability and terrorism thereby increasing the risks of nuclear war. slang; prolif good or prolif bad. It can also be argued that proliferation of nuclear weapons is good because nukes deter aggression and increase caution.

reasonability: n. a topicality standard which indicates that the affirmative only need offer a definition which is not excessively broad and would appear legitimate at first glance.

rebuttal: n. Any of the last four speeches in a debate. During rebuttals, new arguments are usually not allowed.

resolution: n. A proposition of fact, value, or policy which the affirmative is obligated to support; topic, a statement which focuses debate by dividing argument ground on any given issue.

reify: v. using language that makes "false" or "illusory" things seem real and/or legitimate. Some critics might say that advocating aid for minorities actually makes racism more legitimate because it "reifies" the idea of race. These critics argue that, because there is no biological basis for race, targeting people of specific races for help supports (or "reifies") the false notion of race, thus legitimizing racism.

retrench: v. to reinforce the present system. Usually occurring in discussions of critiques, the argument says that the effect of a policy is to reinforce the prevailing attitudes in the status quo. Thus, the problems which exist won't be solved and may worsen.

risk analysis: n. the theory and procedure of claiming that one hundred percent certainty is not needed to act and that the level of certainty that does exist is sufficient basis for policy decisions.

sandbag: vb. to delay in presenting the impact of an argument until a later speech.

scenario: n. a term used to describe the type of situation which might exist when the impact to an advantage or disadvantage would occur.

shift: vb. to alter in a later speech one's position on an issue.



significance: n. the measure, qualitative or quantitative, of the need claimed by the affirmative. Significance has diminished in importance as a issue in recent years because most topics now include substantial or significant in the resolutions.

solvency: n. the ability of the affirmative plan, or a counterplan, to solve the problems being discussed in the round

spending tradeoff: n. a generic disadvantage that argues that the cost of the plan will be taken from programs that could better use the money.

spread: vb. to introduce a large number of arguments in to the debate, usually by speaking at a very rapid rate. n. a description of the process of delivering many arguments.

standards: n. a set of criteria which allows the judge to evaluate the superiority of competing arguments. cf., topicality standards or competition standards.

status quo: n. the present system, the way things are now, the world as we know it exists now.

stock issues: n. those issues that the affirmative must prove, i.e., significance, inherency, solvency and topicality, in order to win a debate. n. a paradigm or perspective for evaluating rounds based on the notion that the affirmative has to meet the burdens of significance, inherency, solving and topicality.

structure: n. the outline of the arguments.

subpoints: n. a specific supporting part of an argumentative structure.

topicality: n. 1) the quality or condition of falling under the range of the resolution's possibilities. 2) an argument suggesting that the affirmative plan is not an example of the resolution.

topicality standards: n. a set of criteria designed to aid the judge in evaluating the topicality argument.

turn: n. an argument that says the exact opposite of what the opposing team said is true in order to prove why you win. For example if the affirmative read a hegemony is good advantage, the negative can turn the advantage by arguing hegemony is bad.

uniqueness: n. that component of a disadvantage which illustrates that the disadvantage impact which the negative claims results only from the adoption of the affirmative plan. That is, the disadvantage impact would not occur absent the affirmative plan.



voting issue: n. an argument which justifies voting for the team that initiated the argument. For example, topicality, critiques, and counterplan competitiveness are frequently considered voting issues.

world government (or WOMP): a generic counterplan derived from the World Order Models Project (W.O.M.P.) commissioned to study the feasibility of a world government. The argument's underlying premise is that each action taken by a sovereign state (as called for by many debate resolutions) increases the impediments to achieving a new world order. The negative therefore argues a World Government should be established to accomplish the objectives of the affirmative and prevent wars between nations.