

7/18/07, The University of Michigan Lincoln-Douglas Institute
Lecture: Jason Baldwin, Jen Larson “Case Writing”

- I. Introduction
 - a. You control what is in your case
 - b. Cases steer the round
 - c. Casing is transferable in reality
 - d. Learn writing tips
 - e. *write the case a few weeks before the tournament, not right after the resolution release or before the tournament. Keep revising
- II. The Goal
 - a. A speech attempting to persuade the audience that the resolution is true or false
 - b. A constructive argument is an argument that in conclusion denies or accepts the resolution
- III. Before the Case
 - a. Research
 - b. Brainstorm
 - i. Sit and stare
 - ii. Work with a team
 - iii. Look for patterns and similarities
 - iv. Think about which are the most plausible
 - v. Avoid the allure of a “surprise” argument
 - c. 1-3 arguments in AFF, 1-2 arguments in NEG
 - i. Have less arguments that are powerful rather than many mediocre arguments
 - ii. Each contention should be one argument
 - d. Premise model outline
 - i. The model checks to see if the conclusion is your goal
 - ii. The model checks to see if the argument is valid
 - iii. The model checks to see if the argument is informative
 - iv. Has potential to show the value premise or criterion
 - v. Shows which argument is empirical and needs empirical evidence
- IV. The Orthodox Case
 - a. Persuasive opening (Introductory quotation)
 - i. Topic specific
 - ii. Memorable and attention-getting
 - iii. Self-contained and self-explanatory
 - iv. It is a kind of preview of the case arguments
 - v. Short
 - b. State your affirmation or negation of the resolution
 - i. “Because I believe _____, I affirm/negate the resolution that _____.”
 - c. Definitions
 - i. Pay attention to the parts of speech of each word and define accordingly
 - ii. Define phrases as one unit
 - iii. Do not include the base of the word or the word itself when defining that word
 - iv. Choose a definition that fits the context of the word
 - v. Consult a reputable dictionary or find definitions in context of an article
 - vi. Don’t define everything
 - vii. NEG may not need to define unless the AFF is abusive

1. If challenging, state why the definition is abusive/inaccurate and then provide an alternate definition
- d. The Standards
 - i. Show why the standards are related to the resolution
 - ii. Show the relationship between the value and criterion
 - iii. Show why the standards are relevant
 - iv. Don't use "that of"
 - v. If NEG you may subsume your value with your opponent's if the standards are only semantically the same
 - e. Observations
 - i. Clears up misunderstandings in the resolution
 - ii. Usually written after the standards
 - iii. Avoid using
 - iv. Avoid the fallacy that if you win the observation then you win the round
 - v. Don't make a sneaky argument in the observation
 - f. Contentions
 - i. Exactly one constructive argument
 - ii. Use the following form:
 1. "My nth contention argues that [resolution] because [reason]."
 2. All quoted material should comprise of only 1/3 of the contention
 3. Explain the argument before the quoted material is inserted
 4. Order your premises in a logical, persuasive sense
 5. Order your contentions in a logical sense, but careful not to bury your best contention at the bottom of the flow because you may miss it in the 1AR
 6. Prove your contentions true and sound
- V. A Heretical Alternative
- a. Write like a persuasive essay much like philosophical journals
 - b. Experiment with this...
- VI. Writing Tips
- a. Use clear, simple language
 - b. Assume nothing, except assume that you need to explain everything
 - c. Make writing explicitly organized with transition words or numbered arguments so that it is flowable
 - d. Short sentences in the active voice
 - e. Refer back to the language of the resolution
 - f. Avoid pronouns
 - g. Make the case interesting and descriptive
 - h. Read case aloud as much as possible
 - i. Be able to write a sentence for each paragraph and then see if those sentences make sense when read in transition