

HARANGUE: DEBATING 101

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Resources

- × www.dav.com.au/resources
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Matter, Method, Manner

Understanding these three Ms is essential for every speaker.

MATTER

Matter refers to the raw material which you use to construct your arguments - the facts or evidence upon which your case is based. Matter includes such things as quotes, statistics, facts and evidence that you may be able to put forward to prove or further your own team case. The two cornerstones of matter are logic and relevance.

Logic refers to whether one fact, or piece of evidence makes another more likely.

For example, In a debate on whether or not the death penalty should be reintroduced, you might use statistics on the crime rates in various US states that do have the death penalty, to argue for the proposition that the existence of a death penalty provides a deterrent to potential criminals and vice versa.

Relevance refers to whether your evidence and arguments can actually be applied and are relevant to the topic at hand. When framing your arguments, check whether each argument is both logical and relevant by asking yourself: "Does this argument make our team case more likely to succeed?" Only if you can truly answer yes to this question is the argument both logical and relevant.

TOP 5 TIPS

1. Relevance! Make sure that you link each argument to the topic.

2. Check the resource guide on the DAV website for hints and links to useful sites.
3. Put yourself in the shoes of your opponents and try to think about what arguments they will make. How will you respond to their main arguments?
4. Ask your teachers, parents and friends for ideas if you get stuck.
5. Make sure each point is backed up by a relevant example!

METHOD

Method is the structure or organisation of your speech, and how it fits into your team's case as a whole. There are three major components of method: internal method, team method, and how your speech reacts to the dynamics of the debate.

Internal method is the way your own speech is structured. Every speech should have a recognisable beginning (introduction), middle and end (conclusion), and in that order. (This may sound obvious but you'll be amazed at how often someone introduces their speech after they are already half way through it.) To succeed in this aspect of method, have a clear understanding at the start of your speech of what your speech should accomplish, and briefly make this obvious at the start of the speech to your audience, then follow that structure, concluding by highlighting what your speech has achieved, in the overall scheme of your team's case.

Team method is the way your speech fits into the team case as a whole. Ideally your three speeches should be consistent with each other, but expansive opposed to repetitive. A second speaker who merely repeats what the first speaker has said can do almost as much damage as a second speaker who contradicts what the first speaker said. This is an area with which new teams often have trouble coming to grips, for it is a team problem, not an individual one. Always make sure you work out together how each speech fits into the overall plan.

The dynamics of a debate is this aspect of debating that makes a debate different to a collection of speeches. It is vital that the debater can react to the way that the debate has gone before his/her speech and make changes to that speech while the debate is going on. For example, if the speaker before you concedes one of your major points, then there is no point spending half your speech trying to make it, as it has already been conceded. A good debater can note this, and adjust their speech at the last minute to allocate that extra time to his/her remaining points. Similarly, it is important that each speaker can recognise, when they start their speech what is the crucial issue or issues in the debate at that point in time.

Your speech (and especially your opening) should reflect this understanding - there is never a better opportunity to undermine the opposition's most valuable argument than in the first sixty seconds of your speech. This is the aspect of

debating that new debaters have the most trouble with, since it requires the ability to see the debate as a battle, and to make important strategic decisions on the run that can have important consequences for your team.

TOP 5 TIPS

1. Outline to the audience what your main points will be.
2. Summarise at the end of your speech what your arguments were.
3. Make sure you give the team split and stick to it!
4. Make sure everyone in the team understands your definition, and is prepared to defend it if necessary.
5. Be careful not to contradict the previous speaker (or speakers) from your team.

MANNER

Manner is the way in which you deliver your speech. It includes everything that goes towards the presentation of your speech. Some examples include:

- × **Use of voice.** Try not to speak in a monotone, and remember to pause when appropriate.
- × **Gestures.** You should use some hand gestures, but try to avoid waving your arms about too much!
- × **Use of notes.** We recommend that you use palm cards rather than a sheet of paper for your notes – waving around sheets of paper tends to be distracting, unlike cards which can fit into your hand.
- × **Eye contact.** The more you look at the audience, the better. The best way to make this happen is to reduce your reliance on your cards. For your first few speeches you might want the added security of having the entire speech written out on cards – but if you can reduce your reliance on cards as you do more debates then your eye contact with the audience will be better. Always face the audience – never turn around to address the opposition when making rebuttal.
- × **Humour.** Where appropriate, humour works well as it relaxes the audience and makes them more willing to listen to you. Don't try to use jokes and other gags unless they are also relevant to the debate (no telling Elephant jokes, please). Humour may also detract from your speech if it is not appropriate, for example making jokes in a debate about life or death issues. Use your judgement on this issue, but if the joke is more likely to make the audience cringe rather than laugh then give the joke a miss.

Manner is the most subjective aspect of debating, the only rule of which is that you must be persuasive. As a speaker, you have to develop a style that works well for you, so that the audience views you as a persuasive speaker. Some people speak

fast, some slow, some are loud, some quiet, some are animated, others are calm and reasoned. None of these styles is inherently better than any other, but some hints for the beginner are that first timers probably speak too fast more often than too slow, and often don't use enough variation in their vocal tone to emphasise important points or to change the pace of the speech. Always bear in mind that your objective is to persuade the audience, not the opposition or your team mates, so look at the audience, speak to them, evaluate their reaction to your speech and modify it accordingly. You can often tell if the audience do not seem to have absorbed your last point before you've started on your next point or if they are bored and want to hear something else. Try to use them as the barometer of your speech, and don't waste time trying to "convert" your opponents.

Keep in mind that teams in a debate don't choose which side you are on – so don't get personal with the other team. Insults directed at your opponents only make you look rude and petty in the eyes of the audience. It could even lead to a breach of the Code of Conduct. Attack their arguments, but don't attack them personally!

TOP 5 TIPS

1. Smile at the audience.
2. Slow down! Most speakers go too fast.
3. Pause between ideas to let them sink into the audience.
4. Vary your voice when you start a new point.
5. Use body language and gestures to liven up your speech.

Speaker Roles

Every team member has a role to play. Make sure you know yours.

	AFFIRMATIVE	NEGATIVE
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Introduction/Context × Definition/Model* × Team Split × Arguments (aim for 3) × Conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Introduction × Counter-model* × Rebuttal (~20–30% of speech) × Team Split × Arguments (aim for 3) × Conclusion
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Introduction × Rebuttal (~25–50% of speech) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Introduction × Rebuttal (~25–50% of speech)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Personal Split × Arguments (2 or 3) × Conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Personal Split × Arguments (2 to 3) × Conclusion
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Introduction × Rebuttal (~90% of speech) × Summary/Conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Introduction × Rebuttal (~90% of speech) × Summary/Conclusion

*Optional

GLOSSARY

Arguments – The range of ideas and reasons why your team is arguing in favour or against the topic. The 1st speakers must get the most important arguments. Remember to signpost arguments as they are being introduced, e.g. "Now moving onto my 2nd argument on the addictiveness of smoking."

Conclusion – A very short (1-2 sentences) ending to reinforce what your speech or team believes in.

Context – Used by the 1A to explain the context of the topic, explaining very briefly some recent events or trends which have led to this debate, and thus why the team believes so strongly in being in favour of the topic.

Counter-model – A model presented by the negative team to provide an alternative solution to the problem being presented by the affirmative team. E.g. That we should ban all junk food: "Our counter-model is that we continue with the status quo, which means that we would continue to have healthy food education in schools, nutrition information availability, and advertisements on television to encourage people to be aware of their choices." If you don't agree with the problem being presented by the affirmative, then there is no need to introduce a counter-model.

Definition – (see: Model) Clarifies what the debate is going to be about. Do not use a dictionary, your common sense will be enough. Aim to define it as naturally as possible in as few sentences as possible, e.g. That we should ban smoking: "This topic is about the Australian government stopping people from making or using tobacco products." It may also be combined or substituted with a model.

Introduction – (see: Context) This can be as simple as introducing yourself but can be used in more persuasive ways. You can reemphasise the main difference

between your team and the opposition, point out an overall flaw in the other team's case, or just restate what your team believes in.

Model – (see: Definition) Clarifies how your team foresees the topic being implemented. It only needs to be presented if not doing so would make the debate unclear to the opposition and adjudicator. Keep it short and simple—only the most essential parts need to be introduced, e.g. That we should have compulsory military service: “We propose in our model that all citizens who are 18 and have finished school be required to perform 2 years of military training.” If you had only provided a definition for this topic, then no-one would know how old or how long the compulsory military service would go for, which could harm your side's case.

Personal Split – An outline of what you will present in your speech, e.g. “In my speech I will be talking about (1) passive smoking and (2) the effects of smoking on the environment.”

Rebuttal – Providing reasons why the opposition has presented illogical or incorrect arguments, or if they have exaggerated or overstated the effects of a certain issue. Always rebut all the arguments presented before you, and you are advised to rebut rebuttal, as well anything else that has been said by the other team. You may want to consider grouping similar arguments and rebuttals into themes to make it easier to follow, e.g. economic and social themes.

Summary – (see: Team Split) can be as simple as re-outlining what your team has presented in arguments; this would be identical to the team split. You can alternatively summarise and recap your team's arguments during rebuttal, as they will often be very similar, e.g. “They said that smoking is good for your health but we already explained to your at 1st speaker that smoking causes a wide variety of health problems. This is because...” etc. This technique is often more effective as it shows that your team was right from the beginning.

Team Split – A very concise outline of what you will present in your speech and your 2nd speaker's speech, e.g. “In my speech I will be talking about (1) the negative healthy effects of smoking and (2) the addictiveness of smoking. Our second speaking will be talking about (3) passive smoking and (4) the effects of smoking on the environment.”