

DIABRANGUE

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5 COMMON SPEAKER ISSUES

JASON FEIGEN EXPLAINS SOME SIMPLE THINGS TO AVOID.



#1: HOLDING CARDS WITH 2 HANDS

Everyone is nervous when they debate. Sometimes your hands shake and you grip your speech firmly, using two hands. But you must avoid this temptation! Clutching cards in front of you creates a barrier between you and the audience; open up and read your speech to them, not to the cards. Just dropping one hand down to your side will allow it to gesture naturally as you talk. It also opens you up to the audience and makes you look more confident than you really are, inviting them to trust you and to believe your arguments.

#2: SHORT SPEECHES

It's easy to think you have done your job simply by speaking until the first knock. However, every second that you could speak for is another second of the audience listening to you, and not your opposition. Finishing earlier than you need to is always a wasted opportunity. Add more depth and time to your points by constantly asking 'Why?' after every sentence. Why does X cause Y? Why is X a bad thing? Why would our model correct X? Adding more layers creates stronger points that are more difficult to rebut.

#3: SAYING 'I THINK...'

Bringing your own opinions and experiences into the debate is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, the audience knows that you are no expert on the matter and has no reason to prefer your opinion to the other team's. But even if you support your opinion with logic, as above, saying 'I' is a missed opportunity to say 'we' instead. This strengthens your entire team by demonstrating that you have worked together, and makes you sound more reasonable because other people agree with you- why shouldn't they?

#4: QUOTING STUDIES

When researchers test facts, they set up experiments and use complicated formulae to arrive at statistics that are usually informative and often shocking. But different researchers often criticise each other's methods, and can arrive at vastly different conclusions to one another. In most debates, the facts in issue are difficult to

prove and both sides will be able to point to studies supporting their views. What adjudicators are really looking for, then, is a logical reason why a study would lead to a particular conclusion. An explanation of why many people will lose their jobs is harder to rebut than just a specific number, even a large number calculated by professionals.

#5: TALKING TO THE WRONG SIDE

Lots of debaters will turn around and speak directly to the other team during the speech. It might seem natural to do this, as you are debating against that team, but it's actually detrimental to your manner. Your role is to convince the audience and the adjudicator that you are correct, not the other team. You're better off facing the audience during your speech.

This article is part of a number of similar articles available under: [Resources at dav.com.au](http://Resources.at.dav.com.au)

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REBUTTAL 101

MING KANG CHEN GIVES SOME SIMPLE TIPS ON THE FUNDAMENTALS OF REBUTTAL.



The *matter* in your speech is more than just the arguments that you've prepared before the debate. Your rebuttal is **equally** as important as the points that your team presents.

#1: REBUT EVERY ARGUMENT PRESENTED BY THE OPPOSITION

Rebuttal isn't just a checklist item, so don't think that by doing one piece of rebuttal, you've done what you're supposed to do. The purpose of rebuttal is to give your team a chance to tell the adjudicator why the other team is incorrect or mistaken. If your team fails to rebut an argument, then your team is indicating to the adjudicator that there is nothing wrong with what the opposition has said. Obviously this is not a very good strategy to win a debate.

The role of the adjudicator is to weigh up which team persuaded them more. In a debate where both teams don't do much rebuttal, it is then left to the adjudicator to compare and contrast which team's arguments were better explained. However, in a debate where your team has been able to outline why all of the opposition's arguments were flawed, then the adjudicator is likely to judge that your team was more persuasive, because you have been able to show the flaws in the other side's case.

#2: YOU CAN REBUT REBUTTALS

Some debaters have been told that they cannot rebut rebuttals but this is completely wrong. We strongly encourage you to rebut any of the rebuttals that the other team has presented, not just the arguments.

Imagine if you were in a debate and your 1st speaker had presented an argument that "smoking is addictive." The opposition then rebuts this by saying "They said smoking is addictive. We disagree because it is very easy to quit smoking with products such as nicotine patches and chewing gum. Therefore addictiveness is not a reason why we should ban smoking." If your team doesn't rebut this point any further, then you've let the opposition persuade the adjudicator that your argument was incorrect.

However, if your 2nd speaker responds by saying "They tried to tell us that smoking isn't addictive because you can just buy nicotine patches and chewing gum. This is wrong because it has been shown that these products do not work the majority of the time. Even if they are 100% effective, it does not change the fact that by the time people decide to quit after realising they are addicted, the damage has already been done." After saying this, you've been able to show the adjudicator that the other team's rebuttal wasn't very effective and that your original argument still stands.

#3: REBUT POINTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

Ideally, the arguments presented by the opposition are rebutted by the next speaker on your team. It is unwise to leave it up to your 3rd speaker to rebut all the points because you want to give the impression throughout the entire debate that your team is more logical and persuasive—you don't want to let their arguments sink in! Remember, debates are won by an

entire team, and just not by a single speaker.

#4: EXPLAIN 'WHY'

Each rebuttal that you provide should be treated like a mini-argument. Rebuttal should not sound like "They said that pets can be treated cruelly by their owners. We disagree, most pets are treated well by their owners." You should continue by explaining *why*. If you don't have time to write it on your cue card, just make a note to say out-loud "And why is this the case?" and answer your question when speaking to the audience "Because most pet owners care about the wellbeing of their pet and only the very small minority of owners would deliberately harm their pet. Therefore we should not ban pets." Anyone can stand up and say that they disagree, explaining why they disagree is more important.

#5: DON'T NITPICK

Rebuttal should be a contest of the major ideas presented by the other team. Do not waste your time rebutting minor issues such as "They said that Tony Abbott is 53 years old. He's actually 56 years old." This type of rebuttal is unlikely to be relevant to the topic that you are debating and you are not advancing your team's case by 'winning' such issues. Use your judgement as to what rebuttal is most important in the context of your debate and use your time wisely.

This article is part of a number of similar articles available under: Resources > Rebuttal at dav.com.au



GET THAT 'SASS' FACTOR*

...BECAUSE MANNER MATTERS. NATALI KLASEVSKI EXPLAINS.



When it comes to preparing a debate certain factors are easier to master than others. Researching, writing, structuring arguments and preparing a case can be well done with time, dedication and careful consideration. So then what sets the average speakers apart from the 'mind-blowingly-phenomenally-incredible' speakers???

Ladies and Gentlemen, I present to you, the sass factor. The 'sass' factor is all about how you present the arguments. Irrespective of how well you have formulated an argument, if the delivery is not convincing you may as well have just produced a pamphlet. So here are my four key components on how you too can get the 'sass' factor for your future debates.

#1: ATTITUDE

The attitude, or 'persona' that you bring to your debate influences your manner greatly. The best thing about this criteria is that there is no right or wrong way to bring it. Some speakers are cool, calm and collected with their delivery. Others are forceful fierce and feisty. Its all about working out what works best for you and using it to your advantage.

#2: CONVICTION

One of the best/worst things about the nature of debating is that you don't get to pick your own side of the argument. In some situations you will be fortunate enough to argue the side you actually agree with, but not always. Fake it 'til you make it and if you have to present the opposite opinion to your own, channel your inner devils advocate. Speaking with confidence and conviction will make you not only more believable but also far more convincing.

#3: NATURAL STYLE

It's all about individuality with this one! As an adjudicator we get to hear a lot of debates. After a while adjudicators develop a discerning ear for speakers who speak naturally and when they are being melodramatic. If theatre is your thing, then by all means, bring on the show, but in most cases, much like a broken zipper, if you force it, it just wont work.

When in doubt, go au nature! If you speak in a natural, even paced tone you are more likely to put your point across in an effective manner. Leave the theatrics to Jim Carrey.

#4: ENJOYMENT

The most important aspect of manner is enjoying yourself. As an adjudicator it is easy to see which speakers are immensely enjoying their time in the limelight and which speakers cannot wait to resume their seat. Even though debating may be a daunting task and speaking in front of an audience may not be your idea of a good time, do remember to enjoy yourself and soak up the experience.

CONCLUSION

When a speaker's manner is on, it's on. Incorporating one or all of these elements into your next debate could take you from average and unmemorable to impressive and debate-stopping!

**Please note: the sass factor does not allude to the following: Beyoncé's attitude during stage performances; stropky behaviour towards siblings; or the way you feel when you correct your teacher.*

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DAV MYTHBUSTERS

IN THIS FOUR-PART SERIES LUKE MCGOWAN EXPLORES SOME COMMON DEBATING MYTHS.



Welcome to DAV Mythbusters! We will be exploring some of the common myths that debaters of all ages believe, and busting them so that you all have a better understanding of what we adjudicators find important, and what we don't. Each of the examinations for the myths has been written by widely consulting with adjudicators from several regions.

MYTH: ADJUDICATORS LISTEN FOR THE CORRECT GREETING

"Good evening adjudicator, chairperson, timekeeper, fellow debaters, students, staff, parents, audience, etc." I guarantee that when writing a debate 90% of debaters go straight to this type of formal introduction.

If you open a debate with this cookie-cutter opening you lose the opportunity to wow the adjudicator with a good first impression. Instead, you come across as someone who has rehearsed a speech and is now repeating it. By greeting someone as you normally would, you not only simplify your opening but you come across as a natural speaker.

Additionally, trying to remember your opening needlessly creates a mess of words for you to trip over. This can cause you to panic before

you even begin your speech. Therefore you may become so careful about doing it right, that you end up concentrating far too much on what are ultimately the least important words in your speech.

The truth is a simple "ladies and gentlemen" is a perfectly acceptable opening line and will save you the stress of remembering to greet everybody in the room. In a future article we will explore alternative introductions which can increase the impact of the start of your speech.

MYTH: BUSTED

MYTH: TYPED PALM CARDS MAKE YOU MORE PREPARED AND A BETTER SPEAKER

When many debaters begin, it is common to type your finished speech on cue cards, set out into neat sizes and so that the words are clear. However, typed cue cards have two problems if you rely on them in the longer term.

Firstly, cue cards are there to keep you on track, not to give you everything you need. Because they are so scripted, you might fall into the trap of simply reading your entire speech with little eye contact. Most times people don't even realise that they are doing it.

Secondly, they are almost impossible to edit at the last minute. Cue cards often leave you no room to annotate or replace things. It's difficult for pen scrawl to completely erase typed words, and the result will be a confusing mess.

Both of these factors mean that it can become difficult to speak freely and off the cuff. The best speeches react to the case being presented by the opposition, and having a perfectly written speech printed out on cue cards does many things to make it harder. Remember that a speech is to be spoken, not read. Prepare your speech and have simple written dot points there to remind you as you go. Furthermore, when you move to higher grades and are expected to do secret and advised topics, you will need to develop the skill of having a speech written in brief dot points.

MYTH: BUSTED

With thanks to the Geelong and Ballarat Regional Coordinators (Natali and Mitchell), along with adjudicators in those regions.

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What is Harangue?

Harangue is a publication written by adult members of the DAV to help all debaters make the most of their experience in the competition. If you have a debating question that needs answering or have any area or topic you would like covered, please send an email to our Ming Kang Chen, our Publications Officer: publications@dav.com.au. In case you were wondering, *harangue* means "a lengthy and aggressive speech."

What types of resources does the DAV provide?

In our resources section we have a number of pages covering areas of debating from team splits, definitions, rebuttal, and even [past issues of Harangue](#) (under 'Schools'). We're working to improve the quantity and quality of the content in the resources section, and future issues of Harangue will showcase new and updated articles that have been added to the site. You can like us on [Facebook](#) to stay notified of new articles.