

HARANGUE

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BAM! AND THE BOREDOM IS GONE



NATALI KLASEVSKI IS TIRED OF ~~SCRUBBING SOAP SCUM~~ INEFFECTIVE INTRODUCTIONS

Good morning/afternoon/evening ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, adjudicators, debaters, members of the DAV community and anyone else who is reading this submission. My name is Natali and I am an adjudicator with the Debaters Association of Victoria...

If you are still with me after that lengthy introduction (thank you) you will realise that IT WAS NOT A VERY INTERESTING OPENING. They say that it takes three seconds to create a first impression. In this article I am going to tell you why the first 15 seconds of your debate are so vital, and how to make them work in your favour.

DO - ACKNOWLEDGE THE CROWD

'Ladies and Gentlemen' is usually more than enough to fulfil this obligation and it is very, very likely that all of your audience members will fall into this category (unless your debate is being held in a zoo).

DON'T - ACKNOWLEDGE EVERY SINGLE MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE

The opposition, chairperson and most importantly the adjudicator are likely to fall into the as previously stated category. Even though they have a title, they don't need to be formally addressed. None of them are royalty, irrespective of how important the adjudicator thinks they are.

DO - USE YOUR TIME EFFECTIVELY

A stupendously lengthy introduction is wasting valuable time, the sort of time that a good debater can't afford to waste. If you have thought long and hard about your debate and prepared well, you should have more than enough material to bring you to the required time.

DON'T - JUST REPEAT A TEAM LINE

Rarely effective, team lines are usually not appropriate to each speakers arguments. You should never, under

any circumstances, use a team line to just 'fill in time'. You only get one opportunity to start the debate off well, make it count (and it is not likely to count with a half-hearted team line).

DO - BE ENGAGING, ENTERTAINING AND ENTHUSIASTIC

It is much better to hear a speaker start off with a bang rather than someone start with a fizz. Demand the floor and don't just be a debater who goes through the motions. If you can make the adjudicator sit up a little straighter in their chair, you are on the right track.

DON'T - SCREAM, SHOUT OR BE OVER THE TOP FOR THE SAKE OF IT
Leave that to the salesmen.

Still not convinced? Adjudicators love a strong introduction. Most adjudicators will hear a large number of...

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SECRET TOPIC PREPARATION

AMIT GOLDBER & MING KANG CHEN GIVE SOME TIPS ON HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR HOUR



The sixty minutes that you get to prepare for secret and advised topics is a big change from having weeks to prepare for a debate. If you plan your hour well and make sure you answer the right questions, you'll find that these debates aren't all too hard. Here's one way we'd recommend using your hour.

00:00–00:10

Make sure you've gotten the **wording correct**—check with your teammates and ask the Regional Coordinator for the topic again if you are unsure. Pay particular attention to whether the topic is phrased in the positive or the negative so you don't end up debating the wrong side, i.e. is there a 'not' in the topic? Before you brainstorm confirm that the team has **same definition** of the debate to make sure that brainstorm time isn't wasted prepping a different debate.

By this point you should have hopefully settled down in your room and you should start **brainstorming separately and silently**. This is important so that every member of the team is able to write down everything that comes to their mind about the debate without becoming sidetracked.

Some things to think about include:

- Why are we having this debate?
- What is the context of this debate, e.g. trends, current affairs, etc.?
- Is there a goal that both teams want to reach?
- Who are the key stakeholders?
- Is this similar to a debate that we've done before?
- What are the principled arguments

that support our side, e.g. freedom of choice, freedom of expression, role of government, etc.?

Affirmative teams should consider:

- What is the main problem(s) that need to be fixed?
- Why is our solution the best way to fix this problem(s)?
- How will our solution be implemented (see [page 4](#) on models)?

Negative teams should consider:

- What is the problem(s) that the affirmative is proposing to fix?
- Do we agree there's a problem?
- If so, what is our solution to the problem: is what we are doing at the moment enough (status quo) or should we propose another solution (counter-model)?
- Why is our solution better?

00:10–00:25

Now is your time to **discuss with your team**. Taking turns to read out what you have come up with during your brainstorm, everyone should be taking notes on the ideas being discussed.

It is likely that you haven't answered all the questions listed above during your own brainstorm and that's OK. This time now should be used to discuss and craft the answers to these key questions. Everybody must be on the same page to ensure your case is presented consistently without contradictions during the debate.

00:25–00:30

At this point, you need to **narrow down your ideas** to about 4–6 arguments and decide on your **team split**.

The first speaker must present the most important 2–3 arguments. If you receive an argument with which you don't feel comfortable, say something! Ask someone to explain the point to you again until you understand.

00:30–00:50

The first and second speakers can now **write their speeches**. Do not write your speech word-for-word with full sentences. Using dot points will help you write your speech faster; it enables you to add more depth to your arguments in the same amount of time. It is common for speakers who try to write a perfect speech in the prep time to end up speaking well short of the allocated time. Dot points should also help in making you a more engaging speaker in the debate.

Third speakers can assist as needed, but should spend their time considering what arguments the opposition may present or how they will rebut your team's arguments.

00:50–00:55

Regroup and check that everyone is still on the same page. Quickly talk through arguments to pick up on any issues. Discuss any key rebuttal ideas.

00:55–00:59

Leave and make your way to the debate room and continue preparing until the debate starts. Do not be late!

01:00

It's time to **debate**. You may not feel as prepared as usual, but don't apologise or act flustered. Confidence is just as important as your arguments.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR SCORE



MITCHELL DYE EXPLAINS WHAT YOUR SCORE IS TELLING YOU

Scores in debating can be confusing. These four tips explain how to maximise your score and interpret what it all means.

UNDERSTAND THAT THE SCORING RANGE IS LIMITED

Speaker scores are out of 100 (40 for Matter and Manner; 20 for Method). The average score is 75 but scores are only adjusted by a few points so most speakers will get a score between 72 and 78; most scores are 74–76, some are 73 and 77, and very few are 72 or 78. A score of 75 (30 for Matter and Manner; 15 for Method) is given when the speech was on par with the expected standard for that grade across Victoria. If you get a score below 75, it might be worth speaking to the adjudicator after the debate to find out how to improve. Anything over 75 is great—a score of 79 or 80 would be considered to be the best speaker in Victoria for that grade—so it is not possible to get 100/100!

TO IMPROVE, LOOK AT THE PARTS THAT MAKE UP YOUR SCORE

If you got less than 30 for Matter or

Manner, or less than 15 for Method, these are areas to work on. To get a good score, you need to cover Manner, Matter and Method. Scoring is holistic, so there's no point having a strong presentation style with nothing to say, or killer arguments without engaging with the audience. As the scoring range is limited and centred around 75, every comment by the adjudicator about every speech can't be reflected through scoring. Tied best speakers are common; the adjudicator can nominate one speaker that was just slightly ahead to break the tie, even though the scoring may not show this.

KNOW WHAT MAKES MATTER, MANNER AND METHOD

Matter is content. Make sure that all your arguments are logical (do they make sense, do you have evidence to back them up?) and relevant to the topic. Clearly link every point back to the topic as it can be easy to get off track without realising it. Rebuttal is essential as well, especially if you are the third speaker.

Manner is your style of presentation: that's vocal (your voice) and non-

vocal (your body language). Usually everyone has something that they could work on improving, e.g. speaking too fast, too monotone, etc. Ask your teammates for advice and practice before the debate.

Method is about organisation. Ensure that your speech has a clear structure, you are signposting, and speaking to time. As a team make sure everyone is fulfilling the correct role for their speaking position.

REMEMBER: SCORING IS NOT THAT IMPORTANT WHEN DETERMINING THE WINNING SIDE

Scoring can be useful when looking at how your speech was in comparison to the expected standard of your grade, but adjudicators do not arrive at a decision by simply adding up their scores and seeing who won. They first determine which side was more persuasive, and then scores are adjusted to match their decision. If you lose a debate by one point, there is probably more going on than just one speaker needing an extra point. Listen closely to the adjudication to find out what the key factors were.

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...debates each year. Let's take myself for example and do the maths:

- 25 (min.) debate nights per year x 2 debates per night = 50 debates;
- 50 debates x 6 speakers = 300 speakers;
- 300 speakers x 15 seconds of the same, sleep inducing introduction = SAD ADJUDICATOR.

If nothing else convinces you to take a few extra minutes to think about your introduction, please do so for the sake of the adjudicator. Impress them with your observations, reiterate what your key point of view is—anything! Trust me, they will love you for it.

This plus all the other articles in this issue of Harangue are part of our Resources section at dav.com.au.

TOP TIP

Approach your adjudicator for personal feedback after the debate. They will often have a few spare minutes to give you and your team feedback that they couldn't fit into the overall adjudication. It also gives you a chance to ask questions to the adjudicator, e.g. other ways you could have approached the topic, what their thoughts were on a specific argument, etc.

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: TREAT THE DEFINITIONS PART OF THE DEBATE LIKE YOU WOULD IN A SCIENCE TEST

There is a right way and a wrong way to handle definitions.

The Wrong Way

It's common for debaters to treat definitions the way they would treat them on a maths, economics or science test – look up what each and every word means in the dictionary and read it out. Here are some examples of where definitions have been done poorly:

- *That we should punish sporting teams for their fans' violent behaviour.* "We define punishing as penalising someone for their actions"
- *That we should not grant developing countries the right to host major international sporting events.*

"Developing means to grow and become more advanced"

Neither of these definitions contribute very much to the debate. Penalising is just another word for punishing, and defining the word "developing" by itself (rather than "developing countries") does not provide any context to the debate.

The Right Way

All a definition needs to be is one or two sentences explaining **what** the debate is going to be about. Use your common sense (not a dictionary) to work out the most reasonable definition for the debate. For example: what is a "major sporting event"? Is it a chess tournament, debating, or is it really about events such as the Olympics or the Soccer World Cup?

Perhaps the misleading part of this is the word **definition**. Many debates will require an affirmative team to introduce the topic with a **model**. Adjudicators want to know **how** you are going to frame the debate and what the world would look like if you were able to implement the debate in real life. For example:

- *That we should punish sporting teams for their fans' violent behaviour.* We propose that clubs with

fans who engage in violent behaviour before, during, or after a match will have fines imposed and league point deductions as a punishment based on the severity of the offence. Offenders would still be charged if they are caught."

As you can see, this model has not been taken out of the dictionary. Instead it provides a framework for the debate, to give a better understanding of where your team's arguments are coming from. Some debates are very simple and a simple definition would suffice (e.g. *That we should ban smoking*) but there are many topics where a short (10 sec) model would be able to set up the broad fundamentals of how the topic would be implemented in real life.

Summary

A two-stage test to a good definition:

1. Is this something that I have just taken from a dictionary?
2. Does it provide a clearer understanding of our argument?

If your answers are No and Yes respectively, then you are doing it right. If you get any other result, read this article over, and try again!

MYTH: BUSTED

What is Harangue?

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

Where get I get more resources?

In our online resources section we have a number of pages covering a wide range of areas including debating fundamentals, topic resource guides, and past issues of Harangue (under 'Schools'). Future issues of Harangue will showcase new and updated articles that have been added to the site. You can like us on Facebook or join our Publications mailing list (see front page) to stay notified of new articles.