

1.3 Analyzing Old Resolutions

This activity introduces students to the structure and meaning of policy debate resolutions. By examining a list of policy debate resolutions from decades past, students will look at the similarities and differences between these resolutions to determine the important features of a resolution.

Objectives

By the end of this activity, each student will:

- be introduced to the structure and function of a resolution in debate.
- practice working in groups to generate ideas.

Time Allotment

15 minutes

Materials and Preparation

A list of policy debate resolutions from at least 20 years ago for each student, at least one per student.

Method

Hand out copies of the list of old policy debate resolutions to the students. (see appendix)

Divide the class into groups of 3-5 students. In their groups students should answer questions about policy debate resolutions, for example:

- What words or ideas do all or most of the resolutions have in common. Why might this be?
- How of the resolutions differ? Why might this be?
- Look at all the foreign policy resolutions. Do you see any trends in the way these resolutions changed over the years? What does each resolution tell us about the significant issues in US foreign policy in the year it was debated?
- Look at all of the domestic policy resolutions. Do you see any trends in the way these resolutions changed over the years? What does each resolution tell us about the significant issues in US domestic policy in the year it was debated?
- Pick two resolutions, one domestic policy and one foreign policy, and brainstorm 3-4 affirmative cases that you think might be run under each resolution.

To conclude the activity, ask each group to present what they observed about policy debate resolutions. Briefly discuss with students the basic parts of a policy resolution, using examples from the similarities they observed. Ask students to discuss as a class why they think the current resolution is relevant to recent developments in national, state, or local, politics.

Follow-up: Ask students to select a resolution from the list and participate short impromptu 1-on-1 debates (one minute speeches and 30 second rebuttals).