



6.12 Improving 2AC Blocks

This activity develops and builds advanced brief writing skills. Students use their flows from a previous debate round and problems they encountered to improve upon their 2AC blocks. It helps students re-examine strategies after difficulties, and encourages creativity and revision.

Time Allotment

One class period or practice

Objectives

By the end of this activity, students will:

- learn to use problems encountered in tournaments and practice to improve their strategy.
- prepare more effectively and learn techniques of critical re-examination and revision.

Materials and Preparation

As a general rule, it is a good idea for students to keep their flows from tournaments and practice debate rounds. For this activity, students will need 2AC blocks for their affirmative case, and flows from an affirmative round in which they used those blocks.

Method

First, break students into the teams in which they debated during the practice rounds or the tournament. Have them read over their flows, particularly those of arguments where they used 2AC blocks, and mark points that they felt they “lost” or were weak on, or that judges pointed out to them needed some work.

Students should then brainstorm improvements or additions that could be made to their blocks, using their flows as a guide. Have them try to “pre-empt” the arguments that the negative made against their blocks in the 2AC to make their positions stronger. Remind the students that they should think of possible responses or weaknesses in their arguments as they prepare them.

When they have a list of improvements and additions, have them consider which arguments are most important, and worth the time it takes to read them in the 2AC. Perhaps their blocks need to be re-ordered if it is important that a particular revision be included. Have students revise their blocks in preparation for the next tournament or practice debate.

When they have finished one argument, have them move on to the next.

Variation: Have students “update” the blocks, by searching for more recent evidence on the topics, particularly for cards or disadvantages that have time-specific link or impact scenarios. This could be given as a take-home assignment or done in class or as a trip to the library.

Variation: Remind students that the additional arguments they brainstorm during the activity that they do not include in their blocks can be saved as “extensions” to their 2AC blocks that can be used later. They should keep these filed with their affirmative responses.