



## 14.4 Responding to Components of a Position

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*This activity develops and builds advanced skill at debating single issues (such as a disadvantage, a topicality violation, etc.). In this activity, two groups of four students debate a single issue through a series of speeches. The affirmative team will defend a particular case against the specific argument forwarded by the negative team. Each of the four students on each team is responsible for debating about a specific component of the position. For instance, if the debate centers around a disadvantage, one student might be responsible for the uniqueness, one the link, one the internal links, and one the impact.*

### Goals

By the end of this activity, each student will:

- gain familiarity with the process involved in responding to specific components of a position.
- improve speech delivery, line-by-line argumentation, flowing, and critical thinking skills.

### Time Allotment

The time allotment will vary depending on the format of the practice debates and the number of debates you conduct. The debates take a minimum of 20 minutes.

Single Issue debates can be a regular feature of a class or of an after school practice. Or, you can set aside a class period or two and have every student participate in a Single Issue debate.

### Materials and Preparation

To complete this activity you will need the following materials and preparation:

- Paper, pens, and a timer.
- A chalk board or over head projector on which to flow.
- Basic familiarity with the specific issue being debated.
- Basic familiarity with and photocopies of the affirmative case being defended.
- Photocopies of the shells for the specific issue that is being debated. You will need one to two sets of evidence for each mini specific issue debate.

Specific issues that may be debated include:

- A specific disadvantage.
- A specific topicality violation shell.
- A specific counterplan shell.
- A specific critique shell.



## Method

Decide upon a format for this activity. One example of a format is as follows:

First Affirmative Constructive:	1 minute
Second Affirmative Constructive:	1 minute
Third Affirmative Constructive:	1 minute
Fourth Affirmative Constructive:	1 minute
First Negative Rebuttal:	1 minute
Second Negative Rebuttal:	1 minute
Third Negative Rebuttal:	1 minute
Fourth Negative Rebuttal:	1 minute
First Affirmative Rebuttal:	1 minute
Second Affirmative Rebuttal:	1 minute
Third Affirmative Rebuttal:	1 minute
Fourth Affirmative Rebuttal:	1 minute
First Negative Rebuttal:	1 minute
Second Negative Rebuttal:	1 minute
Third Negative Rebuttal:	1 minute
Fourth Negative Rebuttal:	1 minute

You may choose to shorten or lengthen these speeches.

Start with two four-person teams of students. Ensure that all students understand the case that the affirmative team is defending.

Have the negative team prepare and deliver a specific argument shell (a topicality violation, a disadvantage, a critique, etc.) that applies to the affirmative case. Observers and the other debaters should flow. Give each of the affirmative speakers time to develop answers to the component of the position for which they are responsible.

Have each of the four affirmative speakers give a one-minute speech in response to the negative argument. Be clear before the activity begins that each (negative and affirmative) speaker is responsible for a particular component of the argument. A student should only advance arguments pertinent to the component of the position that it is her responsibility to discuss.

For instance, if the negative team presents a disadvantage each of the students on the affirmative team will be responsible for advancing arguments relevant to a particular component of the disadvantage. One student will respond to the uniqueness, one to the link, one to the internal links, and one to the impact scenario. Each student should be given 1 full minute to list as many answers as possible. For the sake of this activity, each component should be flowed on its own sheet of paper.

In this scenario, the first affirmative speaker might argue that the disadvantage is non unique, that there is no brink, etc.



When each of the four affirmative speakers have spoken, give the negative team some preparation time. In the case of this example, one negative student will rebuild the uniqueness, one the link, one the internal links, and on the impact scenario. Each of these negative constructive speeches will be 1 minute in length. All of the debaters should make an extraordinary effort to debate line by line. To facilitate this, it may make sense to treat each component of the disadvantage (the link, the impact, etc. ) as if it were an independent contention. Thus, the link debate might have 3 arguments, while the uniqueness debate has 4.

This debate will unfold in a like manner. The affirmative team will give rebuttal speeches and then the negative team will do the same.

Those students in the class who are not debating should be required to submit their flows. You can also ask them to participate in a post round discussion.

#### Follow Up:

Once students have completed one single issue debate, you have students to switch sides. If a student was affirmative, she would become negative on the same issue. You may even have the student who delivered a constructive speech deliver a rebuttal. If you have students switch sides, this variation allows students to focus on mastering clash on specific issues and emphasizes depth and analysis-heavy debate.

#### Variation:

You can vary the number of 2AC or 1NC arguments to make it more appropriate to the debater's experience level. For beginning debaters, have the debate center around fewer arguments and focus on line by line debating.

#### Variation:

For topicality, have the affirmative team run a can that has questionable topicality. And have the negative team prepare and deliver a topicality violation for that case. Also, if a team has lost affirmative rounds to a particular topicality violation, have them conduct single issue debates defending their case against that violation in the format presented above.

#### Variation:

If you are using this activity to practice debating the components of a disadvantage, have each group practice telling the link story of their disadvantage, in ways that alternately increase and decrease the credibility of the argument, before the activity begins. In addition, have students practice assessing the impact of the disadvantage as compared to the impact of the affirmative case. You may also want to give extra time to those students debating the link and the impact of the disadvantage. You may require that the students debating the link give a 45 second overview of their position and then debate the line by line. You may also require that the students debating the impact spend minute or so comparing the impact of the disadvantage with that of the case advantages.