



## 12.6 Telling Stories

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*This activity develops speaking and story-telling skills. In it, each team of debaters writes a summary of their affirmative case. It gives students practice explaining the affirmative. This activity is especially appropriate for students who are already partners who have tournament experience or students who are preparing for their first tournament.*

### **Time Allotment**

Approximately 40-80 minutes at the shortest. Depending on the variations and follow-up activities, this can take several days.

### **Objectives**

By the end of this activity, students will:

- develop skills in argumentation through narrative.
- develop skills in summarizing arguments.

### **Method**

Each team (pair of two students) in the class should write a brief (you should select a length - 30, 45, or 60 second) introduction to the affirmative case that they either do or plan to run at tournaments. Writing this overview can be homework or an in-class assignment.

Students may need instruction about what an effective overview looks like. If you have (or can write) a model of an excellent overview (introduction to the case), you may want to hand out photocopies or project it with an overhead. Have the students read the model and then brainstorm a list of characteristics of effective overviews as a class. If you do not have such a model, then hold a brainstorm session without one.

In addition to whatever ideas students generate during the brainstorm, you can give them an introduction to overviews. An overview is read at the beginning of the 2AC or the 2AR. It frames the debate and the rest of the speech, outlining the reasons why an affirmative ballot is justified. It addresses the inherency, harms and solvency of the case. It tells the whole story of the affirmative in an engaging, persuasive, and word-efficient way. It uses compelling, pithy language – sometimes pulling the best sentences or phrases from the text of cards.

Once the overview is written, have a speaker from each team deliver this speech to the class. After each speaker presents, have the rest of the class discuss the speech. They can address what elements of the story were most and least effective, what else could have been included or excluded, and what they did not understand. You may also have students offer constructive criticism about presentation style. After each pair has presented and received criticism, the students should re-write their introductions. You can also give students the time to practice their revised overviews, integrating some of the feedback they received on presentation style.



At the end of the activity, ask student to submit a draft of their original overview, a typed set of notes of all of the feedback they received from the class, and a revised draft of the overview.

**Potential Variations:**

This activity can be adapted and become “The Story of the Counter Plan,” “The Story of the Disadvantage,” or the Story of the Case Turn.” In other words, the process of this activity can be adapted to a variety of negative positions. Affirmative teams can also write 2AR overviews that are advantage specific (if the case has multiple advantages). When affirmative cases have specific strategic “tricks,” it makes sense to have overviews speaking to these specific strategies.

Varsity debaters (and advanced novice debaters) often have short overviews written out before debate tournaments. These overviews ensure that the position upon which a student is trying to win the round is persuasively and concisely explains. This activity is a great way for a debater to prepare for tournaments: if she has overviews written in advance, she will be able to use preparation time more effectively.

**NOTE:** This activity is particularly useful for improving the effectiveness of Second Affirmative Rebuttal speeches.