

The *simplicity principle* means the standards debate should be kept short and uncluttered by quoting various debate theorists.

## CASE ARGUMENTS

The *burden of rebuttal* is a central concept in policy debate, stating that an argument is assumed to be valid unless the other side offers a rebuttal. If the affirmative case claims the United States will run out of fossil fuels within the next decade, the negative team must offer a rebuttal or the argument is assumed to be correct. The supporting evidence for the claim might have been exceptionally weak, but this won't matter if the negative team says nothing about the argument. The affirmative team will say that its argument is dropped, meaning it is granted by the negative team.

The burden of rebuttal applies equally to the affirmative and negative teams. Suppose the affirmative case claimed illegal immigration destroys the American economy and the first negative speaker responded with evidence showing that illegal immigration actually helps the economy. The affirmative team must offer a response to this argument in the very next speech; otherwise, the argument is won by the negative. The affirmative team cannot resurrect this argument in rebuttal speeches if it failed to answer it in the second affirmative constructive speech.

When a team drops an argument, it does not necessarily lose the debate. It just means that particular argument is conceded to the other team. Negative debaters often choose not to respond to certain portions of affirmative cases. An affirmative team might present a contention (meaning an argument) that the negative team regards as meaningless to the outcome of the debate. For example, say that an affirmative contention states Iran is currently attempting to develop nuclear weapons. The negative team might decide to let this argument pass without a response, calculating that a negative victory does not depend on denying this claim. Accordingly, the negative team must carefully decide which parts of the affirmative case require a negative response. The following paragraphs are designed to provide advice for handling such decisions.

*Contest decision rules: Negative teams must listen very carefully to the first affirmative speech for statements that, if granted, would create value systems favorable to the affirmative team. Consider an affirmative claim that ensuring energy independence is vital to the survival of the United States. If the negative team allows such a claim to go unchallenged, the debate might effectively be over. The affirmative team would remind the judge in the final rebuttal that the negative team has agreed that ensuring energy independence is more important than anything else. The negative team needed to contest the decision rule by reading evidence showing how international peace is best ensured by interdependence rather than independence.*