

affirmative plan. Yet the negative team might argue that federal funding for secondary education competes for the same scarce resources as funding for elementary education. This argument makes sense only if the negative team can prove that it is unwise to spend the money to fund both proposals—in other words, the negative team would need to present a federal spending disadvantage. The negative team would need to show why only the affirmative plan would cause this disadvantage. If all this can be proven, the negative team has really shown that the counterplan is net beneficial. A resource competition claim attempts a lazy argumentative shortcut.

THE PERMUTATION AS A TEST OF COMPETITION

The word *permutation* means to explore all possible combinations or groupings of a set of options. Affirmative teams often suggest permutations of the plan and counterplan as an illustration of how they could be desirably combined. By offering a permutation, the affirmative team is not really changing its affirmative plan; instead, it is showing why the counterplan doesn't truly compete with the affirmative plan. The permutation offers protection to the affirmative against counterplans, which are only artificially or superficially competitive.

Sometimes negative teams write the text of their counterplan in such a way that it bans the affirmative action; this ban of the affirmative action seems to make the counterplan mutually exclusive with the plan. Consider the following counterplan text:

1. State governments will substantially increase their funding of secondary education in the United States.
2. Federal funding of secondary education will remain at current levels.

The negative team could claim that its counterplan is mutually exclusive with the affirmative plan because it would be logically impossible to both substantially increase federal funding and to freeze it at current levels.

The permutation reaches inside the existing text of the plan and counterplan to show how the essence of the two proposals could desirably coexist. Sometimes an affirmative team will offer several permutations. In the education example, the affirmative could offer the following permutations:

1. Federal and state governments will simultaneously increase funding for secondary education; and
2. The federal government will increase funding for secondary education, but the state governments will determine how the increased funding will be used in their states.