

CHAPTER 9

CROSS-EXAMINATION TECHNIQUE IN POLICY DEBATE

In policy debate, each constructive speech is followed by three minutes of cross-examination. This time provides an opportunity for debaters to question sources of support, expose logical fallacies, or undermine the credibility of the opponent's argument.

THE MECHANICS OF CROSS-EXAMINATION

When a speaker finishes his cross-examination speech, that speaker remains at the podium to await questions. The cross-examiner comes to the front of the room to stand beside the podium, and both debaters face the judge during the cross-examination period. The cross-examiner is limited to the asking of questions as opposed to making statements or giving speeches. The cross-examiner has control of the time in the cross-examination period and can, therefore, politely cut off a long answer to ask another question.

Which speaker conducts the cross-examination? The simple way to remember this is that cross-examination is conducted by the person who does not speak next. The first affirmative speaker is cross-examined by the second negative speaker. The first negative speaker is cross-examined by the first affirmative speaker. The second affirmative speaker is cross-examined by the first negative speaker. The second negative speaker is cross-examined by the second affirmative speaker.

What is meant by *open CX*? In some debate leagues, cross-examination has evolved into an informal question-and-answer period during which either member of a team asks questions and answers are given by either member of the opposing team. This practice is specifically prohibited by the rules of some leagues. In debates sponsored by the Texas University Interscholastic League (UIL), for example, teams are disqualified (meaning they lose) if they engage in open CX. In traditional debate practice, questions are asked by one debater and answers are given exclusively by the debater who just completed her speech. Unless you are confident that open CX is allowed in your league, you should carefully follow the traditional debate practice.

THE PURPOSES OF CROSS-EXAMINATION