

preparation time for your partner.

In policy debate, the typical preparation time limit is five minutes per team. But the timekeeper (which is usually also the judge) does not start counting down your preparation time until the end of cross-examination. This means that if you use your full time in cross-examination, your partner has three minutes of preparation time that does not count against your allotted five minutes. Accordingly, your partner will not be happy if you choose to end cross-examination after only one minute because the timekeeper will immediately begin subtracting preparation time from your remaining total.

CARDINAL SINS OF CROSS-EXAMINATION

A trial attorney understands that he can turn off jurors by acting like a jerk. The same thing happens within the debate context. Judges are just people—like all people, they will be affected by your demeanor. If you browbeat an opponent in cross-examination, you can make the judge want to vote against you. Nobody likes a bully. Even if you win the debate, the judge is likely to lower your speaker points. You can maintain your likeable image if you stay away from the four cardinal sins of cross-examination.

The first cardinal sin is talking over an opponent. When you ask a question, provide a reasonable opportunity for your opponent to answer. If you are speaking at the same time as your competitor, the judge will not understand either you or your opponent. It is true that the questioner is in control of the cross-examination period, but it sometimes happens that the respondent's answers are overly long. In such circumstances you should be assertive but also courteous. You can interrupt by saying something like "Thanks, I understand your point. But let me ask you this" If you have provided a reasonable opportunity to answer and your opponent is simply wasting time, the judge will not blame you for interrupting.

The second cardinal sin is name-calling. Don't label arguments as "stupid," "crazy," or "insane." Treat your opponents and their arguments with respect. Focus on the weaknesses of your opponent's arguments rather than making personal attacks.

The third cardinal sin is refusing your opponent the opportunity to explain an answer. You can ask for a "yes" or "no" answer, but don't turn this request into a demand.

The final cardinal sin is the making of speeches in cross-examination. The cross-examiner is limited to the asking of questions. When you attempt to gain an advantage by making new answers to arguments or presenting evidence, you accomplish nothing other than to demonstrate your inexperience at cross-examination.