

questions, it makes it more likely that the respondent will answer in the way you suggest. Question 3 is what Pozner, author of the 2004 book *Cross-Examination: Science and Techniques* calls a declarative question. It creates the most forceful push in the direction of the answer you believe should be forthcoming. Questions that begin with *what*, *why*, or *explain* are almost certain to be open-ended questions, offering to turn over control of the questioning period to the respondent.

Avoid compound questions. The experienced questioner wants to keep the focus on one issue at a time. Consider the following question: “How much will your plan cost, and how will it be funded?” When you ask a compound question, the judge seldom holds the respondent responsible for answering each of the elements of the question. You are really inviting your opponent to set up her own defense of the cost issue.

Focus on facts, not conclusions. Inexperienced debaters think the goal of cross-examination is to trick the opponent into admitting that his case is not inherent, that the disadvantage has no impact, or that he really should concede the debate. Such concessions might happen once in your debate career, but you will waste many a cross-examination period in the search for this type of magic bullet. As Larry Pozner says, “It is far safer to let the jury reach its own conclusions based on the facts rather than demanding that conclusion from a hostile witness.”

Bring the results of cross-examination into your speeches. Judges don’t keep track of the cross-examination period on their flowsheets. When the judge makes the decision at the end of a round, she does so by tracing key arguments on her flowsheets. If you succeeded in establishing important facts in your cross-examination, you must mention this in your speeches themselves if you expect the cross-examination to have an impact on the judge’s decision.

FURTHER READING

Brown, Peter. *The Art of Questioning: Thirty Maxims of Cross Examination*. Macmillan: New York, 1987.

Ehrlich, J. W. *The Lost Art of Cross Examination*. G. P. Putnam’s Sons: New York, 1970.

Pozner, Larry S., and Roger J. Dodd. *Cross Examination Science and Techniques, 2nd Ed.* Matthew Bender & Associates: Newark, NJ, 2004.