

Seed the brainstorming session with questions, forming a simple agenda. Use the italicized terms in the previous paragraphs—the ones in the “Analysis of the Resolution” section—to build your agenda. Start by listing each of the key terms in the resolution and asking what they might mean. If the resolution asks whether something is beneficial or detrimental, think through the list of paired opposites. If the debate topic is a resolution of policy, think through each of the stock issues.

After you have finished your brainstorming session, go back through the items on your list to determine the ones that merit research attention. Chapter 3 provides suggestions for managing your research.

WRITING THE CASE

Public forum participants must prepare two speeches: a four-minute pro speech (supporting the resolution) and a four-minute con speech (opposing the resolution). Each speech should be between 760 and 800 words in length.

The speech should begin with a short attention-getting opening, followed by a statement of your position on the resolution. The resolution used in the national tournament in 2006 was “Resolved: The United States should ratify the Kyoto Protocol.” Following is the introduction used by Valerie Hobbs, first con speaker for Bishop Heelan (Sioux City, Iowa), the 2006 national champion in public forum debate:

“The latest in from Peter Roderick, president of Friends of the Earth International, the leading environmentalist group in support of Kyoto: ‘I think that everybody agrees that Kyoto is really, really hopeless in terms of delivering what the planet needs, but it’s not the sort of nitty-gritty commas and dots in the text of the protocol; it’s the symbolic importance.’ Well, Peter, we do agree that Kyoto is really, really hopeless, but where you go wrong is that Kyoto is about the nitty-gritty commas and dots; it is about the text.”

The speech should then provide reasons you support or oppose the resolution. Each argument should be supported with quotations from authority. The four reasons the Bishop Heelan team offered for opposing the Kyoto Protocol are as follows:

1. The Protocol is ineffective.
 - The Protocol would reduce emissions by only 5.2 percent.
 - The Protocol exempts 134 developing countries.
 - The Protocol provides huge loopholes.
2. The Protocol will have harmful economic repercussions.
 - Abatement costs will be 2.2 trillion dollars.
 - Gasoline prices will be driven up by 66 cents/gallon.