

economic analysis we have already established on this side of the debate by demonstrating that our proposal would also enhance society through increased political engagement and, ultimately, be good for the business community by more effectively equipping young people for the workplace. By the end of my speech, I believe that you will agree with me that side Affirmative has demonstrated that our proposal is good for the economic health of the nation, the political engagement of its citizens, and the educational and vocational prospects of young people.

Let me start by addressing the speech we just heard from the First Negative speaker . . . ”

Within a little more than 150 words (just over one minute of speech), the speaker has identified what she is going to talk about for the remainder of her allotted time and demonstrated how her speech ties into what has already been heard from her teammate. Thus, the adjudicator has a clear understanding of what can be expected and an appreciation of how the whole case will hang together. Either mentally or literally, the adjudicator can check the arguments off as they are made to be satisfied that the speaker has put forward a coherent case.

Roadmapping also fulfills another useful function: it helps the debater order her own thoughts. In most debating situations, speakers work from notes—often hastily put together. Getting into the routine of roadmapping forces the debater to adopt and follow a coherent structure.

Setting Priorities

As well as providing directions for your audience, the introduction should also let them know what to look out for on the way. In practical terms, you’re encouraging the adjudicator to see the issue from a certain perspective by identifying what’s an important argument and what’s pleasant but insignificant background. How you set out the introduction to a speech plays a significant role in this process. The Affirmative team may put forward their arguments from the perspective of “economic reality,” but Negative’s response may portray it as “cold-hearted and money-mad” in contrast to their own “case grounded in the real world,” which Affirmative will describe as “pie-in-the-sky financial fantasy.” Debate is intellectually engaging because it is quite possible that both perspectives are correct; the challenge is in getting the adjudicator to see the issues from the same perspective as your team.

CONCLUSIONS

In many ways, conclusions are the mirror opposite of introductions; they are an opportunity for you to remind the adjudicator of the arguments that you’ve made and to demonstrate