

that you have done what you set out in your introduction. You would hope that you have laid out your arguments flawlessly by the time you come to your conclusion, but, if you haven't, you can use the conclusion to make amends. That doesn't mean introducing entirely new bits of evidence and argumentation—there isn't time—but you can use the conclusion to demonstrate how your arguments neatly segued into each other since this might not have been immediately apparent during the main body of your speech.

While your conclusion as a whole can be a checklist of what you've said, reflecting the introduction, your last words should leave hovering at the front of the adjudicator's mind the clearest, most concise overview of your argument that you can manage. Your conclusion should leave no room for doubt that you have proved your arguments. The final sentence involves your picking the best picture of the trip for the adjudicator to take home with her. For example:

We have demonstrated that the pedagogical benefits of our proposal are based on solid research, our economic model is tried and tested elsewhere in the world, and its potential for increasing civic engagement has already been acknowledged by some of the country's leading analysts. I am proud to stand in proposition of the motion.

BRIEF NOTE ON TACTICS

In a number of debate formats, the opening and closing periods of the speech are “protected time,” meaning that a speaker cannot be asked questions or offered Points of Information. Deliver your introduction and conclusion during this time. It's important that the adjudicator has a clear, cohesive picture of what you are going to say and what you have said without distractions.

Even if you are debating in a format that does not allow interruptions, brevity is key to effective introductions and conclusions. By keeping introductions and conclusions short, you leave the greatest amount of time for the main body of your speech—wherein you can spell out your arguments in detail.

The primary goal of your introduction is to make it as easy as possible for the adjudicator to identify your arguments so that she can appreciate that they are powerful and persuasive. Your opening remarks should allow her to grasp the perspective from which to assess what comes next. An introduction is not a time to rehearse, word for word, the arguments you will present. If your role is to define, briefly tell the adjudicators the definition; if it is to extend or develop or summarize, highlight that this will happen. Set out which issues will form the main focus of your speech. Give each argument a name to help the adjudicator keep track and devote one or, at most, two sentences of the introduction to