

concede that some small businesses will indeed fail but argue that this would be in much the same way that chimney sweeps went bust when child labor was outlawed. Abolishing child labor was still the right course and so is the principle of paying workers a living wage. The Affirmative can then return to their constructive case by arguing that getting rid of companies that rely on paying very low wages frees labor and resources for stronger companies that pay people at a level where they can use those wages to stimulate the local economy.

By using a moral rebuttal and then building on their earlier economic case, Affirmative requires the remaining Negative speakers to fight on two fronts—moral and economic—neither of them very easy.

Strategic Rebuttal

So far, we have assumed that rebuttal can be neatly slotted into a handful of categories and that the debater can simply select an option, then aim and fire. The reality is usually more complicated. However, this smorgasbord approach does help to make clear that you need to think about what you want to rebut, how you can best do so, and, most important, to what end. Resist the tendency to spot a mistake in an opponent's speech and just grab it. That's not the best way to start. Instead, think strategically. Just as important, you need to make effective use of your time and also rebut in a way that doesn't alienate the adjudicators.

The exact nature of your rebuttal will be determined by the specifics of the situation, but you should remember some general points as you develop your strategy.

- *Pick the errors that can be used to greatest effect.* When putting together a case, debaters use various building blocks, some of which have been better thought through than others. Ideally, in rebuttal, you're looking for the block that has been placed precariously and the removal of which brings down the entire edifice.
- *Attack evidence integral to the case.* Some pieces of evidence are integral to a speaker's case; others tend to be thrown in for interest or to demonstrate that the speaker has done her research. Attack the evidence that is essential to the structure. Spotting this evidence can be difficult, but usually it will be an apparently factual piece of information that much of the rest of the case depends on. Frequently, you'll be looking for points where A appears to cause B, but, in fact, A and B are just happening at the same time. Think about the claim the speaker is making about B and ask yourself "what else was happening at the same time that could have caused that?"