

- *Place your rebuttal within the wider context of your own speech.* For example, if your speech focuses on the ethical dimension of a particular discussion, then your rebuttal may wish to focus on how the other side has ignored this. Alternatively, if your points are grounded in political necessity, you might use your rebuttal to demonstrate that the preceding speaker has ignored political reality. Once again, don't treat rebuttal and constructive argumentation as two distinct items; they should intertwine with each other organically.

Managing Your Rebuttal

Rebuttal is not just about defending your ideas and attacking those of your opponents. It's about working strategically with your teammates, organizing your speech so you can highlight major points, and presenting your material in a manner that shows respect for your opponents. To be successful you must:

- *Work closely with your teammates.* There are few areas in which the teamwork that is fundamental to debate is more evident than in rebuttal. In reactive rebuttal, you're using your rebuttal to defend an earlier speaker on your team and, in turn, you can expect to have your arguments defended by your teammates. The same applies to proactive rebuttal. If a teammate has already won a point, you have little to gain by hammering away at it as well. Unless you have something new and substantive to add, move on. Similarly, your speech will be rebutted, so try not to leave too much work for the next speaker on your team in defending you. Teammates must work together, and debaters who are too absorbed with their own speeches to bother defending others on their team tend to find that they then cause problems later in the debate. That's not a formula for success—or popularity.
- *Be aware of time.* Can you realistically address a particular point in the minute or so that you can devote to rebuttal? If you can't, don't attack it; it will consume your whole speech, and you'll be left squeezing your own material in at the last minute when you should be presenting your conclusion. If the point you want to attack is a major issue, develop the rebuttal as an argument in its own right.

Just as you should start with your most important arguments, so you should prioritize the major flaws for rebuttal. If you're left with time at the end of your speech, you can always come back for another volley, but you don't really want to run out of time before pointing out that the other team's entire case is illegal or that their proposal