

set forth in the motion. They will also use those skills at the various levels of argumentation that underpin both of those cases. Does the evidence relate to the claim? Are the claims of the various arguments within a case complementary or would they defeat each other? Is the Affirmative's proposed solution genuinely problematic or simply unpopular, counterintuitive, or new?

## Transferability

Of all of the debate skills covered in this book, critical thinking is, without a doubt, the most applicable to wider life. It has applications for us as citizens, as voters, as scholars, as conversationalists, as writers, as scientists, as job holders, and as thinkers—in short, as active members of the human race. Its uses apply in business, academia, law, politics, the arts and sciences, in our approach to history and literature. It is a skill—or, more accurately, an approach—that should affect all our interactions with the world around us.

The ability to question what has been said; to consider whether the answer that was given was actually related to the question that was asked or was a distraction; to think clearly and logically to the heart of the question; to challenge assumptions and accept only cold, hard, logical proof is both the aim of the debater and one of the most useful skills anyone can develop. It is for this reason that debaters tend to score well in exams and also do well on university entrance tests and later in both job interviews and in employment. A critical approach to problems and the realization that just because something is obvious, it isn't necessarily true is why debating has proved to be valuable in building democratic societies and enduring critiques of human activity.

## Conclusion

Being able to think through to the heart of any problem, being open to new and unexpected explanations or solutions, taking pleasure in the process of thought itself, and having confidence that you have reached a conclusion as free from bias or preconceptions as possible can be one of the most rewarding pleasures of debate as an art. Although critical thinking may appear to be the most esoteric of the skills outlined in this book, it is hoped that this chapter has given you some appreciation of its applicability.

Our capacity to think independently of the demands of the majority or the powerful, to be willing to consider the particular situation and reach our own conclusions—free of