

than disconnected chunks that point more or less in the same direction. Presenting a case works in much the same way. The first speaker outlines the case (introduction); the middle speakers offer arguments and evidence while refuting the opposition (main body); and the final speaker summarizes the case (conclusion).

TEAMWORK IN PRACTICE

Remember, you and your teammates sink or swim together. The concept of “a great speech in a poor team” is invalid. If you are going to win, your teammate(s) also have to win, so problems in their speeches are your problem. Ideally, of course, the best way to avoid problems is not to have them in the first place, but we don’t always get what we want, so speakers often have to think on their feet to rectify an unanticipated situation once it’s happened. As you and your teammates prepare for and engage in a debate, remember the following four points:

1. *Delineate responsibilities.* When planning your case, clearly determine who will address which issue. Two speakers covering the same ground means that it’s easy for one to appear to undermine what the other has said by explaining it slightly differently or placing emphasis on a different aspect. Order your team’s arguments in such a way that they flow logically from each other toward the conclusion you are trying to reach—and always double-check that you actually have two different arguments, rather than two names for the same one.
2. *Reference your teammates directly.* Mention your teammate(s) and their arguments directly. This is both good practice and good manners. Opening and closing speakers on each side should mention other speakers while outlining or reviewing their case, and intervening speakers should do so while defending colleagues against rebuttal. Preferably you should reference your teammates in the context of explaining how your arguments support each other but, if nothing more, it’s useful to let the adjudicator know that you are aware of what the rest of your team is saying and have been listening to the debate. If you fulfill your role correctly, referencing your teammates should become automatic, almost regardless of what else is happening in your speech.
3. *Back up your teammates.* As your team’s case unfolds, some arguments will usually prove to be stronger than others. Some of what they say will just be accepted as being self-evident and, for this part of the case, you can just mention it in passing to show that you agree. However, for those areas of your case that form the focus of clash, you need to defend the arguments they have made, even where they are problematic. You must not publicly criticize their arguments or undermine what they have said by suggesting that its purpose was unclear or that the argument could have been better