

case, rather than highlighting the problems first. Avoid saying “no doubt side Negative will argue. . . ” or something along those lines. Let First Negative work out the weaknesses in the case, without suggestions from you as to which might be their strongest lines of attack, and trust to later Affirmative speakers to respond.

Let’s take a specific example. There is a considerable difference between how these two statements will be perceived by the listener:

1. Negative will, no doubt, argue that we cannot afford additional spending for education in the current economic climate; we would argue that this is something we cannot afford to ignore. By creating this opportunity for future growth through a skilled workforce, we enhance business confidence domestically and reassure international investors that we are in business for the long term.
2. An investment in the workforce of the future will ensure that we do not again face the difficulties that are currently so evident in our economy. By attracting investment and demonstrating confidence, as well as ensuring the long-term viability of our skills base, we can lead the world out of recession rather than waiting to be asked to join the rest of the pack.

By using positive phrasing to answer to a probable question (#2), you leave the impression that the other side is reacting to your ideas rather than your appearing defensive before they have even given a speech. The objective of the First Affirmative speaker is to give the impression that their position is normative and that Negative now has something to prove.

First Negative

The main role of the First Negative is to highlight weaknesses in the Affirmative case. He can take any approach to this task but should both develop his own arguments and introduce the avenues of investigation his teammate(s) will pursue. It may be appropriate to propose an alternative solution to the problem First Affirmative highlighted (this is known as presenting a counter-case), but First Negative is equally entitled to simply point to major flaws in the proposal that has been put forward in the definition. It may well be that he prefers to do a little of both, highlighting flaws in the Affirmative case *and* citing examples of alternatives as evidence of those weaknesses.

He almost certainly will have to give examples of what option or options would work better and, critically, why they would do so. Those options may well contain the status quo, but he should still demonstrate why this is preferable rather than simply claiming that