
EXERCISE

Listen to the opening speeches of debates in as many of the four formats as you can. Focus on speeches given in semifinals and finals of national or international competitions. A list of these competitions, by format, and corresponding websites where videos can be found is included at the end of this book.

1. As you watch the speeches, pay particular attention to:
 - The definition and how it relates to the motion.
 - The extent to which the opening Negative speaker responds directly to the definition.
 - How speakers refer to what will be debated in later speeches.
 - Whether the definition and the Negative response allow for elaboration by later speakers.
 2. Pick whichever debate you think sounds the most interesting and discuss as a group how you think the debate will progress. Then:
 - Watch the debate as a whole. Did it develop as you predicted?
 - Consider which opening speaker did the better job of controlling the debate. Did his team capitalize on that advantage as well as they could?
 - How else could the motion have been defined and why do you think the speaker chose the definition he or she did?
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CHAPTER CHECKLIST

- Opening speakers frame the debate in the mind of the adjudicator and set the direction for the other speakers.
- The First Affirmative must offer the definition, which forms the basis for the debate.
- A good definition is clear, answers all basic questions about the process of what is being proposed, supports why the Affirmative is suggesting a particular course or position, and is tight.
- The First Negative sets out why the Affirmative's proposal won't or shouldn't work.
- Opening speakers should identify the areas of clash.
- The two first speakers must adopt positions that are mutually exclusive.