

# Elaboration and Extension: The Role of Middle Speakers

The first and final speakers have explicitly defined roles, which tend, as a result, to be easier to discuss than those in the middle. However, the central speakers do the bulk of the heavy lifting in terms of actually winning the debate. In large part, their roles are spelled out in the chapters on evidence, argumentation, rebuttal, and speech structure. This chapter will not repeat that information. Instead, it looks specifically at what the middle speakers should aim to achieve. It begins by examining how they should deal with any problems left to them by the first speaker before turning to a general overview of how central speakers should operate within the debate.

Although most of this book has considered how debate works regardless of the format, this is not possible for this chapter. In two formats, World Schools (WS) and Asian Parliamentary (Asians), that have one team of three speakers on each side, the middle speakers put forward the majority of arguments. In Karl Popper (KP), which also has three speakers, the second speaker does not present new arguments. Instead, she delivers a rebuttal speech that is sufficiently different from second speakers in other formats that it will be dealt with separately. The chapter examines the first two formats together and analyzes the role of the second speaker in terms of how they work with the rest of the team. It then looks separately at the role of rebuttal speeches in KP.

A fourth format, British Parliamentary (BP), comprises two teams of two speakers on each side of the debate. This has a dramatic effect on the roles of the middle speakers who, in addition to putting forward the majority of the argumentation, are also required to wrap up the case for one team and open it for another. The chapter also addresses the role of each of these speakers in turn; in particular that of the third speaker on the Affirmative side (Member of the Government), who is responsible for introducing what is called an “extension”—the process of opening a major new area for consideration within the debate. Extensions, although relatively straightforward in reality, are the source of constant panic