

- In the case of a debate on moral grounds, both sides have established a metric for determining the morality of their given position and have demonstrated how an action or series of actions is either meritorious or invidious according to that metric.

Conclusion

The middle speakers are easy to take for granted because their job is to debate—plain and simple. The bulk of their work requires them to fulfill the main roles of rebuttal and argumentation with the strategy and evidence that goes along with them. If we think of the responsibility of each side as building a perspective from which to view the world, the middle speakers have a critical role. Sometimes they may use broadsides of evidence to achieve their aim, at other times they may steadily lead the listener through intricate stages of argument to reach an unavoidable conclusion.

Whatever their approach, the second (and third) speakers need to make sure that the adjudicator appreciates that their case is grounded in believable evidence and results in reasonable claims. They need to establish the strongest case possible because little room is now left in the debate. Any information or case building that needs to be done must have already been done by the time the penultimate Negative speaker sits down.

That is not to say that the debate is over, however. Far from it. Plenty of debates are won, and lost, by the final speaker on either side. Summation is a remarkable skill and, in the hands of an expert, can be fascinating to watch. However, even the best concluding speakers need something to work with—for the bulk of that material, they rely on the speakers in the middle.

EXERCISES

Watch the opening two speeches from a debate in either Asians or World Schools format up to the concluding speakers. As you watch the speeches, take notes on:

- The quantity of argumentation presented by the middle speakers and how that compares with the more descriptive roles of the opening speakers, especially First Affirmative.
- How the cases, as divided by the opening speakers, have largely been addressed by the time Second Negative sits down.