

Speaker's Notes

However you have chosen to record the rest of the round, you will also need a separate set of notes from which to speak. Some speakers use a sheet of paper with points set out as they plan to make them, others use index cards with a card devoted to each point. Both approaches offer benefits and have drawbacks—which you use is more a matter of comfort than anything else.

Clarity is vitally important whichever method you choose. Clearly delineate between points and write down the relevant information required to support each section of your speech. This includes the introduction and conclusion. Don't assume that you'll be able to see how you're going to introduce your speech from the notes for the rest of the speech. For each argument, write down the name of the argument, use arrows or some similar method to indicate logical progression, and note down the evidence you are using—and where it comes from if possible or required—to support that argument.

One final, albeit vital, point: Don't just read your notes aloud during your speech. Your notes are there to support you when you speak. They act as an aid for your memory and help you keep your points in order; they are not a script. Chances are, for a seven- or eight-minute speech, you'll have jotted down 50 or 100 words and phrases that mean a great deal to you but little to anybody else. Use these notes to guide your mind, and those of your audience, through a subject and toward a particular conclusion. Just reading them will last 30 seconds or so and nobody, probably yourself included, will be much the wiser as to what you were talking about.

Notes for the Future

Make a point of taking notes of the entire debate. Even if your own speech is long over, keep track of what is being said. Having a record of all speakers provides invaluable evidence for Points of Information and cross-examination. It also keeps you mentally engaged with the debate rather than staring out the window thinking about lunch. Taking notes throughout the debate is a good way of staying focused.

Keeping a complete set of notes serves another purpose. Notes can be useful for future reference. In the immediate term, having a record of the whole debate will help give context to the comments the adjudicator makes. In the longer term, notes can be a useful source of ideas and evidence for future debates on similar subjects. It's unlikely that you'd want to replicate an entire case, and less likely still that it would fit into another debate.