

ask him to do that one piece of information at a time, or one step of logic at a time, he is far more likely to follow your line of enquiry without seeing clearly where you are leading him until too late. Similarly, if you are seeking to put the respondent in a position where he has publicly committed himself to a particular position, you would be better off briefly asking him to confirm that he made particular points rather inviting him to extrapolate further on a whole area of his speech.

Perhaps oddly, brevity is also useful in responding to a question. Give as much information as is required by the question or as little as you can get away with. Until you have a clear idea of where the questioner is trying to take you, don't make her life easy by hurling additional fuel onto whatever fire she is kindling. Although occasionally filibustering out of a line of questioning you would rather avoid might be appropriate, such occasions are rare and, at best, look desperate. Clear, emphatic, short answers are almost always the better option: "We said that was only an option when the economic conditions were correct." As a rule, aim to keep your answers shorter than the questions. Sometimes this simply isn't possible but it's a useful goal to keep in mind.

Conclusion

Hard interaction is one of the most enjoyable parts of debate. There is a real sense of cut and thrust as each side tries to find a weak point in the argument of the other without revealing their own case too soon. You will develop your own style for approaching CX and offering POIs, but always remember the basics: keep questions brief and relevant to what is happening at that stage in the debate and have a purpose for every question.

The next chapter discusses how victory in debating comes down to which team can control the flow of the debate—even when they're not speaking. Hard interaction is a vital part of doing this. As long as opposing speakers are answering the questions you've asked, responding to your agenda, finding ways to defend their ideas against your rebuttal, you're in charge of that flow and the adjudicator is seeing things from your perspective.