

been equally convinced by the First Negative. Thus, the second, and subsequent, speakers need to demonstrate the strengths of their side and the weaknesses of the other team.

Of course, later speakers don't just stand up and repeat what has already been said. They respond to the debate as the ideas evolve. The role of each speaker, in turn, is to give new perspectives on those themes. At each stage, speakers will be introducing new ideas, along with supporting evidence. They will be finding ways to show that their side has the better narrative, both by demonstrating the strengths of their own arguments and the weaknesses of the arguments of the opposing team(s). When the debate works well, these two processes happen simultaneously. Sometimes, however, the processes need to be distinct, especially when attacking statements as being factually incorrect. Either way, the processes are symbiotic: rebuttal and constructive proposals feed off one another. For each speaker, both sets of arguments combine to make a speech. Within each team, the speeches combine to make a case. For the room as a whole, the cases should combine to make a debate. That final combination results from, and in, clash.

That debate should be typified by clear points of disagreement that, ideally, represent mutually exclusive perspectives on the issue. You are not necessarily demonstrating that your opponents are just plain wrong, although you may be. You are frequently demonstrating that they are misguided and that their failure to grasp the real causes of a problem or their odd sense of priorities or their obsession with one small aspect of the situation mean that your arguments are more reasonable and satisfying.

How to Identify Clash

To ensure clash, do you have to disagree with everything the other side says and enthuse lyrically about everything your side says? A qualified "No." "Qualified" because you should avoid publicly or too obviously agreeing with the other side just as you should avoid disagreeing with your own side. If the other side has said something that is clearly true, "Murder is wrong," you don't need to try to prove that murder is fun for all concerned and should be taught in schools. Likewise, if one of your teammates has said something dumb, just quietly drop the subject unless the other side challenges you—at which point you should support his statement, defend it, and then quietly move on hoping never to have to discuss it again.

Negative speakers, in particular, sometimes feel that they must contradict every word of the Affirmative. They don't. Indeed, it would usually be impossible to do so. Even in the event of a truly terrible case, the Affirmative is likely to have stumbled across one or two