

should begin with information that is a part of the shared knowledge of debater and audience, but debaters' evidence must not stop there. Karl Popper debaters must engage in research to discover information produced by the technical community—information relevant to the debate topic. Then, the debaters must learn to explain such information accurately and intelligibly to a general audience. The process of researching evidence and using it in debates is one of the ways Karl Popper debaters increase not only their knowledge about the debate topic but also the knowledge of their audience.

REASON

Evidence is the starting point of an argument. Karl Popper debaters understand that solid arguments begin with but do not end with evidence. Debaters begin with evidence and then reason their way from evidence to the thesis they want the audience to accept. Unlike debaters in the technical sphere, Karl Popper debaters are not constrained by particular forms of reasoning. Many forms—for instance, reasoning by example, by analogy, and by causality—are legitimate forms of argument in the public sphere. However, when debaters choose a form of reasoning, they are expected to use that form in a rigorous and acceptable manner. You will learn standards for good reasoning practices in each of the forms you might select.

LANGUAGE

Karl Popper debaters will start with evidence and use effective reasoning to convince their audiences to accept their claims. You should present your arguments in language readily understood by audiences in the public sphere. Thus, you should avoid unnecessary technical jargon as well as jargon developed by other forms of debate. The goal of debate in the public sphere is to engage citizens in effective democratic processes, thus you must use language that all parties readily understand. Because jargon separates those who know it from those who do not, it does not support the most important aim of debate. Karl Popper debate seeks to be inclusive, to include debaters and audiences from a variety of walks of life and from a variety of cultures. To make debates as inclusive as possible, you and your teammates should use language common to as wide a variety of people as possible.

CONCLUSION

The form and philosophy of Karl Popper debate emerges from the ideal democratic process of debate in the public sphere. Achieving this ideal is difficult because public debates so often are drawn away from cooperative and competitive attempts to engage ideas and are drawn toward self-serving agendas for aggregating power and personal gain. Frequently controlled by politicians who are more interested in election or reelection than in helping citizens understand issues, debate recently has been characterized by sound bites, by verbal attacks, by deliberate misconstruing of the words and deeds of others, and by thinly cloaked attempts to mislead ill-informed audiences.