

ments, then a rebuttalist should avoid arguments about truisms, even if the rebuttal speaker strongly believes that the opposing team is engaging in a truism.

4. **Argument placement.** Remember that the arrangement of your speech is just as important as the other components. Place your most important arguments at the beginning of the rebuttal, and the weakest arguments toward the end. Depending on the judge, however, you may want to put your weakest arguments first, so that you end your speech with your strongest, thereby leaving a positive impression on the judge.

Although determining the importance of arguments can be difficult, it is absolutely critical if debaters are to avoid poor decision making and leaving themselves open to strategic vulnerabilities on which their opponents can capitalize.

### WEIGH IMPLICATIONS

The tactics of summarizing arguments, making choices, and identifying vital issues for the rebuttal may not yield argumentative victory. In debate, remember always to answer the “so what?” question. Just because a debater proves an argument true, does not make it relevant. The debater must explain the significance and implications of his arguments. Five components to help weigh implications during the rebuttal:

1. **Respond, don’t just repeat**—Address the opposition’s arguments directly.
2. **Compare and examine**—Compare and contrast the merits of your position with the drawbacks to your opponent’s so that you can argue how your team should win the debate.
3. **Think strategically**—Present the most important arguments at the beginning of the speech.
4. **Plan in advance**—Pay careful attention to the arguments in the earlier speeches so you can frame your speech as the debate progresses.
5. **Use opponent’s choices**—Highlight the key arguments an opponent fails to address. By doing so, you can claim that your position is stronger.

These general guidelines should help any debater not only explain the significance of her positions during the rebuttal; they should also help her show the relationships between arguments. In this way, the rebuttalist can be sure to incorporate how her arguments are stronger than her opponent’s, and thus *weigh* the arguments through contrast and comparison.