

with the purpose of eventually acquiring specific knowledge to formulate debate arguments.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The key to successful research is developing a plan so you can work efficiently. Debaters can use many strategies, but we have found the two-phase process most effective for researching all types of topics. The first phase provides background and context and helps define issues; the second facilitates locating and constructing arguments.

Phase 1: General Knowledge Research

- Stage 1. Locate background information
- Stage 2. Accumulate general knowledge
- Stage 3. Determine the vital, specific issues
- Stage 4. Review footnotes and bibliographies from the general sources to help find specific issues

Phase 2: Specific Knowledge Research

- Stage 1. Outline the vital, specific issues
- Stage 2. Brainstorm concepts and key words relating to the specific issues
- Stage 3. Accumulate research on specific issues
- Stage 4. Review and research footnotes and bibliographies from the sources of general and specific knowledge

THE STAGES OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

In this section, we will examine the stages of the research process in more detail. Although some may appear to be self-explanatory, we think you will benefit from seeing the relationship between the stages and seeing how each stage contributes to the overall research process. With this research process, any debater can acquire information to support any type of argument. In addition, if this process is followed correctly, other benefits will accrue. First, following this process ensures that research is thorough and comprehensive. Debaters need to become as knowledgeable about a topic as possible, thus they need as much pertinent information as possible. Second, our process allows thorough research to be done quickly. If the phases and stages are followed, then a debater will not forget to research an important source, will not repeat parts of the research process, and will not hesitate during the research process, because a plan is in place.