

1. **Question of Existence**—do countries use the death penalty?
2. **Question of Definition**—if a country uses the death penalty solely for crimes of treason, is that the same as a country that uses capital punishment for a wide range of crimes?
3. **Question of Quality**—how significant and detrimental is the use of the death penalty globally?
4. **Question of Jurisdiction**—does the U.N. have the responsibility or obligation to address the use of the death penalty?³
5. **Question of Cause**—does the existence of the death penalty lower a nation's credibility in the eyes of the global community?

The stasis approach provides key questions that can help determine the more specific and vital issues within the topic.

Stage 4: Review and Research Footnotes and Bibliographies. Bibliographies and footnotes from your general sources can save you time in finding more specific sources. In addition, footnotes may contain information that supports more sophisticated and nuanced arguments, thereby helping you narrow your research focus.

PHASE 2: SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Using the information you obtained in Phase 1, you can now begin more in-depth research into specific issues and arguments. Four simple stages are involved in this phase of research:

Stage 1: Outline the Vital Specific Issues. During Phase 1, you outlined general issues according to the stasis system. Now, using those general categories, you can be more specific; for instance, a debate team researching the topic “the U.N. should ban the death penalty” might organize the specific issues in the following manner:

- Need:**
 - How many countries allow the death penalty?
 - Which specific countries use the death penalty?
 - How many people are executed in each of these countries?
 - For which crimes is the death penalty allowed?
 - Is the death penalty used more often for minority groups?
 - Is there any evidence of innocent people having been executed?
- Plan:**
 - What legal authority does the U.N. have to force countries to ban capital punishment?
 - What moral authority does the U.N. have to encourage countries to ban capital punishment?
- Benefits:**
 - Would U.N. sanctions succeed in forcing countries to ban capital punishment?
 - Would the elimination of capital punishment be beneficial to societies that currently practice it?