

tant to the military readiness of the United States because they were used widely during the war.

6. To Establish a Plan of Refutation

Refuting an opponent's arguments is probably the most important purpose of cross-examination.⁷ Debaters can point out deficiencies in logic, evidence from unqualified sources, inappropriate examples, fallacies, etc., to undermine their opponent's case. For instance, if a debater finishes her speech that included arguments describing how development assistance from the United States should be used to clean up depleted uranium in Iraq, then her opponent—the questioner—could initiate the cross-examination with this question: “Are you aware that U.S. development aid has empirically failed in countries in sub-Saharan Africa?”⁸ Without comparable counterexamples, the respondent's previously made arguments are nullified even before the opponents give their next speech.

7. To Identify Inadequacies in Argument ⁹

This purpose is related to the previous purpose of refutation. While identifying argument inadequacies may help the refutation process, simply exposing them during the cross-examination may not necessarily be enough to “refute,” although such exposure can certainly undermine the credibility of the respondent. To identify inadequacies, you must know the kinds of inadequacies that exist. We suggest two general kinds of inadequacies: internal and external. Examples of internal inadequacies, although not exhaustive, include outdated evidence, misapplied or misunderstood evidence by the opposing team, contradictions in the way the opposing team presents its arguments, etc. External inadequacies include, but are not limited to, counterexamples, a failure to address counterevidence or testimony, discrepancies with common knowledge, etc.

8. To Undermine the Opponent's Credibility

Credibility is an important issue in a debate. Not only do judges assess the relative strengths of a speaker's arguments on her credibility, they also use credibility to serve as a tie-breaker when debate rounds are otherwise too close to call. Hence, undermining an opponent's credibility can seriously weaken her case.

9. To Enhance Your Own Impression and Credibility

Just as the cross-examination can influence the credibility of the respondent, it can also affect the credibility of the questioner. The content of your questions as well as your manner and style directly affect the way an audience or judge assesses you. Debaters should use cross-examination time to showcase their talents and knowledge of a topic. The impression they convey here can greatly influence their success in the debate.

10. To Prepare for Constructive Arguments

As respondent, you may be able to anticipate future opposition arguments based on the types of questions asked during cross-examination. With this knowledge, the respondent's team can prepare arguments for future speeches. Be careful not to reveal too much in your questions to avoid tipping your hand.