

questions will rarely yield useful answers, and you will waste valuable time if you have to rephrase them. Be clear and direct; avoid long and complicated questions.

Occasionally, pursuing an analogical line of questioning is a good tactic. For example, if the resolution concerns U.S. development assistance, you might choose to build a line of questioning around American power projection or issues surrounding aid, without making the connection to the resolution explicit. In a later speech, you could then make the point of the analogy clear. As a tactic, analogical questions can sometimes elicit admissions from an opponent; because the resolution is not being addressed directly, your opponent may be more willing to give direct and unguarded answers. Analogies that are strained or farfetched, however, are not often successful.

MANAGE TIME APPROPRIATELY

Sometimes, of course, three minutes will not seem long enough, and time will run out in mid-question. Debaters who prepared a sequence of questions are more likely to be successful than debaters who did not. Three simple questions you can always ask are:

1. How do you know (insert specific argument)?
2. What do you mean (when you say “x”)?
3. What is the significance (to your argument of “y”)?¹⁰

On the other hand, don’t be afraid to make a graceful exit before your allotted time is up. Do not leave the most important question until last. But if you have made your point and completed your questions before time runs out, close the questioning and sit down. Do not continue with weak or unprepared questions, they may lead to tactical losses that leave the audience with a negative impression of your performance.

EXPERIMENT WITH NEW APPROACHES

Finally, don’t be afraid to experiment with different tactics or to combine tactics.¹¹ The most proficient questioners are those who are comfortable, are not afraid to take risks with their questions, and use a variety of techniques. As you gain more experience in cross-examination, you will feel more comfortable with different approaches.

ADVICE FOR THE RESPONDENT

Like asking questions, answering questions is not a science. Nevertheless, we are able to offer some advice that is based on the experience of debaters and judges. Of course, you should adapt this advice to fit your situation.