

2. Organize by cause. As we discussed in Chapter 8, causal arguments have their own unique strength in argumentation. Given their importance, you could frame a speech around a causal connection. For example, in debating a ban on indoor smoking, you could argue that cigarette smoke causes secondhand smoke, which is dangerous to nonsmokers.¹ This causal connection could then provide the basis for the entire speech.
3. Organize by reason. You and your team may uncover multiple reasons either to support or reject an issue. You could construct a speech around these. For instance, if the proposition was to ban the death penalty, you could organize your speech on the four or five key reasons your team identified for abolishing capital punishment.
4. Organize by question and answer. This arrangement seems the most obvious. Every debate proposition, although phrased declaratively, is really a question. Instead of “the U.N. should send peacekeeping troops to Burundi,” the proposition *could* read “should the U.N. send peacekeeping troops to Burundi?” As such, you could structure a speech around that question with the premise that the proposition is a vital question. For instance: “Is the situation in Burundi creating harms?” “Are these harms related to a lack of peacekeeping or law enforcement personnel?” “Is the United Nations an appropriate organization to send peacekeeping troops?” Your speech would include arguments answering these questions.

ARRANGING BY TIME/HISTORY

Another way to arrange arguments is by time or history. You can view debates as stories about specific topics and arguments. Stories have a beginning, middle, and end. Thus, you could arrange the speech and arguments chronologically, describing the controversial issue, then discussing the issue’s relevance to contemporary society, and finally offering a view of the world after the issue is settled. For example, if a proposition stated, “the world should reduce its dependence on oil,” you could describe world dependence on oil, then discuss the implications of current oil dependency, and finally portray the future in which the world is independent of oil.

ARRANGING BY PROBLEM-SOLUTION

Debaters can also structure their position in a problem-solution format. As debate is primarily concerned with societal problems and potential solutions, this format is often ideal. As debater, you would begin by articulating the problem and then discuss it in depth. Next, you would propose a solution and explain the merits of your plan. For instance, if the proposition states that the U.N. should address world hunger, you would first discuss the problem of world hunger and then suggest how the U.N. can combat it, explaining the benefits of your plan.

ARRANGING BY RELATIONSHIP

Occasionally a proposition requires debaters to see relationships between ideas. When this occurs, you should structure your speech around such rela-