

tionships. For example, if you were involved in a debate of the proposition that national identity is more important than religious identity, you could base your speech on the contrasts between nation and religion, i.e., the secular versus theological effects on identity.

STYLE AND DELIVERY

To succeed in debate you and your team must do more than organize your arguments clearly. You must deliver them with style, presenting them eloquently, accurately, and in a rhetorically powerful manner. You must use not only your mind but also your voice and body to give the most persuasive speech possible.

COMPONENTS OF STYLE

Style involves both the use of language and the use of the voice. Use of language includes clarity, eloquence, and accuracy; use of the voice includes vocal clutter, pitch, rate, and volume.

Clarity refers to the speaker's precision of thought and speech. You should be able to clearly elaborate on the meanings of your words and arguments. Occasionally opponents in a debate have difficulty understanding the way an argument is presented. When this occurs, you should be able to provide alternate explanations, including examples.

Eloquence is a debater's ability to speak fluently and persuasively. It involves having and using a large vocabulary, merging tone with language, and utilizing visual language. For example, when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. declared, "I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character,"² he was engaging in eloquent speech. Eloquence, while an aspect of style and delivery, is also related to the subject matter. Obviously, a speech is more eloquent when it can tie persuasive style to the argument at hand.

Accuracy is the skill of conveying precisely what you mean. Occasionally a speaker thinks one thing but says another. If your stance in a debate is that immigration should be monitored for security purposes, you must be precise in your description of exactly how immigration should be overseen. Failure to do so could provide the impression that certain immigrant groups are more of a risk or are more of a problem than other groups, thereby feeding into stereotypes and prejudices. As language is arbitrary, debaters should be very careful in how they present arguments.

Vocal clutter includes "ahhs," "umms," and other unnecessary sounds and language. Eliminate them! Vocal clutter fills speech time without adding value. Clutter not only takes up precious time, it also signals to the audience—especially the judge—that you are not focused or are not familiar with your material.

Pitch refers to the height or depth of a voice. Studies have shown that audiences prefer medium-range pitches, so practice keeping your voice at that level. But remember to vary your pitch to emphasize the mood you are working to convey. A high-pitched voice indicates sharp emotion, while a lower one indicates