

The state should provide education only in its official language. (Simple policy)

Some people are able to move objects “psychic energy.” (Description)

Capital punishment is state sanctioned murder. (Definition)

This country ought to have open borders. (Simple policy)

Pollution is currently causing global warming. (Cause-and-effect relationship)

Individual autonomy is more important than community. (Comparative value)

- Following the identification of propositions, instructors can ask questions to show that different types of propositions carry different burdens. For example, policy resolutions require the defense of some kind of action while value resolutions may not.

15. EVALUATE THE RESOLUTION

GOAL:

To encourage students to focus on what makes a resolution good or bad.

METHOD:

- Present students with a list of possible resolutions, including some recently debated resolutions. Include some that are unclear, some that contain no controversy, some that have obviously biased language, some that focus on multiple ideas, and some that focus on insignificant or uninteresting issues.
- Working alone or in groups, students should accept or reject each resolution and give a reason for their decision.
- As students present their reasons to the class, the instructor can record all of the criteria for good resolutions that get mentioned.

16. SELECTIVE DEFINITION

GOAL:

To reinforce the notion that only some terms need to be defined, and to initiate a discussion on what makes a definition good or bad.

METHOD:

- Using a list of recent resolutions, ask students to indicate which terms might require definition.
- Then ask students to brainstorm about ways to define those terms and to discuss which definitions might be better and why.
- As students present their choices to the class, the instructor can keep a list of the criteria for developing good definitions.