

Lesson 3: Rebuttal

What is a rebuttal?

The rebuttal is the second speech of the round and is where a debater directly responds to their opponents arguments. In this speech you should focus on proving why all the arguments in your opponent's case are wrong.

What to do during a rebuttal?

A good rebuttal is organized and balanced. Respond to your opponent's arguments in the exact order they were presented and number your responses -this is called signposting-. Don't spend too much time on one of their arguments and neglect the other.

Different types of responses

When responding to the opponent's case, there are a variety of responses you are able to make. There are four main responses:

Non Unique → states that your opponents impact is already happening in the status quo

De-links → explains why the link isn't true

Mitigation → says that your opponent's are overstating their impact

Turns → argues that your opponent's argument is actually a reason to vote for you

We'll explain this with an example :

Let's say you're debating **Resolved: Physical Education should be mandatory in schools**. Your opponents argue "P.E leads to better school performance because of a higher focus span (link)."

Here are the types of responses you can make.

Non Unique → "In schools without mandatory PE school performance is already at an all time high, so sports wouldn't really make a difference." In other words their impact of better school performance already happens in both worlds.

Mitigation → "P.E. is only a small facet of kids' lives; the main impacts on attention span are sleep and nutrition, not P.E." Even if P.E. does increase focus, it isn't a major factor on a students overall attention span.

De-Link → "P.E gives kids short-term energy, causing them to be more hyperactive and lose focus in class." Therefore P.E. doesn't increase attention spans.

Turns → "A higher focus span for kids is often really bad, because it causes kids to burn out after doing work." This means P.E. does increase attention spans, but this is bad.

