

Lesson 4: Summary

Often regarded as the hardest speech in the round, the summary speech lasts for 3 mins and is the third speech given in the round. The purpose of the summary speech is to narrow down the round into a few key ideas.

First Summary vs. Second Summary

Although the first and second summary speeches share the same essence, they do differ in certain aspects. If you are the first speaking team—giving the first summary—you would likely focus on collapsing on your strongest arguments. This means emphasizing and clarifying your strongest points to help the judge better understand your arguments. Additionally, as the first summary speaker, you are responsible for frontlining, which involves defending your case for the first time and responding to your opponents' rebuttals. On the other hand, if you are giving the second summary, you would primarily use the speech to mostly build upon the arguments made by your partner. You can extend and reinforce their points and emphasize the strengths of your team's position.

Strategizing

In prep time, you and your partner should discuss exactly what arguments and defense you plan to extend in summary, as it is the most crucial speech in the entire round.

Collapsing

On offense (why the judge should vote for YOU), you should pick either a contention or a subpoint that will be the piece of offense that your team uses to win the round on your side of the flow.

When collapsing, look for arguments with little or weak defense from the opponents—this may be the argument with the fewest responses, or may be an argument with many, poorly-explained arguments. In any case, the goal is to collapse on the argument you feel will win you the round. You do not have to rebut your opponents' responses on the contentions on which you do not collapse but, make sure you respond to all turns to prevent your opponents from gaining offense.

Defense

Extending defense (why the judge SHOULDN'T vote for your opponents) on your opponent's case is equally important. Ensure that responses that your partner makes in rebuttal are cited again in your summary. If you give the second summary, your opponents may have already collapsed—if so, provide defense only on the arguments they extend in first summary.

When to Weigh

In a summary speech, you should always weigh towards the end of the speech. Weighing in the summary speech is crucial for providing a reference point to the judge and enabling your partner to extend it in the final focus. Allocate adequate time (at least 30 seconds) for weighing to compare arguments and impacts. Analyze importance, magnitude, and probability to demonstrate why your arguments outweigh your opponents'. Weighing establishes a framework for the judge's decision-making process and enhances your chances of winning.