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## Guide

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## Rules

### Introduction

A debate round has two teams with two debaters each and a Speaker. The Speaker serves as both the judge and arbiter of the rules during the round. Note here that "Speaker" always refers to the judge from this point forward. One team represents the Government, while the other represents the Opposition. The Government team is composed of a Prime Minister, who speaks twice, and a Member of Government, who speaks once. The Opposition team is composed of a Leader of the Opposition, who speaks twice, and a Member of the Opposition, who speaks once. The Government proposes a specific case statement, which the government team must demonstrate to be correct. The Opposition does not have to propose anything, but must demonstrate that the case statement is not correct. The Speaker decides at the end of the round, based on the arguments made in the round, whether the Government has proved its case or whether the Opposition has disproved it. The team which met its burden more convincingly wins.

### Order and Timing of Speeches

- Prime Minister Constructive (PMC): 7 minutes
- Leader of the Opposition Constructive (LOC): 8 minutes
- Member of the Government Constructive (MG or MGC): 8 minutes
- Member of the Opposition Constructive (MO or MOC): 8 minutes
- Leader of Opposition Rebuttal (LOR): 4 minutes
- Prime Minister Rebuttal (PMR): 5 minutes

Note: Each speech has a thirty second grace period.

### New Arguments

New arguments can be made at any time during the first four speeches. These speeches are called constructives. New arguments cannot be made during rebuttals, the last two speeches of the round. The Prime Minister can, however, respond to new opposition arguments that were made during the MO. So

## News

### 04/28/2015

Congratulations to the 2015-2016 APDA Board!

- President: Sean Leonard
- VP-Operations: Dan Takash
- VP-Finance: Matt Kahn
- Members-at-Large: Jerusalem Demas, Laura Coughlin, Kyle Grigel

### 03/18/2014

Congratulations to the 2014-2015 APDA Board!

- President: David Israel
- VP-Operations: Taylor Blackburn
- VP-Finance: Nate Rifkin
- Members-at-Large: Aaron Murphy, Nathaniel Donahue, Priyanha Nadasabesan

### 04/25/2013

Be on the lookout for APDA Committee applications. They will be posted towards the end of May. We

the PMR may contain new responses, but not new arguments.

### Points of Information

During the PMC, LOC, MG, MO debaters may rise to ask the debater who is speaking a question or insert a short statement. The procedure for this is as follows:

1. The debater who wishes to ask a Point of Information (POI) rises from his or her seat, places one hand on top of his or her head and extends his or her other arm to signal that he or she has a point.
2. The debater who is speaking may choose to recognize the point or not. If the debater does not want to recognize the point, he or she simply says "No thank you," or waves the questioner off. The questioner then sits down. A debater may not simply interrupt if his or her point is not taken.
3. If the debater who is speaking recognizes the point, then he or she says "On that point" and allows the questioner to give their point. At any time, the debater whose speech it is may stop the POI and tell the questioner to sit down.

The debater who is speaking does not have to recognize or refuse the point immediately. She/he can leave the questioner standing until it is convenient for the debater who is speaking to indicate whether the point will be entertained. Some debaters ask a special form of POI called a point of clarification. Clarification means that a debater does not understand the case or a particular argument. If possible, the speaker should try to answer the clarification to ensure a confusion-free debate round. Do not abuse the idea of clarification by asking too many clarification questions or disguising arguments as clarification.

### Points of Order

A point of order is raised when a competitor believes that one of the rules of debate is being broken. There are two circumstances during a debate round under which a debater should raise a point of order. The first is when the debater who is speaking has exceeded her/his grace period. The second is when a debater introduces a new argument during one of the two rebuttal speeches. The procedure for either point is as follows:

1. The debater rises from his or her seat and says "Point of Order."
2. The debater who is speaking stops their speech.
3. The debater who rose on the point indicates what rules violation they are raising the point on by saying "the speaker is overtime" or "the speaker just made the new argument \_\_\_\_\_ which is new in rebuttal."
4. The speaker of the round, who has been judging the debate, will rule the point "Well Taken" or "Not Well Taken."

A well taken point means that the speaker must conclude their speech if they are over time or that the new point will not be considered as it was offered during a rebuttal. A not well taken point means that the speaker disagrees with the point and will allow the debater to go on speaking or will consider the argument as not being new. The speaker, not the debater who is speaking, may also rule the point "under consideration," which means that the speaker will determine whether the point is true at a later time. "Under consideration" only applies to new arguments in rebuttal, not to time limits.

Although debaters may break other rules, for example, the Government may run a specific knowledge case, debaters do not need to bring up these violations on points of order. These violations should be mentioned during a regular speech. A debater may not argue about a point of order. Once a debater has

encourage everyone to apply!

**03/22/2013**

Congratulations to the 2013-2014 APDA Board!

- President: Josh Zoffer
- VP-Operations: Ashley Novak
- VP-Finance: David Israel
- Members-at-Large: Zach Bakal, Taylor Blackburn, Dan Cobos

## Current Standings

### Team of the Year

- 1: Wilson & Lynyak (Yale)
- 2: Zhang & Saffran (Yale)
- 3: Elliott & Slater (Stanford)
- T-4: Zboray & Kropper (Maryland)
- T-4: Cathcart & Keung (Brown)

### Speaker of the Year

- 1: Harry Elliott (Stanford)
- 2: Nathan Raab (Princeton)
- T-3: Andrew Bowles (George Washington)
- T-3: Evan Lynyak (Yale)
- 5: Henry Zhang (Yale)

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stated a point, all debaters must remain quiet while the speaker rules on the point.

### **Points of Personal Privilege**

These are almost never used. Do not rise on a point of personal privilege unless you have been deeply insulted on a personal level by an intentional attack on your person. The procedure for a point of personal privilege is:

1. Rise and say, "Point of personal privilege."
2. The speaker will say "Point well taken" or "Point not well taken."
3. The debate continues, while the speaker notes down any serious offences.

Points of Personal Privilege may also be used for a personal emergency. Note: Speakers will take into consideration extremely rude behavior without any debater raising a point, so there is no need to do so.

### **Cases and Resolutions**

APDA has very few rules and regulations regarding cases. Debaters should, however, clearly understand how a case functions in a debate round and how each side may defend and attack the case. The term "case" refers to the position the Government team has chosen to defend. Some people also use the term "case" to mean the entirety of arguments presented by one side in a debate round. In that sense, both Government and Opposition could have a case. The rules and regulations apply to the first meaning of the word "case." Throughout these rules, assume that "case" refers to the position of the Government and the arguments that team has advanced for that position. Cases must link appropriately to the resolution. The resolution will be read when pairings are announced. A resolution can be a phrase or sentence that forms the starting point for the debate. The Prime Minister begins each debate by repeating the resolution and verbally connecting that resolution to the case statement of the government team. There are three types of links which the Prime Minister may be called on to make:

#### **Loose Link**

The most common type of link, a loose link means that the PM only has to make a passing connection to the resolution. The link cannot be a voting issue in the round and the resolution will often be something outrageous. If the resolution were, "Attack dogs have all the fun," a suitable loose link could be: "Attack dogs have all the fun. Their viciousness makes them successful. I want to talk about some other vicious people, the New York City Police department. I propose that each New York City police officer be required to spend one day a year in a public school teaching students about their rights under the constitution." This example demonstrates that a loose link resolution will often be unrelated to the case statement of the Government.

#### **Tight Link**

A tight link forces the Prime Minister to link to and argue a case that complies with a position prompted by the resolution. Examine the tight link resolution "This house would legalize freedom." The Prime minister could link to a case about legalizing drugs, legalizing gay marriage or embargoing China until it granted freedom of the press. A link to the case "We should fix an explosive collar around every US citizen, so that we can terminate trouble makers" would be poor, because the fascist policy proposed above does not legalize freedom in any meaningful sense. Poor tight links can be a voting issue against the government.

#### **Straight Link**

This type of link means that the resolution is the case statement. "The United States should assassinate Saddam Hussein" means just that - kill him. It does not mean maim, wound, embargo or anything else. Not following a tight link would be a big mistake, because the judge cannot vote for you. Do not try to dodge the meaning of the resolution by using obscure definitions of words. The term "United States" in the example resolution does not mean "United States of a Free Kurdistan." It means "United States of America."

Cases have three other requirements. They must not be status-quo. That means they cannot support a position that people generally agree on or that has already been enshrined in law. The case The United States should not allow child labor would be unacceptable, because child labor has already been outlawed. This rule applies primarily to policy cases which propose a specific law or plan, because the total of all current laws and plans and traditions constitutes the status quo. Cases also cannot be tight or tautological, and they must not be specific knowledge. These conditions are discussed below.

### **Tight Cases and Tautologies**

Tight cases are cases which the opposition does not feel they are able to argue the opposition side of fairly. Even if there are some minor arguments for opposition, a case is tight if it does not allow the opposition to make arguments which could beat the case. "People should not be dragged from their homes randomly by boy scouts and subjected to electro-shock therapy" would constitute a tight case. Even if someone could conceive of a good reason to shock random people or a possible psychological benefits to young boy scouts from earning their torture merit badge, the case falls to the government side easily. Tautologies are one step further. These are government case statements which are self-evidently true. Earth is smaller than the Sun, for example, is a tautology. There can be no argument with this factual statement. More commonly, a tautology occurs when a certain position is the only option; e.g., "Clinton is the best Democratic president since 1981."

If a PM proposes a tight case, the LO must point this out during the LOC. Ordinarily, the LO would then propose an alternative version of the case statement which the opposition would be willing to oppose. If the Government team accepts this alternative, then the debate can be judged as if the alternative were the original case statement. If the LO does not propose an alternative or the government does not accept the alternative then the key issue in the round is whether or not the governments case is tight or tautological. If the opposition proves that the case is tight, then the opposition wins. If the government proves that the opposition could have beaten the case, then the opposition loses. Regardless of how the round goes, both sides should try to argue their side as effectively as possible.

Please note that you should offer reasons why a case is tight. "I am not good enough to beat this case" does not mean that the case is tight. "No moral person can argue for the torture of innocents without cause" does constitute an argument for tightness. Certain cases may be considered "APDA tight." That means that although some people argue for each side of the debate, the general characteristics of APDA as a community of college students make the opposition side too difficult to defend. Legalizing sodomy may be debatable, but a vast majority of APDA debaters would support that case, so the case could be considered tight. Debaters who choose to run a government case in favor of banning sodomy would be forced to defend the position they choose.

### **Specific Knowledge Cases**

Sometimes the government team will propose a case that deals with specialized subject matter that makes the case un-debatable. The case "NASA should replace the current sealant used on the space shuttle with hypoxynucleotide-C4598" would be specific knowledge. It may be that there are very good reasons to replace the compound or to keep the old compound, so the case would not be tight. The subject matter of the debate, however, would revolve around very specific scientific knowledge which

only chemical engineers would have. The opposition should stand up in the LOC and say that the case is specific knowledge and attempt to debate or argue whatever they can. Even though I do not know about those particular chemical sealants, for example, I could argue that the old sealant must work to some degree, because we have been launching so many shuttles during the past six years. I could further say that NASA has limited funding and should concentrate its efforts on the Mars program instead of sealants which do not constitute a significant threat. All of those arguments can be made without knowing about the specific topic. The government team would be heavily penalized for running a specific knowledge case and the opposition would win in the above example. Parliamentary debate does not allow evidence. Debates which require research may well be considered specific knowledge, unless the Government team can adequately explain all of the relevant information.

Most cases will not be as clear cut as the one above. The standard we apply on APDA is that of the "reasonable college student." A well-informed student should be able to debate the topic. Debaters may also think of a New York Times standard. "Could I read and debate about the subject of this debate based on information available in the New York Times?" This means that discussing WWII or the Kosovo conflict would be fair game. The standard should not be abused by arguing that a person could read all about a specific merger deal in the business section, so a debate about the merger of two European software companies would be general knowledge. General knowledge would be found on the front page or in major articles in the national or international sections of the paper.

The fact that an individual does not know about a particular area does not mean that it is specific knowledge. Important events in history, major works of literature and current events are general knowledge. The opposition team can, however, ask the Government team for an outline of the facts in a particular case. The Government team must disclose all the information. They may not try to win by concealing the truth. Even cases which could be specific knowledge are not if the Government teams does an adequate job of explaining the situation and giving the opposition team the facts required to construct an opposition. One could, for example, run a case about Korean War policy provided that they outlined who fought in the war, the general political circumstances of the time and any major events that had recently occurred. The Korean War began in the 1950s, so the government would mention that after WWII the world had polarized along capitalist and communist lines and that the USSR had demonstrated its nuclear capability prior to the start of the war. The United States presence in the Philippines might also be relevant, but the grain production in Outer Mongolia for the years 1955-60 would not be relevant; the Government team would be expected to know and outline for the Opposition US military presence in the far east, but not specific, unimportant events. Despite the fact that the Korean War is a major event in the 20th century, the Government team must be prepared to outline the conflict for uninformed opponents. The Opposition should also be given ample opportunity to ask questions about the case and the time period.

Many APDA debaters know a lot about certain specific areas, for example, constitutional interpretation. Although a successful debater should probably learn about some of these topics, the burden rests with the government to adequately explain what the debate is about. The case "The Supreme Court should reverse its ruling in *Ambach v Norwick*" would be specific knowledge unless the government clearly laid out the issue in the case and framed a debate which someone without legal training could win.

Other specific knowledge topics could include baseball realignment, a particular movie or your favorite TV show. The fact that MASH and Seinfeld had high TV ratings does not mean that everyone should be expected to know the details of the characters or anything about certain plot lines. The government can still make a good debate about specific knowledge by introducing the case and explaining the situation properly.

### **Time/Space Cases**

The Government may choose to run a special kind of case referred to as time-space. Time-space means that the Government team places the judge in the role of a particular person or decision making body at a particular time in history in a particular place or position. The judge must then decide the round based on the viewpoint of those people in that situation. The case "You are Bill Clinton in 1991, do not seek the Presidential nomination" would be a time-space case, because the judge must adopt the persona of Clinton and view the round from the perspective of 1991. Note that the government does not have to specify each parameter or person, time and place. If these factors are not specified, assume the reasonable or average circumstance. The example above does not specify a particular place, because the decision to run for the nomination was made over a period of time in several different places. When no person is included, assume the persona of an average person. If Government does not specify a time, assume the current day. The Opposition should always have the opportunity to ask the Government exactly who, when and where a particular case is set. To introduce a time-space case, the Prime Minister should specify that the case is time-space and then clearly tell the judge "You are \_\_\_\_\_. The time is \_\_\_\_\_. You should [insert the case statement]."

Time-space cases are subject to all of the rules for regular cases, including tightness and specific knowledge. Two extra rules must be considered in a time-space situation. First, events that have not happened yet or facts that are not yet true in the specified time period may not be used in a historical case. If the Government team has set its case in the 1800s, the Opposition cannot make arguments about nuclear war or personal computers. This rule has a nuanced exception. A team may refer to future events in order to prove facts that have occurred in the time of the case, if the validity of their facts is questioned. Examine the following example. The Government team runs a case about India a year before India tested its nuclear weapons. The Government chooses to make the speaker the government of India. The Opposition teams makes an argument about Indias nuclear capability to which the Government responds that India does not have nuclear weapons. The Government team has not told the truth. India did have nuclear weapons a year before it tested them and the speaker, acting as the Indian government, knows that India has nuclear weapons. In order to prove the fact about Indias nuclear capability, the Opposition may remind the judge that India tested it nuclear weapons a year after the time of the debate, which means that their weapons were ready or nearly complete at the time of the debate. The Indian government would know that, but the judge and the Government team might not. The only way for Opposition to prove its assertion about current facts (in the time of the case) is to talk about events that have not yet happened. This does not violate time-space, because the actual argument the Opposition makes uses only facts that are true at the time of the case. The future event only proves the validity of the Opposition argument. The Opposition could not assert that India will test nuclear arms in a year or that Pakistan will test nuclear arms in response. Opposition cannot argue that because the Indian government could not be sure that it would test, it could only be sure that it did have the weapons to test. The Indian government would also not know about the exact state of the Pakistani nuclear program or Pakistans plans to test. The Opposition could argue that India would have some idea that Pakistan had an advanced nuclear program, but could not state the facts with the same clarity as facts about the Indian government. If the time-space case had made the judge the Pakistani government, the Opposition could argue about the exact state of the Pakistani arms program, but would have to be more vague about the Indian program, because the speaker has different knowledge depending on which role the speaker adopts. The second extra rule deals with the nature of making the judge a particular person or group. People are not the same and do not view arguments the same way. Adolf Hitler and Ghandi have very different views on arguments about war, race and religion. The psychology of the judges persona should be considered when judging the round or making effective arguments. Consider the case "You are Hitler, do not attack the Russian during WWII." This case has many great arguments for it. No army has successfully survived the Russian winter. The Russians could be conquered later, after the fall of Britain. Fighting a war on two fronts will be very hard. The case, however, should not win. Adolf Hitler does not think like a rational person. He believes his armies are invincible, his conquests pre-ordained. The Opposition should point out these character flaws and then

make arguments that do appeal to Hitler. The Russians are of inferior racial stock. Their communist ways have left them weak. These arguments would not be particularly effective in an ordinary debate round, but they have devastating effects in the context of a particular time and place. Given these rules, the Government team must be careful to construct a case that can be argued from both sides. Cases which give the speaker an extreme set of psychological characteristics will often be psychological tautologies or psychological falsisms. A psychological tautology is a case that cannot be argued against because of the speaker's assumed psychology. "You are the Orthodox Jews of the Shas party, do not give up your claim to Jerusalem" would be a psychological tautology because this group of Orthodox Jews has a religious zeal that defines their character and does not permit negotiation on Jerusalem. "You are Yoda, surrender to the dark side of the force" would be a falsism, because Yoda's personality would never permit him to go to the dark side.

### **Cases and Casing**

Creating fun and debatable cases can be difficult, so many debaters think of cases in advance. The process of coming up with cases is called "casing." Although people think of ideas in advance, debaters should not research or over-prepare. Debaters should also refrain from running the same case too many times. Debating the same topic can be boring. Debaters often do not argue as effectively about an issue they have talked about too much. Debaters who rely on a small number of cases, moreover, do not develop the ability to debate about many different issues and will not enjoy success against better teams.

### **Counter-Cases**

The LO may elect, in the LOC only, to propose a counter-case. This case should be different from the status quo (the current situation in the world) and must be mutually exclusive with the Government's case. Mutually exclusive means that one could not do both what the Government and the Opposition propose. If, for example, the Government proposed that we legalize drugs, then the Opposition could propose that we switch strategy in the drug war while leaving drugs illegal. One cannot legalize drugs and have a war on illegal drugs at the same time. The Opposition could not, however, propose that we educate the public about the harms of drug use, because education can be done regardless of whether drugs are illegal. If the Opposition proposes a non-mutually exclusive counter-case, they will not gain credit for any arguments that stem from that case. Sometimes, the Opposition may propose a case which is not mutually exclusive by itself, but then demonstrate why the Opposition case will work better than the Government case or the Government case plus the counter-case. The Opposition has demonstrated that its case is superior to the Government case and that the Government case should not be adopted. Judges should allow this strategy. In the above example, the Opposition could say that education will solve most of the problems that legalizing drugs would. That would be non-mutually exclusive, so the judge should not credit the Opposition team for that type of counter-case. If the Opposition team argued, however, that education was more effective when drugs were illegal and that legalization did not solve any problems that education could not solve alone, then the Opposition would have presented arguments against the Government case that proved that the counter-case was preferable to the status-quo or a combination of the government and counter-case. That argument would aid the Opposition considerably.

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