The image features two large, thick black L-shaped brackets. One is positioned on the left side, with its vertical bar extending downwards and its horizontal bar extending to the right. The other is on the right side, with its vertical bar extending upwards and its horizontal bar extending to the left. These brackets frame the central text.

REBUTTAL SPEECHES

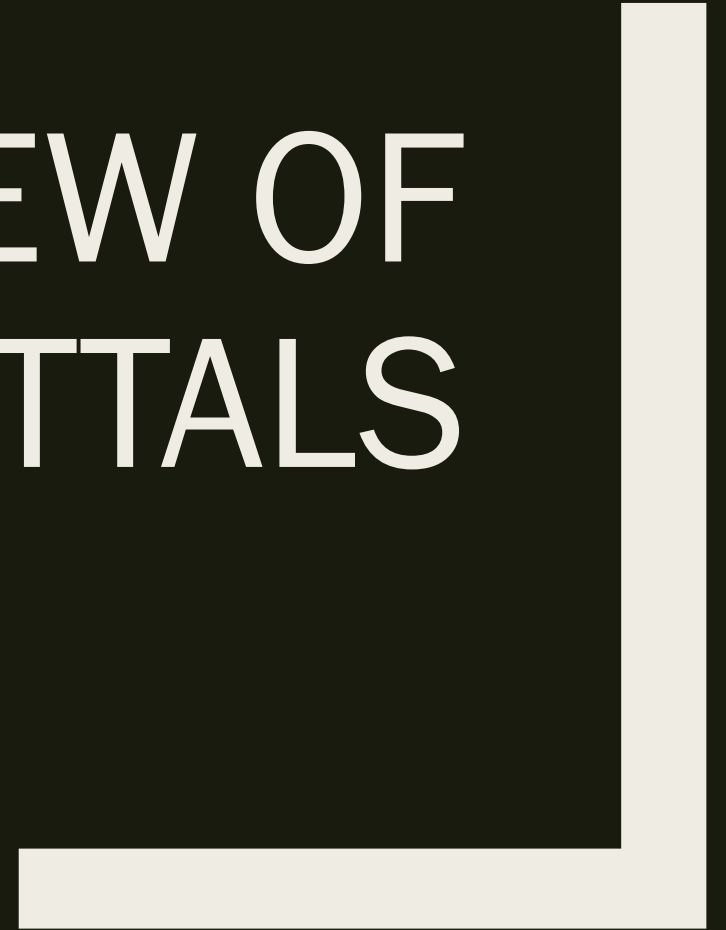
Overview

- Overview of Rebuttals
- Structuring a Rebuttal Speech
- General Advice
- Drills, Practice Exercises, & Other Resources

A Brief Note (or Three)

- Much of what I'll talk about is **not** and **should not be exclusive** to rebuttals
 - Weighing impacts? **Should be in constructive speeches**
 - Emphasizing the important elements of your side? **Should be in constructive speeches**
 - Using examples? **Should (absolutely) be in constructive speeches**
- Throughout this presentation I'll try to flag the difference between what is objectively considered to be true and strategies that have worked for me/teams I've been on
- I am not the Ministry of Truth in terms of rebuttal speeches – what I say is (hopefully) useful but there are (and should be) diverging opinions on what constitutes a “good” rebuttal

OVERVIEW OF REBUTTALS



Just so we're all on the same page...

- Rebuttal speeches are the final 2 speeches (OPP Rebuttal and PROP Rebuttal)
- No Points of Information are allowed
- New arguments are NOT allowed
- New examples ARE allowed
- Summarize the debate from the perspective of your side, indicating why your side won the debate

Rebuttal Fundamentals & Purpose

- Prove and explain why your side has **already won** the debate based upon the arguments/refutations that have **already been presented**
- At best, a rebuttal should **write the judge's Reason-For-Decision for them**
 - The RFD should be the judge's explanation of which team they voted for and why
 - A rebuttal should attempt to answer the question of: "Which team won and why?"
- Must be **comparative** (that is, must prove why your side wins **against** the other side, not just in isolation) and **reasonably objective** (that is, should not deliberately straw-man the opposing side or ignore massive portions of their case)
- Rebuttals are **not** beholden to the same set of norms or rules as constructive speeches
 - Most importantly, while constructive speeches have an obligation to adhere to the flow (i.e. "I'll respond to their first argument, then their second argument, then their third argument") rebuttals are more flexible and adaptable to the round
- *Thought Experiment: what would debate be like if we did not have rebuttal speeches? In other words, what would debate be like if we stopped the debate after the 2nd OPP Constructive?*
- Good rebuttals need to be aware of what your team is **WINNING** and **LOSING** on
 - *EX: dropped refutations, arguments, impacts, etc.*

Differences Between PROP and OPP Rebuttal

- Mostly the same... except...
- PROP Rebuttal is allowed to introduce new refutations in response to any **new** material (i.e. argumentation) presented in the 2nd OPP Constructive
 - “Material?” This could be:
 - A new line of refutation
 - A new warrant/mechanism for an existing argument
 - A new line of argumentation
 - *Possibly in the form of refutation*
 - *Possibly in the form of an additional contention*

Refutation in Prop Rebuttal

- Bad tendencies:
 - (1) Over respond
 - (2) Under respond
 - (3) Poor selection
- Test for responsiveness
 - (1) Does the argument/refutation deal directly with a major area of clash that I am going to talk about?
 - (2) Was the argument actually developed well? Does it have a clear claim/warrant/impact structure?
- Real Example: PROP Rebuttal
 - 2nd OPP makes the argument that privacy violations are unimportant because people forfeit their right to privacy when they go into public areas, irrespective of whether surveillance cameras are there
 - This is the first truly responsive argument made by OPP in response to PROP's argument about privacy violations!
- Hypothetical Example: Pretend you are PROP Rebuttal
 - Motion: This House Believes That governments should reclaim a large proportion of all donations to charities and redistribute that money to other charities on the basis of their effectiveness
 - 2nd OPP makes the argument that corrupt/non-democratic/non-accountable governments will reallocate the money inappropriately, e.g. the Trump administration won't let money go to pro-BLM causes such as the bail fund
 - This is really important to address, because if you don't it might win OPP the round!

How and When to Prep?

- You can prep *a little bit* in advance for rebuttal speeches, but you need to allow for flexibility and adaptability as the round plays out
 - *EX: a team might spend significantly less time on an argument than you are anticipating, or might run a very creative argument you hadn't previously thought of*
- OPP Rebuttal
 - Flow: 1st PROP, 1st OPP, 2nd PROP
 - 2nd OPP: prep your speech while also listening (even if not flowing all of) the 2nd OPP speech
 - Something that worked for me – flow the 2nd OPP speech when they are responding to PROP's arguments, and plan/prep your speech while the 2nd OPP speech is rebuilding OPP's own arguments
- PROP Rebuttal
 - Flow: 1st PROP, 1st OPP, 2nd PROP, 2nd OPP
 - OPP Rebuttal: prep your speech while also listening (even if not flowing) the OPP Rebuttal
- **Remember: use prep time in between speeches strategically!**

REBUTTAL STRATEGIES



In the meantime, any questions?

Warning #1: On (Virtually) All Motions, You WILL Have to “Drop” (Not Cover/Address) Material

- In 99.999% of debates, you just will not be able to cover every single argumentative idea that has been raised
 - This is what makes rebuttals so difficult to pull off successfully – you have to figure out what’s important and what isn’t
 - This means that a good structure for a rebuttal speech will allow you to focus on the **most important areas of the debate**
- Many debates have such a breadth of material such that rebuttals have to selectively cover the *most important arguments*
 - EX: This House Believes That the English language should be the primary language of instruction in developing countries
 - EX: This House Would break the United States up into multiple, independent sovereign countries
 - EX: This House Regrets the glorification of productivity
 - These are ALL debates with lots of possible arguments on both sides – in the rebuttal speech, you would have to crystallize the debate down into the most important issues

Warning #2: No Matter What “Format” You Use, PROP Rebuttal (Generally) Needs to Do Some Extra Stuff

- Clean up any “loose ends”
 - Did OPP accuse PROP of being internally inconsistent? Non-comparative? Lacking evidence?
 - Did OPP accuse PROP of dropping any arguments even when PROP didn’t actually drop those arguments?
 - These are things that PROP Rebuttal should, ideally, take care of at the top of their speech
- Rebuttal
 - There are multiple schools of thought on this
 - My experience: begin with “extraneous refutation” directed at the 2nd OPP Speech, rather than integrating that refutation into your speech

Strategy #1: Clash-Oriented Model (Voter Issues)

- In any debate, there should (hopefully 😊) be **clash**
 - This is debate, after all, so there should be some disagreement between the two teams
 - If you use this model of a rebuttal speech, you structure your speech **around the most important areas of the debate, i.e. the most important “clashes” in the debate**
- This model is one whereby a rebuttal speech focuses primarily on the major areas of clash in the debate
 - *Note: this **does not just mean** that you compare one of your contentions to one of your opponents’ contentions – rather, it means that you critically summarize the debate into several major points of summary*
 - You can think of “clashes” as “tradeoffs” – what are we “trading off” for?
 - For example, are “we” trading collective security for individual liberties?
- What does this look like?
 - In this debate...
 - Privacy vs Security
 - On “This House Believes That the criminal justice system should not consider retribution as a factor in sentencing”
 - “In my speech, I’m going to look at two major questions: First, what effect does this policy have on the amount of crime. Second, what is principally just for a state to do to those who commit crimes.”
 - Crime – recidivism/alienation from the state vs deterrence/vigilante violence
 - Principle – free will vs right to punish/social contract

Strategy #1: Clash-Oriented Model

- Examples of clash
 - This House Regrets the global proliferation of surveillance cameras
 - *Clash Area (1): Privacy vs. Security (rights tradeoff)*
 - *Clash Area (2): Are surveillance cameras effective?*
 - This House Supports a significant increase in the minimum wage
 - *Clash Area (1): Which side better benefits the overall economy?*
 - *Clash Area (2): Which side better benefits workers making the minimum wage?*
 - *Of course, there are other clashes!*
 - This House Would only allow university admission on the basis of standardized testing, as opposed to non-quantitative methods (e.g. essays, alumni interviews)
 - *Clash Area (1): Which method is less subject to bias/discrimination, i.e. which method is more equitable?*
 - *Clash Area (2): Which method allows universities to select the best or most deserving/qualified candidates?*
 - *As with the first motion, there are other clashes here, as well!*

Strategy #1: Clash-Oriented Model

Some ~Warnings~

- Don't waste time on unimportant issues! Spend time on what is most important
 - Example: this morning's debate!
 - OPP Rebuttal: good to not focus on arguments about cost (raised in 1st OPP), but the overview on eyewitness bias isn't a good use of time since it is never mentioned again/weighed against the arguments made by PROP
 - PROP Rebuttal: good to focus on clash over the effectiveness of surveillance cameras, but not enough time is spent on the "abuse" argument
- **DON'T** formulate clashes based directly on your contentions/arguments, **UNLESS** you made your arguments clash-oriented
 - EX: This House Believes That meritocracy is a myth invented by the rich
 - OPP Case: (1) Meritocracy is *not* a myth, (2) Meritocracy was not invented by the rich
 - OPP Rebuttal: (1) Is meritocracy a myth?, (2) Was meritocracy invented by the rich?
 - What's the problem? (1) Almost invariably, this winds up over-crediting your own arguments and under-crediting your opponents' arguments, (2) This is too similar to the constructive portion of the debate

Strategy #2: Worlds Approach

- Compare what the two “worlds” look like
 - What does the PROP world look like? What lives do people lead? How do societies function?
 - What does the OPP world look like? What lives do people lead? How do societies function?
 - Most importantly, **what is different between the two worlds** – and is it for the better or worse?
- What does this look like?
 - In this debate...
 - “In my speech, I’m going to look at how the PROP world differs from the OPP world, and prove that the minor benefits of crime reduction that the Opposition focuses on are categorically less important than the privacy benefits we provide”
- *Warnings*
 - This strategy oftentimes backfires because speakers wind up characterizing “their” world as phenomenal and the other side’s world as terrible
 - EX: This House Believes That education systems should indoctrinate students into the belief that they are personally responsible for suffering in the developing world
 - PROP Rebuttal – “PROP ends global poverty and stops massive amounts of suffering, while OPP wants students to remain in their privileged cocoons”
 - This strategy sometimes ignores the issue of *burdens* – what did the other team have to prove and why have they failed to prove that?

Strategy #3: “If You Believe X, Else If You Do Believe X”

- Either: (A) Find a “contingency” area of clash and win on that clash (for example, OPP’s case is **contingent** upon proving that surveillance cameras are effective), or (B) Find an argument that singlehandedly beats the best possible version of your opponent’s case
 - EX: “This House Believes That the International Criminal Court should indict President Trump for crimes against humanity”
 - PROP: This will make the perception of the court (which is presently perceived as neo-colonialist and racist) better
- What does this look like?
 - “I’m going to look at two issues in this speech: First, are surveillance cameras effective at any of the things that OPP talks about? Second, even if you believe that surveillance cameras ARE effective per OPP’s logic, why should we care more about societal harms and invasions of privacy than security?”
- When is this useful?
 - **Debates where there is disagreement over definitions**
 - EX: “If you believe PROP’s definitions, here’s why we win. Else, if you believe OPP’s definitions, here’s why we win.”
 - Debates involving principled (i.e. not consequence-based) arguments
 - EX: “This House Supports the use of torture in the fight against terrorism” – OPP might claim that torture is immoral, even if it were to lead to good outcomes (which OPP should also contest)
 - EX: “I’m going to look at two issues in this speech. First, is it ever morally acceptable to use torture. Second, even if it is morally acceptable, does using torture achieve anything.”

WEIGHING



Wickedly Wonderful Ways of Weighing

- Magnitude
 - *Which impact affects the greatest number of people?*
 - *Which impact has the greatest size or intensity?*
 - Example: PROP might say that their impacts relating to privacy accrue to ALL people whereas OPP's benefits accrue to a far smaller number of people
 - Example: OPP might say that the benefits of crime reduction are significant (e.g. saving life, protecting communities) but the harms of privacy violation are small
- Probability
 - *Which impacts are most likely?*
 - *Which characterization of some group/actor/nation is most reasonable?*
- Timeframe
 - *Which impact has the greatest temporal significance?*
 - Example: short term vs long term impacts

GENERAL ADVICE

Things That Work, and Things That Don't



Some General Advice

- BE GENEROUS TO THE OTHER TEAM – DO NOT STRAW MAN/DELIBERATELY ADDRESS A WEAKER VERSION OF THEIR ARGUMENT
 - *Grrrrr.....*
- LISTEN CAREFULLY TO YOUR PARTNERS – DID THEY **ACTUALLY** PROVE WHAT THEY SET OUT TO PROVE?
 - *Don't assume that, just because an argument makes sense to you, it makes sense to the judge*
- Attempt to monitor the judge for indications of believing arguments
 - *Yes, this doesn't always work... but it can be helpful!*
 - *Also, don't read into this too much... For instance, I shake my head side to side when I hear a claim that I think is really interesting, which could – very easily – be interpreted as a sign of disagreement*
- **Point out dropped arguments!!!**

New Examples in Rebuttal?

- Real world ones are great, rather than abstract evidence
 - Today's debate
 - PROP: give more examples of countries with predatory/abusive usage of surveillance, e.g. Eritrea/Turkmenistan/North Korea, etc.
 - OPP: give more examples of cities or geographic regions where the use of surveillance has reduced/solved crime
 - This House Would colonize Mars – PROP: example of technological development from the Apollo missions, e.g. medical equipment
 - This House Would ban religious advocacy in public areas – OPP: example of how limiting speech leads to more extremism in public discourse
 - This House Regrets the existence of Twitter's fact-checking feature – OPP: example of Facebook's policy on free speech
 - This House Would break up consistently dominant political parties – PROP: example(s) of the BJP and Congress Party in India
 - This House Believes That the United States should allocate two additional Senate seats to the American diaspora – PROP: examples of/in the African Union
- Examples as refutation
 - Obviously, new refutations are *not* permitted in rebuttal speeches – however, using examples to highlight logical inconsistencies or absurdities in your opponents' argument can be extremely effective!
 - *Strategy* – as a rebuttal speaker, whenever you hear an argument made by your opponents that doesn't have clear grounding in the real world, i.e. there are no examples/evidence mentioned, think if there's an easy example to defeat the argument
 - This House Believes That social justice movements should primary seek change through the courts rather than through the legislature
 - OPP: "Legislative bodies are more progressive than courts"
 - PROP Response (in Rebuttal): give examples like Roe v. Wade, Brown v. Board of Education, Netherlands v. Urgenda Foundation

Communication is Crucial!

- On Opposition, communication between the 2nd OPP speaker and the OPP Rebuttal speaker is crucial
 - *2nd OPP should clean up any "loose ends," e.g. accusations of fabricating evidence, allegations of internal inconsistencies/contradictions, etc.*
 - *OPP Rebuttal should communicate any material (i.e. arguments) that is important for OPP to win important clashes*
- On Proposition, communication between PROP Rebuttal and the 2nd PROP Speaker is also important
 - *This is, after all, PROP's only chance to respond to the brunt of Opposition's argumentation*

“Round Vision”

- Know what you’re winning, know what you’re losing on
 - *Highly effective to prioritize issues that you are **winning** on, don’t spend significant time on issues that you are **losing** on*
- Know what’s most important in the round
 - As I mentioned earlier, **relentlessly prioritize time on what is important**
- As a non-rebuttal speaker, know what the major clashes are and make sure to address them
 - *For instance, when constructing your case, make sure to focus on what will be most important later in the round!*
 - I think of this as “clash-oriented” casing

Things That Can be Helpful?

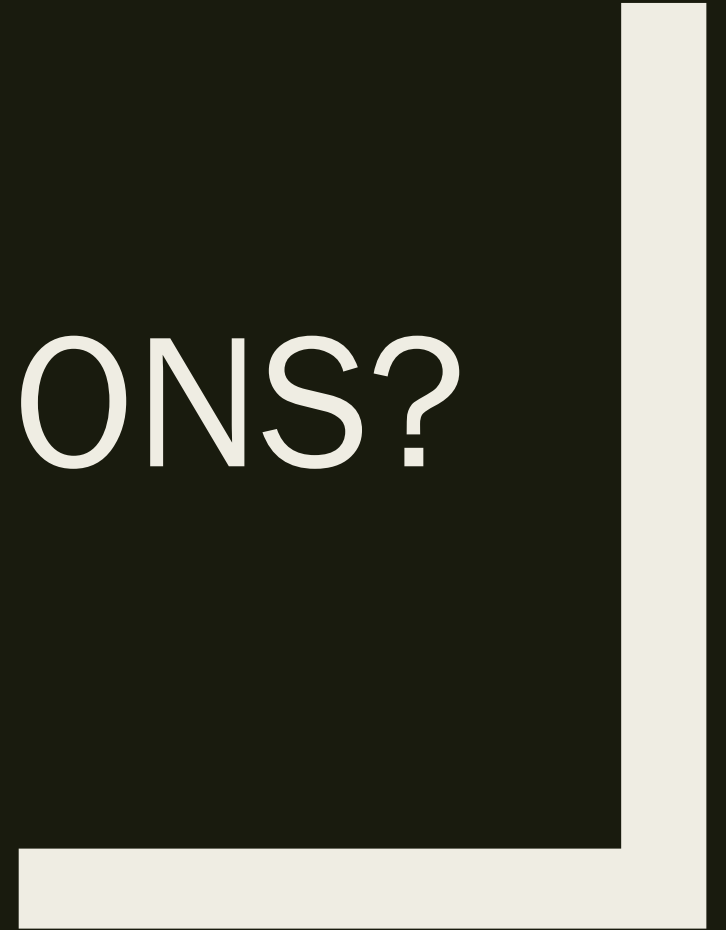
- “Wow, I can’t believe our judge didn’t remember that we said X”
 - Imagine what would happen if you got back a ballot that ignored some argument you made – make sure that doesn’t happen!
- “Why on earth would our judge think that X is more important than Y?!?!?”
 - Explain this to judges! **Do the weighing for the judges!**
- Think about your intro quote, and make sure you tie it in later if it has important content!!!



FLOW!!!!

“tracking” the arguments

QUESTIONS?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Additional Resources

- Drills/Practice Exercises
 - Time efficiency – do a practice debate with 4 constructive speeches. Have the rebuttal speaker give a 5 minute speech. Give feedback. Then make them give the same speech (i.e. same content) in 3.5 minutes
 - Identifying important clashes – do a practice debate, but stop the debate after every speech and discuss what each speaker contributed to major areas of clash
 - Winning on clashes – do a practice round with 4 constructive speeches. Stop the debate, deliberate, and announce a result and RFD as if the debate were over at that point. Then have the rebuttal speeches go
 - Note: best ways to get better at rebuttals are (A) practicing rebuttals, (B) flowing and (C) judging
- Anything about WSDC Reply speeches will be very similar in nature to Parli-style rebuttals
- Additional resources
 - *[Adapted from BP]* [Arth Mishra on Whip Speeches](#)
 - *[Adapted from WSDC]* [Guide to Reply Speeches](#)
- Good rounds
 - *2003 APDA Nationals Finals [LOR/PMR]*
 - *Angela Li [Team Canada] Reply Speeches*