

Harangue

Issue 1

2013

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Welcome to Harangue 2013

Dear Debaters,

Welcome to the student magazine of the 2013 DAV Schools Competition!

Harangue is a publication that strives to arm student debaters, like you, with tips to improve your Matter, Manner and Method. The DAV has published the Harangue for a while now in various forms, and I sincerely hope that you find Harangue to be a helpful and informative read.

I am always willing to hear what you liked and disliked about Harangue, as well as what you want to see in future editions. It is my desire to ensure this magazine best meets the needs and expectations of its readers.

I hope you enjoy Harangue, and I wish you all the best of luck for the Schools Competition!

Matthew Rossi, Publications Officer.

Any submissions or feedback for Harangue would be greatly appreciated, particularly recommendations for article topics. Please contact Matthew at publications@dav.com.au

Round 5 Draws

You may have noticed round 5 draws were not published on the DAV website at the beginning of the year. It's not because we are forgetful! We create a special draw for this round which is based on your team's ladder points from the previous rounds. In round 5 your team will be drawn against a team which has performed similarly to your own (the exception being if teams have competed against each other previously in this year's competition - we want to keep things interesting for everyone!)

In the week following your round 4 debates, check the [DAV website](#) to see if your round 5 draw has been created.

Three Tips to instantly improve your debating

Don't start off your speech by introducing yourself, your speaking position, and your team's side.

The first thirty seconds of your speech are the ones that people are dedicatedly listening to you. If you are telling people things they already know, they will tune out. Start instead with something snappy, a sentence that relates to the topic and your team's stance on the topic.

Try not to read too often from your cue cards.

This is a piece of feedback that adjudicators will often give, so try and avoid it. Remember you're speaking, not reading. If you don't have too much material written out on your cue cards you won't be reading from them. This is why we encourage students to not write out their speeches entirely - because they end up reading from their cards.

Go out with a bang - your final line is important.

This is a particularly pertinent piece of advice for secret topics as you don't have time to write out your speech fully. Don't get up to speak without an endgame in mind. Prepare the last line that you're going to say, which should sum up your case, and be a strong ending on your team's stance, written out in full. You sound like you know your stuff, and that you have a handle on the topic.

Alice Boer is a student at the University of Melbourne completing her Bachelor of Arts. She is an experienced Coach and DAV Adjudicator. Alice has also represented the Melbourne University Debating Society in international tournaments.

Chairing a debate

Although the role of the chairperson may seem small, a competent chairperson can help a debate proceed smoothly, which is pleasant for everyone.

Here are some things to remember:

1. State the topic: this might seem obvious, but the audience may not have heard it before. It's also a good idea in case one team has a different wording to the other.

2. Introduce the teams.

3. Announce the speaking times: although everyone should know their speaking times, announcing them at the start of the debate means that all speakers are aware of them, and protects you from accusations of bias.

4. Call on each speaker: introduce each speaker only when the adjudicator indicates to you that they're ready.

5. Timing: please keep time carefully. To signal the time, you should knock on the

desk, clap your hands, or ring a bell. Ensure all can hear the sound.

Grade	Warning	Final
A or B	6 mins	8 mins
C	5 mins	6 mins
D	4 mins	5 mins

6. At the end of each speech: announce the length of the speech, and then wait for the adjudicator to signal that they're ready for the next speaker.

7. At the end of the last speech: inform the audience that the adjudicator is deliberating, and will deliver their adjudication in a few minutes.

Thanks for chairing – it really makes the debate run smoothly.

Harangue /he'raŋg/
Noun: A lengthy and aggressive speech
Verb: To lecture someone at length in an aggressive and critical manner

Often Debaters resort to responding to a case by arguing that resources should be diverted to another, unquestionably valuable, public service. Minh-Quan Nguyen explains why this tactic should not be employed.

Godwin's law states: "As an online debate grows longer, the probability of a comparison involving Nazis or Hitler approaches 1." Fortunately, school debaters tend not to follow this rule.

Allow me to suggest something similar: "As a DAV debate grows longer, the probability of somebody arguing that 'we should spend the money on health/education/poverty/etc. instead' approaches 1." Let's call these H&E arguments, as health and education are almost invariably mentioned.

Despite the widespread use of H&E arguments, they are rarely persuasive or strategically wise. Why? Well, apparently the DAV printing budget won't allow me to list all 7,481 reasons in these pages, but here are three:

1. They don't reflect how budgets are made. Yes, we have limited money. But governments tend to decide first what to spend on big priorities like health, and then work out what's left for other things. I'm oversimplifying, but the point is that nobody sits around wondering whether it would be better to fund kidney machines or the Grand Prix. In most cases, there's simply no reason to believe that your opponents are stealing money from schools in deprived areas or hospitals.

2. The money spent probably wouldn't make much of a difference. The Commonwealth spends \$200 billion a year on health and education. Even if a policy proposal in a debate required a billion dollars in extra spending, and even if that money had to be taken

from the health or education budget, the impact would arguably be marginal.

3. They avoid the issue of the debate. Actually, this is probably the most important objection. If you're having a debate about arts or sports funding or subsidising the print media, then have that debate and discuss the merits of the proposal at hand. H&E arguments are thought-terminating clichés: everyone agrees that caring for the sick is an objectively good and important thing, so evoking this is an underhand way of stopping a debate in its tracks and avoiding a real and substantive discussion about whether a policy is worth having.

So please, resist the temptation to use carbon-copied H&E arguments. That said, not all resource allocation arguments are a lost cause. It may, for instance, be reasonable to believe that the material resources and political "effort" that could feasibly be spent on helping disadvantaged school kids is limited, so we may have to make choices about which policies to adopt. Be careful, though, that you don't focus exclusively on some alternative policy and why it's so brilliant: always engage seriously and directly with the merits of your opponents' proposal.

Minh-Quan Nguyen is a student at the University of Melbourne completing his Juris Doctor, after having completed a Bachelor of Arts. He is an experienced DAV Adjudicator and has represented the Melbourne University Debating Society in international tournaments.

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Topic Resources

The DAV publishes topic guides for prepared topics. The guides provide a basic overview of the topic, and include some links as a starting point for your research.

The guides can be found in the 'Resources' section of dav.com.au