



Dear Debater,

Welcome to the 2017 Debating season, and a special welcome to our new subscribers! Harangue is the DAV's student newsletter that contains articles that will help with your debating skills, give you some handy tips, and advertise debating and public speaking opportunities.

Our articles are written by DAV adjudicators who have a great understanding of the Schools Competition. They have plenty of tips and tricks that will help you enhance your debating style.

In this issue, we will discuss:

- Round 1 - A recap of the topics
- How to approach "regret" topics
- Mythbusters: Writing your speech in full

As always, if you have a question about debating that you'd like answered, email media@dav.com.au and we'll get an adjudicator to answer in the next edition. Also, please remember to subscribe to [Harangue](#) for all future editions and tell your friends/team about it too.

Good luck for Rounds 2 and 3,

Andre Sabatino - Media and Publications Officer | media@dav.com.au

Round 1 Recap

Vice-President of Adjudication and Training, **Mitchell Dye**, looks at what teams did right (and not so right) during Round 1.

A Grade - That Australia should end its alliance with the US

This debate showed that setting up a clear definition, and, where appropriate, a model, is essential to avoid messy debates.

Stronger sides were able to clearly explain what the alliance with the US was, and how they planned to end it. Additionally, an effective strategy employed by these teams was to weigh up both the positives and negatives of the alliance, and to explain why the balance meant that we should or should not end the alliance.

At times, teams were inconsistent and changed their stance during the debate. A common instance of this was when a first speaker would define the alliance as the ANZUS treaty, while the second speaker would then go on to discuss economic issues (e.g. tariff wars) without clearly explaining why ending the ANZUS treaty would have such economic impacts. Some teams even forgot to compare their team's position to their opponents.

This topic also showed why it is always important to establish clear links back to the topic. On occasion, teams would make statements such as "Donald Trump said on Twitter..." or "Everyone knows that the US doesn't have values in line with Australia..." These statements may or may not be true, but do not necessarily prove anything in relation to this topic on their own. It is important to show why what you are proving means that we should or should not end the alliance- adjudicators aren't

meant to make the links for you.



B Grade - That parents should not be allowed to refuse medical treatment for their children

This topic showed the importance for negative teams of not trying to pre-empt the affirmative side's arguments too much. It's always a good idea to broadly strategise and think about what their main arguments might be, but you never want to lock yourself into a specific line of argument that depends on the affirmative side going a certain way.

This means being flexible and ready to adapt. In one debate that I saw, the affirmative side set up a clear model where the courts would have the final say over medical treatment. However, the negative side assumed in all of their arguments that doctors would be having the final say.

As with the A Grade topic, adjudicators reported occasional issues with setting up the debate - the concept of 'medical treatment' is quite broad. Some teams felt that this included procedures such as immunisations, which at times turned the debate into an argument solely about the pros and cons of vaccinations, while other teams felt that this should be excluded from the definition. This highlights the importance of preparing for every debate as a team to ensure a consistent stance.



C Grade - That the value of a citizen's vote should diminish with age

This topic, unlike the A and B grade topics, sometimes became problematic because teams focussed too much on how the voting system would change and failed to adequately explain the benefits of the proposal. Adjudicators reported that some teams spent considerable amounts of time explaining complex mathematical formulas or other schemes to determine the value of a citizen's vote based on their age. This was often unnecessary, as negative sides tended to focus on whether a vote should diminish at all, rather than how it would occur.

For affirmative teams, it was important to compare the types of issues that older and younger people care about, and how this was likely to affect voting patterns. It was important to determine early on what problems this topic was trying to solve, and how changing the value of votes based on age would solve these. It was also important to avoid generalisations or assertions (e.g. "Old people don't care about climate change...") without stepping the argument through and linking back to the topic.

For negative sides, it was important to step through arguments as well. A lot of negative cases tended to rely on the idea that such a policy was discrimination. The topic is clearly about discriminating based on age, but it was important for negative sides to explain the harms of such discrimination and why they would outweigh the benefits of the proposal of the affirmative side.



D Grade - That Australia should adopt a new national flag

Teams used a lot of different approaches to this topic- some wanted to change the flag because it looked too similar to other countries, while others felt that the flag failed to represent Australia as an independent nation.

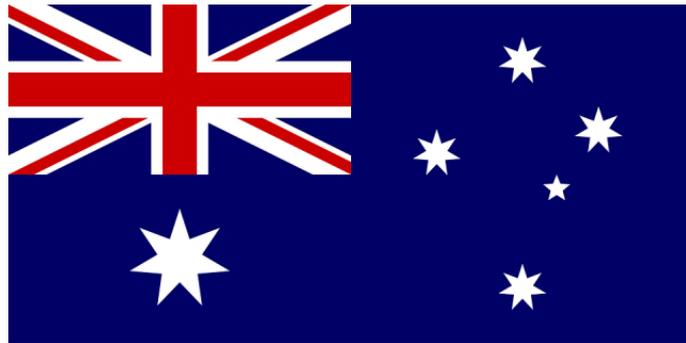
Teams generally did a good job at talking about how they might go about changing the flag- either proposing designs of their own or talking about a process for public consultation.

It was important for teams to avoid just talking about the problems or benefits of the current flag, but how their idea for a new flag would improve things.

This topic could be problematic at times because a flag means different things to different people. It was important for teams to explain what the purpose of a national flag was, and the harms that would arise from either making changes or failing to implement a new flag.

Use of the TEEL structure is a good approach to taking an idea and turning it into an argument. At times, speakers tended to have good arguments, but they were not sufficiently developed and this meant that speeches went under time. For example, if your speech says that people feel the flag doesn't represent them, proceed to explain how this might be a bad thing. Then explain why bringing in a new flag would help.

If you need extra resources, DAV resource guides can help! They contain key focus questions, so if your team's case cannot answer one or more of these questions it may be a sign that you are missing some key elements from your case or arguments. The resource guides for upcoming topics in 2017 are available on the DAV website.



Carina Field looks at a common myth surrounding definitions to find out if it stacks up.

Myth: That you need to write your speech out word for word

BUSTED: While it is important that you spend time breaking down the topic and consider it in great detail, the outcome of your efforts should remain largely in dot-point form. In other words, having your speech written in full is not the best way to organise your notes.

Written speeches can affect two assessable criteria: *manner* and *matter*.

Manner: written speeches encourage reading which limits your eye-contact and usually leads to speeches being delivered too quickly, monotonously and/or in a

reading voice.

Matter: written speeches restrict your responsiveness. The best debates are those where speakers listen and choose how to respond to the opposition based on what is actually said (not relying on written rebuttal). Similarly, teams need to be responsive by keeping their arguments relevant. Sometimes prepared arguments/rebuttal can work against you or become irrelevant because they do not accurately address issues in the debate. Dot pointed arguments can allow for more flexibility and overall less work for you. If you need to make adjustments, it is much easier to do this with dot points than with a fully written speech.

Manner and Matter are weighted equally, therefore there is a need to find a balance between carefully scripted speeches and audience engagement.

Remember that just because you do not need to write out your speech word for word, it does not mean that you should research and consider the topic in any less detail!



How to Approach 'Regret' Topics

Vice-President of Schools, **Ben O'Shea**, looks at how to deal with 'regret' topics .

Sometimes a topic might appear in the form 'That we **regret** x', for example, '*That we regret the demise of traditional media outlets*'. This is a form of empirical topic, because you are being asked to prove whether or not a statement is true, rather than implementing some sort of proposal.

If you're the affirmative team, you don't need to prove that people should be literally sad about the proposition: a fair/reasonable test to set is stating that you need to prove that demise of traditional media has, on balance, made society worse.

It can often be useful in regret topics to think about what may have replaced/developed instead of x, and whether that would have been better or worse. Below is an example:

Example: 'That we regret the demise of traditional media outlets'

Remember, an empirical topic doesn't require you to propose any action— it requires you to prove that this statement is true. The affirmative team begins by setting out a test i.e. what they have to prove in the debate. An example here might be "We, as the affirmative team, will show you how the diminished role of traditional media outlets (such as newspapers, television news and radio) has led to society being a worse place overall". (Notice how this test also defines what traditional media is. You can include your definition in the test or have it separate).

The Affirmative team would then go about constructing arguments like they would in any other debate. Examples of arguments might include:

1. The impact that this has upon the quality of news;
2. The impact that this has upon journalists;
3. The impact that this has upon political discourse etc.

The Negative team would go about rebutting these arguments and creating their own arguments on how society has benefited. Possible arguments might include:

1. The increased number of people who are able to have their views heard;
2. The reduced influence of certain people in the media;
3. The impact of new outlets upon how people access the news.

Both teams should try to make sure they explain throughout why their arguments are important in the debate, and link them back to the original test.

Please note: if you do need to get in contact with the DAV for any reason, the best way to do so is through your schools debating coordinator, or by going to the DAV website. Reply messages to this email account are sent to an unattended inbox, and cannot be responded to.

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