The Debater's Cheat Sheet

Build, rebut, and win the clash

Build an argument: C-R-E-L

1. Claim: state your point in one clear sentence.
2. Reason: explain why it's true.
3. Evidence: back it with a fact, example, or study.
4. Link: tie it to the motion and show why it matters.

Rebut in four steps

1. They said: restate their point fairly, in one line.
2. But that's wrong: state your response.
3. Because: give your reason and evidence.
4. So: explain why your side wins the clash.

Points of information

Offer a point of information in one sharp sentence during an opponent's speech, either a question or a quick challenge. In your own speech, take one or two to show you can think on your feet, then move on. Never take more than you can handle.

Spot the fallacy

Ad hominem: attacking the person, not the point.

Straw man: twisting their argument to beat it.

Slippery slope: "this tiny step leads to disaster."

False dilemma: pretending there are only two options.

Bandwagon: "everyone thinks so, so it's true."

Circular: using the claim to prove itself.

Hasty generalization: one case, big conclusion.

Red herring: changing the subject to distract.

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