

How To Structure a Substantive Speech

This document is intended for teachers and coaches whose students are competing in the ACT Debating Competitions. This document provides an outline for how to structure the substantive elements of a speech.

Consider the motion [that we would ban the production of meat for human consumption](#).

Introduction

A good introduction should serve two functions. An introduction should provide context for the debate, and specify where the debate is occurring. An introduction should also identify the problem that their model will resolve.

Note: *Speakers do not need to state the topic, what side they are on, their speaker position, or their name.*

For example: In developed countries, humans do not require on meat to survive. Thus, it is immoral to subject animals to the inhumane conditions of factory farms.

Model

The model details the specifics of the policy that is to be implemented. Where it is relevant, the model should also specify who would enforce the policy. There are instances where certain harms can be 'modelled out' of the debate.

For example: In our model, the governments of developed countries will ban the production of meat for human consumption. Any individuals or businesses found to be producing or selling meat will be shut down and heavily fined. Farmers will receive subsidies in order to move from meat production to vegetable production.

Split

Give the titles of the arguments you will be making in your speech, and the title of your second speaker's substantive point(s).

Note: *Speakers do not need to introduce the members of your team, or to say that their second and third speakers will be doing rebuttal/summation.*

For example: First, I will explain what animal rights are and why they must be upheld. Second, I will explain how the production of meat harms humans. Third, I will discuss why the government therefore has the right to restrict our autonomy.

Substantive Arguments

Practical Arguments

Describe the problem that exists in the status quo. Name the stakeholders who are affected by the problem, and describe how they are affected. Identify and explain the mechanism in your model that addresses this problem. List the beneficial outcomes of your model.

For example: **Problem** Meat is an inefficient source of nutrition. Animals have to be fed grain, which could have been directly consumed by people. Not only is meat expensive, but the production of meat for human consumption drives up the cost of grain. **Stakeholders** The high cost of grain means that poor people in developing nations cannot afford enough food to survive. This leads to malnutrition and illness, and stunts the growth of children who are affected. **Mechanism** In banning the production of meat, grain will become more plentiful, and thus will become cheaper. **Benefits** Poor people in developing nations will be able to afford sufficient nutrition. This will lead to less illness, decreased rates of child and infant mortality, and a healthier and more productive nation.

Principled Arguments

Identify the principle that the status quo violates, and explain why this principle is important. Explain how your model upholds the principle that you have identified.

For example: **Principle** The production of meat for human consumption is a gross violation of animal rights. Animals are robbed of their freedom, displaced from their natural environment, and subject to painful conditions. **Importance** Animal rights are important in the same way human rights are important. We grant rights to humans because they experience pain and suffering; animals experience suffering in a roughly analogous way. Even though animals are less intelligent than humans, this does not preclude them from having rights. After all, we extend human rights to less intelligent humans, such as infants and the mentally disabled. **Mechanism** Banning the production of meat for human consumption frees animals from the suffering they experience in battery cages and factory farms.

Conclusion

Conclusions provide the opportunity to emphasise the most important part of your case, or to directly compare your benefits to the opposition team. Conclusions should be short and concise.