The four chapters of Part One help students understand how their training as debaters benefits them, their communities, and their social worlds. Chapter 1 presents good reasons to study debate, demonstrating the role of debate in local, cultural, and global perspectives. The chapter also provides historical outlines of argumentation and debate in both China and the United States. Following that historical framework, Chapter 1 shows how debate tournaments function as educational settings teach students critical thinking by providing argumentation information, debating instruction, and then practical experience of debating, all in controlled, educational environments. Chapter 1 closes with a discussion of generative debate, noting how educational debate resembles and differs from “naturally occurring” debate but also applicable when adapted to community decision-making, family disputes, workplace differences, and so on.

Chapter 2 introduces ethics in debate, a topic central to all debates in all contexts. The chapter explores the concept of ethics and reviews ethical principles, providing guidelines for debaters to use in the development of their debating skills. The ethical principles outlined in Chapter 2 underlie all debate practices and critical thinking processes introduced in this textbook.

Chapter 3 covers concepts central to argumentation, arguments, and debate, differentiating each of these topics to help students begin to understand the scope of study in this textbook. Chapter 3 introduces various terms and concepts fundamental to the study and practice of debate. The concepts of arguments and argumentation, persuasion and debate, along with claims and supporting material are described so that students and judges alike will have a common understanding of these concepts.

Chapter 4 discusses methods of analyzing a debate topic, the ultimate purpose of which is to discover the range of arguments that may be presented on each side of that topic. In particular, Chapter 4 covers analysis of the background, type, definition and interpretation, and potential issues of the debate topic.
Part One