Chapter 7

Arguments by First Opposition Teams

Chapter Outline

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- Refutation of the Case of the Prime Minister
- Construct Arguments to Oppose the Prime Minister’s Interpretation of the Motion

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- Arguments Against a Policy Motion
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Summary

The roles of the Leader and Deputy Leader of Opposition are analogous to those of the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, with the role of the Leader of Opposition being similar to that of the Prime Minister. Like the Prime Minister is primarily responsible for describing the position the Government side will defend, the Leader of Opposition will describe the stance to be taken by the Opposition side in the debate. As the Prime Minister is responsible for constructing most of the arguments of the First Government team, the Leader of the Opposition is responsible for constructing most of the arguments of the First Opposition team.

Debaters assigned to debate for the Opposition side need to remember that they must do more than simply oppose the motion. They need to oppose the particular stance or the model offered by the First Government team. Consider a situation where the motion is, “Nations should provide a minimal level of education to all their citizens.” The First Government team might decide to focus the debate on Sub-Saharan Africa and might present a model that suggests that all nations of Sub-Saharan Africa should provide at least a secondary education for all their citizens. In such a case, the First Opposition team would need to focus their arguments on the model, not just on the general motion. The Opposition side would be expected to engage the First Government teams with arguments about Sub-Saharan Africa, not nations in general. Furthermore, they would be expected to focus on the question of secondary education. Opposition debaters who raise issues about education in East Asia or issues about post-secondary education would miss the mark because they focused on the motion in general, not on the model offered by the First Government team. Those arguments would not address the central point of the debate.
Role of Leader of Opposition

The Leader of Opposition is responsible for the following: (1) providing a clear statement of the Opposition stance in the debate, (2) refuting arguments made by the Prime Minister, and (3) constructing at least one independent argument against the position advocated by the Prime Minister.

Provide a Clear Statement of the Opposition Stance in the Debate

The Opposition stance toward the motion tries to accomplish some of what the First Government team achieved when they created their model of the motion. A solid stance gives the First Opposition team the chance to show that they do more than merely oppose statements made by the First Government team. Such a stance also gives them the opportunity to show the audience and judge precisely what the Opposition team intends to support. A clear Opposition stance is important regardless of the kind of motion being addressed.

Just as defining and interpreting the motion is the right and responsibility of the First Government team, establishing the stance for the Opposition is the right and responsibility of the First Opposition team. As the First Government team is expected to establish a reasonable definition and interpretation, so the First Opposition team is expected to develop a reasonable stance. After the First Opposition team develops the stance, the Second Opposition team is obliged to continue to pursue that stance in their speeches, as well. To do otherwise would leave the debate going in too many directions, and would create a very confusing debate. Thus, if the First Opposition decides to support the status quo, the Second Opposition team would not be able to suggest a counter proposal—one that is different from the Government’s proposal and the status quo.

Of course, one way that an Opposition debater can make a persuasive argument against the motion is to merely oppose the claims of the First Government team. But, creating a more precise stance allows the Opposition team to go beyond merely opposing to showing that they too have a position they support. The following brief sections will discuss how the Leader of Opposition can describe the Opposition stance when debating policy and value motions.

The Opposition Stance When Debating a Policy Motion. When the First Government team introduces a model that supports a certain action, then the First Opposition team should support an action that goes in a different direction. By doing so, the First Opposition team can show the judge and audience that, in addition to opposing the action taken by the First Government team, they also support some action of their own. The First Opposition team can describe the action they support in one of three ways: by explicitly supporting the present course of action, by supporting general direction the present course of action with minor changes, or by supporting a counter proposal.
Explicitly Support the Present Course of Action. One good way for the Leader of Opposition to take a solid stance is to explicitly defend the present course of action. This option is the one that is most frequently taken by First Opposition teams. Much of the time however, the First Opposition team’s support for the present course of action is only implicit in their rejection of the First Government team’s model. The First Opposition team can be more persuasive by describing the actions taken by the present system and by defending those actions explicitly. To do so, they would need to describe the particular elements of the current policy they support, then, of course, they would need to give persuasive reasons why they believe the current action is superior to the First Government team’s model. For instance, with regard to the education example discussed earlier, the Leader of Opposition might clarify that they support the current efforts regarding post-secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa. Then, the speaker would need to go on to describe the current approach as a combination of increased access for students and increasing the number and quality of qualified teachers. Later, the speaker will need to construct an argument supporting that stance. Construction of such an argument will be discussed soon, but for now, the Opposition team’s stance should be clearly and explicitly stated.

Defend the Present Course of Action With Minor Changes. A second choice of the First Opposition team is to defend the general direction of the present course of action while supporting minor changes to it. Perhaps the Leader of Opposition believes that the present course of action is basically good, but also wants to suggest some things about it that could be changed without going as far as the First Government team would suggest. In that case, the Leader needs to be explicit about what changes he or she proposes to the present policy. For instance, the Leader might defend the current policy of working to increase student access to education while acknowledging that more money needs to be put into the effort. In this way, the Leader of Opposition retains the benefit of arguing for the present system, in general, while simultaneously offering mechanisms for overcoming problems caused by the present system.

Support a Counter Proposal. A third alternative is to support a counter proposal, sometimes called a counter plan or counter model. A counter proposal is one that is different from both the status quo and from the model presented by the First Government team. More than just being different, the counter proposal needs to differ from the First Government team’s model in ways that cannot be accommodated by the First Government team’s model. When two things are so different that their differences cannot be accommodated, those differences are called “competitive.” So, the counter proposal needs to be not just different from the Government model, but different in ways that are competitive. The motion, “Nations should provide a minimal level of education to all their citizens,” can be used to illustrate examples of competitive and non-competitive counter proposals. For instance, if the First Government team were to offer a model that suggests that nations of Sub-Saharan Africa should guarantee access to a secondary education for all, and the First Opposition team offered a counter proposal that said, “Yes, but we also should institute new programs in Sub-Saharan Africa to combat Aids and HIV,” then the first response by the First Government team might simply
be “We should enact the proposal envisioned by the First Government team’s model along side, not instead of, the counter proposal.” In other words, the First Government team is arguing that the counter proposal is not competitive with the model because the two proposals can and should accommodate one another. The point is this: If the proposal offered by the First Government and the counter proposal offered by the Opposition can accommodate one another—that is to say that they can be pursued simultaneously, then the counter proposal is not competitive and, thus, does not offer a reason not to accept the First Government team’s model.

The example above can illustrate how the Opposition team could present an argument that their counter proposal really is competitive. The Opposition team might demonstrate that financial resources in Sub-Saharan Africa are so limited that those nations only have the ability to pursue secondary education or HIV-Aids. Thus, the counter proposal to combat HIV-Aids cannot be accomplished if we are spending all our resources on the First Government team’s proposal to enhance access to secondary education. In this case, the Opposition would of course be obliged to argue that combatting HIV-Aids is more important than guaranteeing access to secondary education.

Another way the First Opposition team can suggest that a counter proposal is competitive with the First Government team’s model is to suggest that they are mutually incompatible. For instance, if the First Government model suggests increased access to secondary education, the Opposition team might suggest that we should, in fact, eliminate public secondary education. Although that might not be a counter proposal that many of us would like to support, it illustrates how a counter proposal might be competitive by being mutually exclusive with the First Government team’s model. The model and counter proposal are mutually exclusive because one cannot even envision simultaneously providing greater access to secondary education and also eliminating secondary education.

Sometimes, advocating a counterproposal can be a very persuasive way to engage a debate. It also is a more complex way to argue. That is not to say that a counterproposal should be avoided, just that it needs to be argued carefully and probably only by experienced debaters.

Thus, when debating a motion of policy, the First Opposition team should develop their stance toward the motion, a stance that is unique and different from that of the First Government team. Three ways to create such a stance have been discussed: explicit defense of the present course of action, defense of the general direction of the present course of action with minor changes, and defense of a counter proposal. The stance that the First Opposition team takes will then help to determine the kinds of constructive arguments they and the Second Opposition team will choose to present.

*The Opposition Stance When Debating a Value Motion.* The necessity for the First Opposition team to present a clear Opposition stance remains whether the motion centers on policy or value. However, since the First Government team is not presenting and defending a policy proposal, the stance of the First Opposition team also will not be about policies. Two ways that the First Opposition team can present a clear stance opposing the motion as
interpreted by the Prime Minister include: (1) clearly stating a different value that the Opposition will support, and (2) clearly stating that, although they support the same value as the government, they will apply it to the object of evaluation differently.

*Present a Clear Statement of a Value Different from That of the First Opposition.* A very clear way to distinguish the First Opposition’s position from that of the First Government team is to make a clear statement about the value position they support. For instance, the Leader of Opposition can clearly state and argue for a value that is different from the one supported by the Prime Minister. Thus, the Leader of Opposition should clearly identify the value that is supported by the Prime Minister, identify a different value that the First Opposition team will support, and give persuasive reasons why the Opposition value is better than that of the Government. For instance, if the value argued by the Prime Minister is individual liberty, the Leader of Opposition might identify and support of the community as a contrasting and better value. Then, the Leader of Opposition would need to give reasons why community support is more important than individual liberty when those two values come into contrast. They might suggest for instance, that the pursuit of individual liberty will benefit some people but will harm the community at large.

*Present a Clear Statement of Evaluation That the First Opposition Team Will Support.* In some cases, the Opposition team will support the same value that the First Government team supports, but will argue that that value applies differently to the object to be evaluated. In this case, the Leader of the Opposition will express support for the value supported by the First Government Team, then will show how that value does not support the object to be evaluated. Consider, for instance, the situation where the object to be evaluated is Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), and the Prime Minister has argued that “quality medical care” is a value that supports TCM. In such a case, the Leader of Opposition might first agree that quality medical care is an important value, then, proceed to show how TCM does not provide the highest quality of medical care. Thus, the Leader of Opposition has presented a clear stance without disagreeing about the value presented by the Prime Minister.

Whether the Leader of Opposition chooses to present and defend a contrasting value or show how the value presented by the Prime Minister supports the Opposition value stance, they are presenting a clear Opposition stance with regard to the value motion.

*Refutation of the Case of the Prime Minister*

The second important responsibility of the Leader of the Opposition is to provide explicit refutation of the Prime Minister’s case. Refutation is an important element of the debate because it is the feature that allows the audience and the judge to see not only the arguments of each side, but also how the arguments contrast with each other. Judges expect speakers to refute the most important arguments of the opposing side.
Refutation is important, but it is not the only important thing that needs to be accomplished in the Leader of Opposition speech. A more complete discussion of refutation will be presented in Chapter 10. For now, the most important thing to remember is that the Leader of Opposition needs to refute at least the most important arguments made by the Prime Minister. The process of refutation might not take more than one or two minutes, but it is an important process, nevertheless.

Construct Arguments to Oppose the Prime Minister’s Interpretation of the Motion

The final responsibility of the Leader of the Opposition is to construct arguments to oppose the Prime Minister’s interpretation of the motion. These arguments should simultaneously oppose the Opening Government team’s model and support the Opposition team’s stance in the debate. So, if the Opening Opposition is supporting the status quo, the Leader of Opposition’s argument should support the status quo and simultaneously oppose the Leader of Opposition’s stance.

In one sense, creating constructive arguments for the Opposition is like creating a case for the motion. When creating a case for the motion, the Prime Minister will frequently create a model or establish a clear stance that sets the direction that both Government teams will take during the debate. Similarly, the Leader of the Opposition should describe an Opposition stance that will guide both Opposition teams for the entire debate. Also, like the Prime Minister creates an argument or a series of arguments that provide a sufficient case for an audience or judge to accept the position taken by the First Government team, debaters creating a case against a motion must attempt to create an argument or a series of arguments that, singly or in combination, create a sufficient case to reject the First Government team’s position.

Below is an outline of potential speeches by Leaders of the Opposition. The outline is of a speech on a policy motion. A speech on a value motion would follow a similar process.
Potential Speech on a Value Motion

Introduction

Motion for debate: “The nations of the world should guarantee a minimal level of education for all its citizens.”

Statement of Advocacy:
The First Opposition Team will support the current level of funding and infrastructure for all levels of education. Our belief is that nations of Sub-Saharan Africa have greater spending priorities that must be maintained first.

Speech preview:
During the remainder of this speech, I will present two arguments: 1) The Prime Minister’s proposal will not solve the problem of increased access to education, and 2) the Prime Minister’s proposal will divert needed funds from treatment of HIV and Aids. My colleague the Deputy Prime Minister will then suggest even more priorities that may be sacrificed.

Argument 1: The Prime Minister’s proposal will not solve the problems.
Sub-claim 1: Students do not complete education because of HIV-Aids.
Sub-claim 2: Even if they are guaranteed funding and infrastructure, they will not complete their education.
Sub-claim 3: Because they do not complete their education, they will still be confined to poverty.

Argument 2: The Prime Minister’s proposal will interfere with work on HIV-Aids.
Sub-claim 1: The Government proposal advocates spending money on education.
Sub-claim 2: The funds devoted to education will come from research on HIV-Aids.
Sub-claim 3: Devoting money to HIV-Aids will have a larger effect than devoting money to education.

Conclusion
Both the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition create constructive arguments in their speeches. This section focused on the Leader of Opposition and the next will focus on the Deputy Leader.

**Role of the Deputy Leader of Opposition**

The role of the Deputy Leader of Opposition is analogous to that of the Deputy Prime Minister. The Deputy Leader of Opposition is responsible for defending the Opposition stance presented by the Leader of Opposition. To do so, the Deputy Prime Minister should continue the refutation of the Prime Minister’s case that was begun by the Leader of Opposition, refute any new arguments raised by the Deputy Prime Minister, rebuild arguments raised by the Leader of Opposition, and add at least one new argument to those presented by the Leader of Opposition.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is responsible for adding new material to that presented by the Leader of the Opposition by constructing at least one new argument in support of the Opposition stance. Thus, the Deputy Leader also constructs arguments, but not to the extent that the Leader of the Opposition does. The Deputy Leader’s speech is, nevertheless, important with regard to argument construction.

The role of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, like that of the Deputy Prime Minister, is to add something constructive to what was said by the Leader of the Opposition. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition might choose to add a completely new argument or might choose to elaborate a point made by the Leader of the Opposition. In either event, the Deputy Leader will add new constructive material to the debate. Such new material may be in the form of a new argument suggesting why the First Government team’s model will not work, or why the First Government team’s model will create more problems than it solves, why the Opposition’s counter proposal is superior to the First Government’s model, or any other argument designed to oppose the First Government team’s model. In either case, the Deputy Leader will construct arguments using principles similar to those used by the Leader of Opposition.

So, those are the roles of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the two members of the First Opposition team. The next section will discuss common kinds of arguments that those and other Opposition speakers may choose to make.

**Common Kinds of Opposition Arguments**

This section will discuss several kinds of arguments that the First Opposition team can make. These are the only kinds of argument the team can make, but they are among the most common kinds of Opposition arguments. These categories not because they are derived from some theoretical taxonomy of arguments. The kinds of common arguments may differ depending on whether the motion is one of value or of policy. The discussion below will
begin with common arguments to be raised when confronting a policy, and then will move to those which can be used arguing against a value motion.

**Arguments Against a Policy Motion**

Typically, arguments against a policy motion include those that suggest that the model will not solve the problems raised by the First Government team. They also include principled arguments against the First Government team’s model, arguments claiming that the model will create more problems than it will solve, and arguments to suggest that a counter proposal is better.

*The Model Will Not Solve Problems.* A common type of argument used to oppose a model is one that claims that the actions envisioned by the Prime Minister will not solve the problems suggested by the First Government team. That kind of argument is appropriate when one of the Government speakers uses the very common method of describing a serious problem in the *status quo* and then shows how the proposed model will solve that problem. The First Government team’s argument is probably centered on cause and effect reasoning. The Government speaker will describe a problem, and then describe its cause in such a way that the model can eliminate or circumvent the cause, thus, solving or at least mitigating the problem. The Opposition debaters will then need to consider that cause and effect relationship.

For instance, a Prime Minister might describe problems of secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa, arguing that lack of access to education causes an increase in poverty. He or she might note that people without a secondary education are much more likely to exist on less than $200 (U.S. Dollars) per year than people who have earned a secondary education. A debater for the Opposition might suggest that the model will not solve the problem of poverty because it fails to deal with one of the most significant causes of poverty, HIV-Aids. The Leader of Opposition might suggest that HIV-aids is a substantial reason people are not getting education and that, even if children have guaranteed access to education, they will not complete their schooling nor will they move out of poverty because of HIV-Aids.

The illustration below shows how such an argument might look:
To clarify the process of arguing that the model will not solve the problem, consider a second example. If the First Government team presented a model suggesting that the United Nations should install desalinization plants to solve the problem of clean drinking water, the Leader of Opposition might suggest that desalinization will not, by itself, provide clean drinking water.

Such an argument is illustrated below:

**Opposition Argument: The Model Will not Solve the Problem**

**Claim:** Access to education will not solve the problem of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa.

- Sub-claim 1: Students do not complete their education because of HIV-Aids.
  - Teachers may be unable to teach because of HIV-Aids
  - Students may have to leave school to care for family members who have HIV-Aids
  - Students may be forced to drop out of school because they have HIV-Aids.
- Sub-claim 2: Even if students are guaranteed access to secondary schools, they may not be able to complete their education.
- Sub-claim 3: Because they do not complete their education, students will still be confined to poverty.

**Opposition Argument: The Model Will not Solve the Problem**

**Claim:** Desalinization will not provide clean drinking water.

- Sub-claim 1: Desalinization works primarily for rich countries located by the ocean.
- Sub-claim 2: Much of the world’s population in need of clean drinking water does not live near the ocean.
- Sub-claim 3: Therefore, even if the United Nations created clean drinking water through desalinization plants, they would not be able to get the water to inland populations.
The goal of such an argument is to test whether or not the Prime Minister has isolated the correct cause of the problem. If the alleged cause is not the real cause, then removing the alleged cause will have no effect on the problem.

Frequently, arguments that suggest that the Government proposal will not solve the problem are good arguments, but they may not in and of themselves be sufficient to reject the proposal. For instance, even in light of these arguments, the Government team may be able to suggest that their proposal is a good one even if it does not completely solve the problem. In other words, they would suggest that their proposal would solve a substantial part, if not the entire problem. Thus, that kind of argument is more persuasive when combined with some of the arguments discussed below.

Principled Arguments Against the Model. A second kind of argument that members of the First Opposition team might consider is a principled argument against the First Government team’s model. In some cases, as discussed earlier, the First Government team may have used principles to recommend some actions that they proposed. In cases like this, debaters supporting the Opposition side might choose to explicitly support a different value system or a different principle than that supported by the opening Government team. That kind of a stance is useful when the case for the motion centers on a principle that the First Government team has associated with the action they are recommending.

If the Opposition chooses to support a different principle, they need to state that principle clearly, then give reasons why the principle they are supporting is better or more appropriate than those of the First Government team. Then, the Opposition needs to show how that principle is consistent with the actions they believe should be taken. For example, if the First Government team argues that, “Israel should change its policies toward Palestinians,” it could choose to support the principle of property rights. Using an alternative principle, the Opposition might choose to support the idea that the Government has the responsibility to provide safety for its citizens. The Opposition debaters would then need to think of reasons that safety was more important than property rights, and also would need to show how the current policy toward Palestinians is consistent with the principle of safety. The example of supporting a different principle is illustrated below:
Sometimes, debaters appear to be taking a moral high ground by arguing from principle. By supporting a different principle, the Opposition debaters show that they too stand on that high moral ground, even if the principle they support is different from that supported by the debaters arguing in favor of the motion. If the First Government team is arguing that we should act on principle, the Opposition team also can claim the moral high ground by arguing from principle.

The Model Will Create More Problems Than It Solves. A potentially powerful argument against a model designed to offer a solution to a problem is one that claims that the model will create more problems than it solves. Constructing an argument of this type involves the Prime Minister crafting an argument of consequence. When the First Government team constructed an argument of consequence, they described their proposal, then drew a causal argument from their proposal to some effect and finally, evaluated the effect. The pattern used to craft an argument of consequence for the Government Team operates exactly in the same way for an Opposition argument.
Such an argument can be illustrated using our earlier example of a motion that stated, “Nations should provide a minimal level of education to all their citizens.” In that example, the First Government team presented a model that said all nations of Sub-Saharan Africa should provide at least a secondary education for all their citizens. In a debate involving this model, the Opposition might construct an argument that the model would interfere with efforts to solve the HIV-Aids problem. Such an argument is illustrated below:

**Opposition Argument:**
*The Model Will Create More Problems than it solves*

**Claim:** Guaranteeing universal access to secondary education will interfere with the ability to solve the HIV-Aids issue.

- **Describe:**
  - The proposal envisioned in the First Government team’s model has a substantial financial element.
  - Financial resources in Sub-Saharan Africa are limited.
- **Associate:**
  - Using the financial resources needed to fund guaranteed access to secondary education would necessarily cause resources to be taken from some other area.
  - The most likely place funds would be taken from HIV-Aids treatment.
- **Evaluate:**
  - Money is better spent on HIV-Aids than on guaranteed access to secondary education.

In that example, the debater begins with descriptive arguments, describing a part of the First Government team’s model, namely, that the model has a large financial element. Second, the debater describes a feature of the current situation, namely, that financial resources are limited. Then, the argument moves to one of cause and effect association. There, the debater argues that the financial resources to support guaranteed secondary education would need to be taken from some other programs, most likely from HIV-Aids prevention and treatment programs. Finally, the debater moves to the issue of direct evaluation claiming that money is better spent on HIV-Aids than on guaranteeing access to secondary education. Of course, in all of those cases, much more complete arguments would need to be presented than are present in this brief illustration.

Arguments suggesting that the Government model will create more problems than it will solve can be quite important to a debate. Think about the motion that Israel should change its policies toward Palestinians and a corresponding model that the State of Israel should destroy their “security fence.” The example below illustrates an argument that claims that the
“security fence” prevents terrorism and, by implication, that the destruction of the fence would cause terrorism. The illustration below shows how the argument can be made using the describe, associate, evaluate pattern:

### Opposition Argument:
The Model Will Create More Problems than it solves

**Claim:** The Israeli security fence helps prevent terrorism.

- **Describe:**
  - The “security fence” constructed by State of Israel is so massive that prevents travel between the occupied territories and Israel.
- **Associate:**
  - Prevention of travel between the occupied territories and Israel has greatly reduced the number of suicide bombings.
- **Evaluate:**
  - The reduction of suicide bombings has, according to statistics of the Israeli government, saved over 200 Israeli lives and has prevented serious injuries to another 1000.

In the illustration, the First Opposition team started by describing features of the “security fence.” They suggested that the “security fence” is a barrier built primarily to separate Israel from the “occupied territories” such as Gaza and the West Bank; that the “security fence” is so massive that it prevents travel between the “occupied territories” and Israel. After describing relevant features of their model, the Opposition debater then drew a causal association between that feature and some effect. In that example, the debater argued that the “security fence” had the effect of preventing Palestinian suicide bombers. To support that cause and effect argument, the debater noted the decreased numbers of Palestinian suicide bombers after the construction of the “security fence.” The causal relationship between the fence and suicide bombers then allowed the debater to make an explicit evaluation of the security fence. After having shown that the effect of the “security wall” was a decrease in the number of suicide bombers, the Opposition debater then intensified evaluation of the fence by discussing how many Israeli citizens were killed in such attacks. In that case, they pointed to Israeli government statistics suggesting that the number of suicide bombing attacks went from 76 before the fence to 12 in the first three years after the building of the security fence.

Thus, that constructive argument shows why the action modeled by the First Government team would create serious problems. Of course, the argument will be much stronger when the Opposition debater actually compares the reduction of suicide bombings with the specific problems noted by the Government debaters.
A Counter Proposal Is Better. When the First Opposition team has decided to use a counter proposal as their stance in the debate, they should then present one or more arguments that show why the counter proposal is better than the proposal envisioned in the First Government team’s model. Consider the situation where the First Government team is arguing for guaranteed access to secondary education, and in contrast, the Opposition team is arguing for increased spending on HIV-Aids. In a situation like this, the Opposition team might argue that money is better spent on HIV-Aids treatment and prevention than on universal access to secondary education. Such an argument, illustrated below, can be made following the describe, associate, evaluate method.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Opposition Argument:</strong></th>
<th>The Counter Proposal is Better</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Claim:</strong></td>
<td>Spending to guarantee access to secondary education will interfere with solving the problem of HIV-Aids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Describe:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o The First Proposition team’s model advocates spending large sums of money to guarantee access to secondary education.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o The counter proposal advocates devoting that money to solving the HIV-Aids problem.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o These two proposals are incompatible with one another since the governments of nations of Sub-Saharan Africa do not have sufficient funds to do both.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Associate:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o Money devoted to solving the HIV-Aids problem will have a very large effect on people living in the Nations of Sub-Saharan Africa.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Money spent to guarantee access to post-secondary education would have a more modest effect on those people.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluate:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Solving the HIV-Aids problem has the potential to help over 22 million people currently suffering with aids.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>o While guaranteed access to post secondary will have positive consequences, these consequence pale in comparison to those to be achieved by solving the problem of HIV-Aids.</td>
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In the above example, the Opposition debater has described a feature that distinguishes the model from the counter proposal, noting that the First Government model must involve spending large amounts of money on universal access to secondary education. In contrast, the counter proposal recommends spending that money on HIV-Aids treatment and prevention. Such a description highlights the contrast between what the First Government team is suggesting (model) and what the Opposition team is suggesting (counterproposal). Those
features as described identify the point of conflict between the two actions being proposed. Having described the features that identify those essential differences between the two actions, the debater in this example has drawn a causal association between that feature and an effect: Spending money on guaranteeing secondary education causes governments in Sub-Saharan Africa to reduce spending on HIV-Aids. Then, the debater moves to the explicit evaluation, arguing that a reduction of spending on HIV-Aids will have a disastrous effect on the health of all people living in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**Arguments Against a Value Motion**

One of the most common ways to argue against a value motion is simply to suggest that the consequences associated with the object of evaluation do not support the government position. Consider, for example, the value motion discussed in the last chapter about traditional Chinese medicine. Recall that the motion was interpreted to support acupuncture because acupuncture is useful for treating certain conditions and it is generally not harmful. If opposing such a motion, the Leader of Opposition might choose to construct arguments showing how acupuncture is not useful or that acupuncture leads to bad side effects. For instance, the Leader of Opposition might note that study reported by *The Guardian* noted that the benefits of acupuncture were quite small when compared to either no acupuncture or sham acupuncture (Alok Jha). That article cited studies that compared patients who received acupuncture to those who did not. It also cited studies that compared patients receiving legitimate acupuncture to those receiving fake acupuncture.

Another common method of arguing against a value motion is to associate the object of evaluation with some value or principle. Consider a motion stating that the “execution of Yao Jaixin was just.” Yao Jaixin, a wealthy young Chinese man, was involved in an intentional homicide resulting from a traffic accident. After Yao struck the person with his automobile, he then got out of the automobile, killed her with a knife, and later was executed for that crime. In some circles, the execution of Yao was controversial because he was from a wealthy, prominent party. The execution might be supportable as just by appealing to the principle of the rule of law. A well-known commentator in the Chinese media, Li Qianfan, wrote: “In a country guided by the rule of law. . . . What I really hope to see is not the death of Yao Jiaxin, but the legal system being able to provide protection to the people.” Thus, the motion could be opposed by appealing to the principle of the rule of law.

This section has been devoted to explaining some common kinds of arguments that might be made by debaters opposing a motion. It begins by explaining arguments relevant to the Leader of the Opposition. The speech of the Leader of the Opposition should contain an introduction, a statement of the Opposition side’s stance toward the motion, arguments opposing the First Government team’s motion, and a conclusion. The speech is an especially important one because it will set the direction for both Opposition teams. The section also explained the role of the Deputy Leader of Opposition showing how that person’s role is similar to the role of the Deputy Prime Minister. Both of those speeches involve refutation of the arguments of the previous speaker, rebuilding of the arguments of his or her colleague, and the construction of another argument to support his or her side in the debate.
This chapter focused on constructing arguments to support and to oppose a motion attending primarily, but not exclusively, on the speeches made by the First Government and First Opposition teams. Those speeches constitute the first half of the debate, sometimes referred to as the “top of the house.” The speeches made by the Second Government and Second Opposition team constitute the second half of the debate, which is referred to as the “bottom of the house.” The next section will focus on constructive arguments presented in the second half of the debate.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to explain arguments and strategies useful to the First Opposition Team. The two members of this team have distinct responsibilities. The Leader of Opposition should first provide a clear statement of the Opposition stance in the debate, sometimes coming in the form of a model of the motion. Second, the Leader of Opposition should refute the important arguments made by the Prime Minister. Finally, the Leader of Opposition should construct and present at least one independent argument against the position advocated by the Prime Minister. The second and third responsibilities, refutation and argument construction, are both important, but need not be presented in that order. In some cases, a debater may want to present a new argument and then turn to refutation, while in other cases, the debater may want to conduct refutation prior to the construction of a new argument.

The Deputy Leader of Opposition needs to advance the refutation offered by the Leader of Opposition, and also needs to refute any new arguments presented by the Deputy Prime Minister. Also, the Deputy Leader of Opposition needs to add at least one new argument to the overall position advanced by the First Opposition Team. By following those responsibilities, the two members of the First Opposition Team will be seen as acting in concert with one another--as a team rather than as two independent speakers.
Terms and Concepts From Chapter 7

Check your memory and comprehension by describing or defining these key terms and concepts:

- Opposition stance in a policy
- Supporting the status quo
- Supporting the status quo with minor repairs
- Supporting a counterproposal
- Opposition stance in a value debate
- Principled arguments against a policy proposal
- Arguments suggesting that the proposed model will not solve the problem
- Arguments suggesting that the proposed model will create greater problems
- Arguments of consequence regarding a value motion

Discussion Questions For Chapter 7

- Why is an opposition stance an important part of the overall strategy for the First Opposition Team?
- What is the difference in defending the present course of action with minor changes and defending a counterproposal?
- Describe the common kinds of opposition arguments?

Exercises For Chapter 7

- Present a sample Prime Minister speech to a group of debaters who are divided into teams of two persons each. (A demonstration debate about education can be found here: http://willamette.edu/cla/china_debate/curriculum/index.html. Several other debates are easily located on the Internet.) After they listen to the Prime Minister’s speech, give them 5 minutes to discuss the speech then ask one of the speakers to present a 2-minute speech in which he or she refutes important arguments from the Prime Minister’s speech.
- Present a sample Prime Minister speech to a group of debaters who are divided into teams of two persons each. After they listen to the Prime Minister’s speech, give them 15 minutes to discuss the speech and, following the “common kinds of opposition arguments” to create at least three different kinds of arguments in response to the speech.