**Introduction to Debating**

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This chapter introduces the concept of debate and reasons why you have to participate in debate as well as to explains skills that you can gain if you participate in debate often. It describes the ground reasons of debate, argumentation in debate and the structure of debate competition. In reading this book, you are now dealing with a spesific kind of communication. If you want to start to upgrade your critical thinking and presentation skills, go on reading.

1. **What is Debate?**

Debating is a clash of arguments. What is challenging in debating is that you will find strict rules of conduct and quite sophisticated arguing techniques and you will often be in a position where you will have to argue the opposite of what you believe in. For any issue, there are always different sides of perspectives; different story of why do people support or disagree with certain issues. Debating seeks to explore the reasons behind each side. To make those reasons understandable and convincing, you should deliver your arguments with good communication skills.

Snieder (2008) believes that debating is about change. In debating, you are constantly engaged in a struggle to better our lives, our community, and our future. You should never be satisfied with the status quo since something in our lives needs improving. Debate is the process that determines how change should occur. Debate occurs on the floor of the House of Representatives, during Presidential Candidates campaigns, during government meetings, and at your corners of schools. Debating could be formal such as when the General Assembly of the United Nations debates whether to sanction Suriah for crimes againts civilians. Debating shall be less formal when you are speaking againts your classmates’ conviction about rules in school. Debating could also be informal, such as a debate with your parents about when you can begin having a boyfriend or a girlfriend.

Research on debating evidences by Rodie Akerman and Ian Neale in 2011 advances that debate can be described as a formal discussion where two opposing sides follow a set of agreed rules to engage in an oral exchange of different points of view on an issue. Formal debates are commonly seen in public meetings or legislative assemblies, where individuals freely choose which side of an issue to support, and also in schools or university competitions, where the participants are often assigned a particular side for which to advocate.

1. **Why Debate?**

In Debate, you always need to hear both sides of an opinion. Hear all of the information involved. Someone on the other side may make you rethink your own opinion. Persuade you to change your mind. In any case, it always stimulates your brain and causes you to form a stronger opinion. Even when you change your mind and believe what the other side thinks. The more information you can gather, the better. It is important to see two sides of an argument. Also debate is essentially about persuasion as most have an audience, so you need to be able to show that you have thought enough about what you are saying to be able to defend that position from someone of an alternative view.

Believing that debate is a challenging and highly rewarding activity for most who become involved in it, there are a full range of benefits associated with being on the debate team.  People debate for couple of reasons. Some think that debate is fun.  The vast majority of the tens of thousands of students who compete in debate tournaments each year will tell you that debate is fun. The experience is a little different from one to another, but generally the thrill of competition, the teamwork,and the travel opportunities make debate fun. Debate is also about a teamwork. An additional benefit of getting involved is building friendships with teammates who enjoy similar interests. Debate also trigger public speaking skills. Most people naturally avoiding public speaking provides a non-threatening environment to practice these skills so that you will have the skills necessary to do a great job before public.  This increases your chances of doing well in important events such as interviews for jobs or scholarships. Debate arms you with analytical skills defined as the ability to critically analyze a problem and propose workable solutions.  This is a skill that debate best teaches and high-level leaders and business people possess. Research skills would be an invaluable skill you will gain in debate. This covers traditional library research to the internet-based research. One of excellences in debate is listening and note taking skills. Debate requires that you become a careful listener and good note taker.  This helps you get and learn faster and understand better.   
 Many of succesful people like reputable lawyers, business executives, and elected leaders were involved in debate, and for good reason.  Simply put, debate-related skills help you get ahead and stay there.  The power to persuade is highly respected and there is no better way to master this art than through debate.

1. **Basics of Argumentation**

Why is argument important in debate? In many ways, the answers seem obvious; It is as important as air for our life. It is important to be able to argue rationally both in a debate championship or in a real life. Second, knowledge often comes through argument. Once a case is proved; a dispute is opened up and then solved; a new hypothesis is posited; you are asked to look at an old problem in a new way. Third, argument is about clarification as well as persuasion. Well-argued speeches contain a sharp sense of meaning to an issue. Fourth, argument can be enjoyable – and students are spaces in which argument is encouraged and where it can flourish. The foregoing reasons may seem obvious, since argument cannot be separated from debate. Part of this chapter is to help you learn better about how to bring the best from you with regard to argument. Playing arguments is like playing your gadgets: If you understand how they work, you are likely to get more service out of them, understand what went wrong when they break down, and fix the problem before your next outing. What matters most about argument to the debater is in differentiating bad argument from a good argument. In debate, this, in many ways, remainss problematic.There is no such thing as a total bad argument; rather, you should judge arguments based on the effectiveness. arguments shouldmust be judged on the basis of their effectiveness.

There are three most common types of argument. They are **induction, deduction, and causation**. These include the vast majority of possible logical relationships used in debates.

**Induction**

Inductive reasoning is the process of citing a sufficient number of specific examples to prove a generalization. You may characterize the process as ‘from the specific to the general.’ You cite example 1, example 2, and so on, and then draw the conclusion, a generalized statement about those factual examples. You can also reverse the process. You may state the generalization that you intend to prove and then cite examples to support it. Debaters utilize the later technique most frequently when using induction.

You must consider the following five principles when using induction:

1. The examples cited must be factual, not hypothetical.
2. The examples must be analogous; they must be of the same type, species, or category.
3. The induction must be built on a sufficient number of factual examples. What constitutes a sufficient number depends on the nature of your subject and your audience. If you are talking about nuclear power, for instance, you cannot not use examples from Iran alone. An audience that has knowledge of your subject will usually require more examples than one that has none. An audience that does not want to believe your conclusion will demand more examples than an audience that wants to believe it.
4. The conclusion of induction is a generalization.
5. You can effectively undermine an inductive argument by challenging the methodology or process used in collecting the data. Whenever you talk in terms of percentages, ratios, indices, the majority of cases, and the minority, you are referring to terms statistical in nature. Yet in most subjects for which we are apt to become advocates and use such statistical terms, the probabilities are great that the actual statistics have been gathered by a sampling process (an inductive process) rather than the complete counting.

Induction is a powerful weapon in influencing people’s beliefs. Speakers use it to defend or challenge the system of status quo, to demonstrate historical trends, to estimate public opinion, to show that certain courses of action are advantageous, and to establish universal truths. Induction is used widely in all areas of endeavor to uncover knowledge and verify findings.Therefore, you who wishes to become an effective debater will learn how to use it to strengthen your arguments and to refute the arguments of others.

**Deduction**

Deduction is one of the most common forms of reasoning found in debate. The essence of deduction is to take two ideas that we accept, find a relationship between them, and then draw this relationship as a conclusion. Those investigating crimes often use such reasoning. For example, if a murder was committed in one city on Saturday night, and if the enemy of the victim was seen in another city at the same time, then the enemy cannot be the murderer because of the accepted generalization that a person cannot be in two places at once. Often a deductive argument will take some accepted generalization and apply it to a specific situation. If one accepts the generalization, then it seems reasonable to accept the specific conclusion.

Deductive reasoning is that form of reasoning in which a conclusion is drawn from premises. The following are examples of deductive reasoning:

Any nation that has good univesrities has good financing for them.

USA has good universities.

Therefore, USA has had good financing for universities.

Any person who has a record of honesty in the past can be relied upon to be honest in the future.

Dr. Agus has a record of honesty in the past.

Therefore, Dr. Agus can be relied upon to be honest in the future.

Note that the proposition to be proved in each case is the concluding statement of the deduction. In each of the above examples the conclusion is drawn from the two statements that precede it. The first two statements are the premises upon which the conclusion is based.

**Causation/causal reasoning**

Causal reasoning is the form of reasoning in which you can demonstrate that an event that happens first has the means, power, facilities, and/or desire to produce a second event. Teachers often suggest to a student, “You’ll fail because you are cheating.” In this case, I am suggesting a certain conclusion, namely, you will fail. This is our proposition to be proved. Our support or proof for the proposition is the statement that you are cheating. The actual process of causal reasoning in its simplest form involves the statement of either a cause or an event as sufficient support for the whole reasoning process. This is what you did when you cited cheating as the obvious reason why you would fail. In most of your speaking, however, your causal reasoning will take the form of explaining why the cause produces the effect.

You can substantiate causal relationships and strengthen your arguments by citing experts who attest to the relationship or by using induction. For example, to prove that vitamin A in a food supply would reduce blindness, you could present evidence that thousands of people used it in three different cities, with the same results. You can then say that the causal relationship was proved. Here are two examples of causal reasoning:

* Statistics show that smokers have a higher incidence of lung disease. The cause is that smoking damages the lungs.
* Corruption in the current government will make it difficult for the party to win the upcoming election. The cause is that voters will not vote for a corrupt government.

1. **Structure of Arguments in Debate**

There are various ways to explain the structure of an argument.

Considering the structure of arguments, good arguments should also comprise of **AREL**:

1. **Assertion** – the statement which should be proved.

This a statement encapsulated in **ONE** sentence, which answers the following question: Why the judges should support your proposition? If you don’t manage to formulate your assertion in one sentence, you’d better drop this argument. In most of the cases it will be a failure.

1. **Reasoning** – the reason why that statement is logical. It isn’t enough to state something. It is equally important to explain your statement. So if you make a statement youu should explain to the adjudicators: **Why** your assetion is true and logical?
2. **Evidence** – examples/data that support the assertion and reasoning above. It isn’t enough to claim and explain something. Why the judges should believe you? It is important to **substantiate** your claim and explanation with **facts, statistics and experts’ opinions** (we call this staff – evidence).
3. **Link Back** – the explanation of the relevance of this argument to the motion. As you have talked a lot explaining the argument and substantiating it with evidence. The judges might have forgotten what the whole staff is about. So it is worth to remind them your assertion for the second time thus making a conclusion.

Another simple way to understand a good argument is by understanding how to create a good set of argument. To create a good argument, similar to the AREL principle, just do not forget the following 4 parts: a claim, an explanation of the claim, evidence and conclusion. I will explain how to make a good argument on the following motion: “This House would Ban Junk Food from schools”.

**1. A claim.**

A claim is a statement encapsulated in **ONE** sentence, which answers the following question: Why the adjudicators should support your proposition? If you don’t manage to formulate your claim in one sentence, you’d better drop this argument. In most of the cases it will be a failure.

So, a good claim regarding the above mentioned motion can be:

**“**We would ban Junk Food from schools in order to maintain the good academic achievement of the students**”.**

**2. An explanation of the claim.**

It isn’t enough to state something. Explain then. It is equally important to explain your statement. It is **not** self-evident that the banning junk food will bring benefit to the students’ health. So if you make a statement of such a kind you should explain to the adjudicators: **Why** the banning of junk food could be beneficial in health? A possible explanation can be:

**“….currently the eating habit of the students determines the physical condition of the students. Scholars believe that junk food does not contribute at all to the quality of human health. In addition, it is believed that junk food causes various health problems. By eliminating junk food from schools, the government has automatically protected the students from easy access to junk food. Then, junk food will be absent in the students’ eating habit and the students will stay healthy. So, with good physical performance, the students will be better in their academic performance.”**

**3. Evidence to back up your claim and explanation.**

It isn’t enough to claim and explain something. Why the adjudicators should believe you? It is important to **back up** your claim and explanation with **facts, statistics and experts’ opinions**. So bearing this point in mind our argument evolves into:

**“….this is proved by the rising number of students who are addicted to junk food. These students find problems of health and many times they cannot attend classes and exams. In China, numbers of students missing classes because of getting sick is getting higher. The reason is simply they are addicted to junk food. Those students cannot improve their academic quality.”**

**4. A conclusion.**

After you talk a lot explaining your argument and evidence, the judges need to recall to what is the main idea of your case. The judges might have forgotten what the whole staff is about. So it is worth to remind them your claim for the second time thus making a conclusion:

**“Since junk food contributes much in the decrease quality of students’ performance, you should support our proposition to ban junk food from schools.”**