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Building Models

Goals:

- Help debaters learn to identify policy motions that require a model.
- Help debaters build models that have enough detail without narrowing the debate too much.
- Help debaters anticipate major arguments of the opposition.

Procedure:

1. Present some basic ideas about models based on (attached at bottom)
http://debate.uvm.edu/dcpdf/models_and_plans.pdf
2. Go through the example given. Ask debaters what else they would include and anything they would leave out.
3. Give each debater a different motion to build a model for, and allow five minutes for him or her to outline a model according to these guidelines.
4. Have each debater present their model to the group.
5. Ask question, such as – what major opposition arguments do you anticipate and how do you deal with them? Has anything important been left out? Are you trying to narrow the debate too much? Can you do any of this through definition instead of having it in the model?
6. After you ask these questions of the first two debaters, have others ask the questions instead of you.

Cautions:

- Strive for word economy in the way the models are built.
- Make sure to keep the session moving so all will have a chance to contribute.
- Make it clear to them that no model is perfect.

MODELS AND PLANS FOR POLICY TOPICS

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European and Asian debaters tend to say “model,” North American debaters tend to say “plan.” Both terms refer to the specific proposal a team is making for implementing a policy topic.

Guidelines:

1. Have enough detail in your model so that it explains what you propose.
2. Have specific elements in your model that anticipate some arguments by your opposition.
3. Avoid having too much detail in your model, especially if it seems that you are trying to narrow the debate too much.
4. If you need added detail, try to define a term in a specific way instead of including that in the model.

Components:

Agent: who will do it.

What: what will they do.

How: how will they accomplish this

Specifics: if it costs a lot. Include funding; if it will be hard to enforce, specify method of enforcement; if it will need facilities, specify how you will build them; if it will take time, specify a phase in period. Include these specifics only when necessary.

Copy: If such a proposal has already been implemented somewhere with success, say you will copy those methods.

Example:

This House would legalize prostitution.

National governments will legalize prostitution as a commercial activity.

Prostitutes will register, undergo periodic health checks and be given commercial rights and police protection. The program will model the system used in Berlin, Germany.