



Citing Sources Aloud and Adding Analysis: 20 Sentence Starters.

Judges reward speakers who sound credible and think for themselves. This guide shows how to cite evidence smoothly and gives you 20 sentence starters that turn facts into analysis.

Facts are not enough

Evidence tells the judge **what** happened. Analysis tells the judge **why it matters** and **what follows**. Beginners often stack facts without explaining them. A simple rule: after every fact, say at least one sentence of your own thinking.

The formula

Source + date + fact. Then: "This matters because ..." Then: "Therefore ..."

How to cite a source out loud

Say the outlet and when it reported the fact. NSDA guidance says the name of the source and the date are the typical minimum. Keep it short; you are not reading a bibliography.

WEAK	BETTER	WHY
"Studies show ..."	"A report from a national statistics agency this spring found ..."	Names who and when
"I read that ..."	"According to a major newspaper last month ..."	Sounds credible
"Everyone knows ..."	"Data from an international organization shows ..."	Uses real support
Long quote	Short paraphrase with the key number	Saves time

Be honest. If you only remember the approximate number, say "about" or "roughly." Never invent an outlet, number, or quote. If a fact is an opinion piece, say "one columnist argued."

Twenty sentence starters

To explain why it matters:

- ◆ This matters because ...
- ◆ The impact here is ...
- ◆ What this tells us is ...
- ◆ The bigger picture is ...
- ◆ At stake is ...

To show cause and effect:

- ◆ As a result, ...
- ◆ This leads directly to ...
- ◆ The root cause is ...
- ◆ If this continues, then ...

- ◆ That pressure will likely push ...

To compare or weigh:

- ◆ Compared with ..., the difference is ...
- ◆ The strongest factor is ... because ...
- ◆ Some argue ..., but the evidence suggests ...
- ◆ On balance, ...
- ◆ The tradeoff is ...

To look ahead and conclude:

- ◆ Looking forward, ...
- ◆ The next step to watch is ...
- ◆ In the short term ..., in the long term ...
- ◆ Taken together, these points show ...
- ◆ That is why the answer is ...

Practice a point

- 1 Pick any news story and write its key fact on a card.
- 2 Say the fact with a spoken citation.
- 3 Add two sentence starters from the lists above.
- 4 Say the point in 60 to 90 seconds.
- 5 Record yourself and listen: was the analysis your own words?

WRITE ONE FACT WITH A CITATION AND TWO ANALYSIS SENTENCES

Quick self-check

- ☐ Every point has at least one source named aloud.
- ☐ No fact is left unexplained.
- ☐ I used different starters, not the same one three times.
- ☐ I never invented a number or an outlet.

Coaching note

Want a plan built around your speaker? Book a free consultation with Scholar Coach at the link below.

Built from public guidance: NSDA Competition Events Guide: Extemporaneous Speaking · Stoa Extemporaneous Rules (2024). Rules change by league and tournament, so always confirm against your tournament invitation and current league rules.

Want a plan built around **your** debater?

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