



Writing an LD Affirmative Case: A Template.

A step-by-step build for a six-minute Affirmative Constructive: framework, two contentions, and a timing plan. Includes a fill-in template and a self-check before you hit print.

Case anatomy

An AC is read at conversational-fast speed for **six minutes**. A tidy case has five parts. Your speaking pace decides how many words fit, so time yourself.

PART	JOB	TIME
Introduction	Grab attention and name the resolution	20 sec
Definitions (if needed)	Define only key terms	20 sec
Framework	Value and criterion	50 sec
Contention 1	First main reason the resolution is true	2 min
Contention 2	Second main reason	2 min
Conclusion	Tie back to value and ask for the ballot	20 sec

Time splits are suggestions. Keep a few seconds spare so you never rush the finish.

Build it in order

- 1 Read the resolution slowly.** Underline the key words. Ask: what exactly am I being asked to prove? 'Ought' means a moral or practical duty, not what will happen.
- 2 Pick a value and criterion.** Choose ones you can explain simply and that clearly favor your side without feeling forced.
- 3 List 5 to 8 reasons.** Brainstorm every reason the Aff is true. Then keep the strongest two or three.
- 4 Build each contention.** Use the claim, warrant, evidence, impact pattern below.
- 5 Link to the framework.** End every contention with: 'This matters because it upholds [value] through [criterion].'
- 6 Trim and time.** Cut anything that does not help you win. Read it aloud with a timer.

Contention template

LAYER	FILL IN	EXAMPLE (PRACTICE TOPIC)
Claim	One sentence tag	Required service strengthens communities
Warrant	Because...	Because shared projects build trust among neighbors
Evidence	Quote, study or real example with source	Cite a real source you verified

LAYER	FILL IN	EXAMPLE (PRACTICE TOPIC)
Impact	Why it matters	Stronger communities are safer and more connected
Link	Tie to value	This advances the common good

Evidence rule

Only use evidence you can actually cite: author, source and date. NSDA rules require you to say the author's last name and the year aloud and to have the full citation ready if asked. Do not guess or make up statistics. If you cannot find support, argue from logic and say so.

Self-check before you print

- ☐ My case argues the whole resolution, not just a small piece.
- ☐ My value and criterion are explained in plain words.
- ☐ Each contention has a claim, warrant, evidence and impact.
- ☐ Every contention links back to my criterion.
- ☐ I can read it in under 6 minutes at a pace the judge can follow.
- ☐ I know the best argument against each contention.
- ☐ I have a one-sentence summary of my case.

Common pitfalls: too many contentions (a few strong ones beat many weak ones), jargon the judge cannot follow, evidence with no explanation, and a framework that has nothing to do with the contentions.

Next steps

Once the case is written, practice it aloud three times, record yourself once, and have someone try to poke holes in it. Revise after every practice round. A case is never finished, only ready for this week.

Want a second set of eyes?

Scholar Coach can review your case and delivery. Book a free consultation at the link below.

Built from public guidance: UIL Intro to LD Debate slides, K. Adcock (uiltexas.org) · UIL Intro to LD Debate slides, E. Huber (uiltexas.org) · NSDA High School Unified Manual, 2021-2022 edition (speechanddebate.org) · UIL Judging Lincoln-Douglas Debate instructions, 2024-25 (uiltexas.org). Rules change by league and tournament, so always confirm against your tournament invitation and current league rules.

NOTES

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

Book a free consultation. The short intake takes about a minute and opens right away.

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