



LD Cross-Examination: Question Types and Drills.

Three minutes of cross-ex can set up your whole next speech. Learn the question types, a simple structure, and eight drills you can practice with a parent or teammate.

What cross-ex is for

In LD, each constructive is followed by a **three-minute** cross-examination (varies by league). The questioner asks, the speaker answers. Use it to **clarify**, **expose weak points**, and **set up arguments**. It is not the place to give a speech.

Remember

Anything useful you learn in cross-ex only counts if you use it later in a speech. Say 'In cross-ex, my opponent admitted...' when you do.

Six question types

TYPE	PURPOSE	EXAMPLE
Clarifying	Make sure you understood	'Can you repeat your criterion?'
Closed (yes/no)	Lock in a concession	'Do you agree some students would be forced to participate?'
Source check	Test evidence	'Who wrote that, and what year?'
Link	Test the logic	'How does that prove the resolution is true?'
Setup	Prepare a later argument	'Does your criterion count the harm to individuals?'
Trap (use carefully)	Reveal a contradiction	'You said rights matter most; does a mandate respect that?'

A simple question chain

- 1 Start broad.** 'What does your criterion measure?'
- 2 Narrow it.** 'So it is about overall benefit, correct?'
- 3 Test the edge.** 'What if the benefit comes with a harm to one student?'
- 4 Close.** 'So under your criterion that harm still counts?' Then stop and move on.

Keep questions short, polite and firm. If the answer is long, say 'Thank you' and ask the next question.

Eight drills

DRILL	HOW	TIME
1. One-word answers	Partner answers each question in under five words	3 min
2. Chain of five	Write five linked questions that end in one clear point	5 min

DRILL	HOW	TIME
3. Flow and ask	Read a case aloud; ask three questions from the flow	5 min
4. Interrupt politely	Practice ending long answers with 'Thank you, next question.'	3 min
5. Answer defense	Answer calmly without giving away your whole case	5 min
6. Source drill	Ask for author, date and qualification	3 min
7. Close the loop	Practice saying how you will use the answer in your speech	5 min
8. Full simulation	Do a timed three-minute cross-ex on a practice topic	3 min

- ☐ Prepare three questions before every cross-ex.
- ☐ Look at the judge when giving a key answer, not just your opponent.
- ☐ Never argue; ask the next question.
- ☐ Write down every useful answer on your flow.

Answering well

- ♦ Pause, then answer in one or two sentences.
- ♦ If you do not know, say so and offer to explain in your speech.
- ♦ Do not guess at evidence. 'I would need to check' is acceptable.
- ♦ Stay calm and polite, even if pressed. Judges notice.

QUESTIONS I WILL ASK IN MY NEXT ROUND

Practice partner needed?

Scholar Coach runs live cross-ex practice with feedback. Book a free consultation at the link below.

Built from public guidance: NSDA High School Unified Manual, 2021-2022 edition (speechanddebate.org) · UIL Judging Lincoln-Douglas Debate instructions, 2024-25 (uiltexas.org) · UIL Intro to LD Debate slides, E. Huber (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.

BOOK NOW →