



Building an Affirmative Case.

Step-by-step instructions for writing a first affirmative case, with a fill-in template and a simple worked example on a school-level topic.

The parts of an affirmative case

The first speech, the 1AC, is written in advance and read from a prepared document. A typical case has a few standard parts. Your coach may change the order, but the pieces stay the same.

PART	WHAT IT DOES	ROUGH SIZE (A GUIDE, NOT A RULE)
Plan text	States exactly what action the Affirmative will take	One sentence to a short paragraph
Inherency	Shows the problem will not go away without the plan	1 to 2 pieces of evidence
Advantage(s)	Explains the good results of the plan and why they matter	Each advantage has a claim, evidence and an impact
Solvency	Shows the plan works	2 to 4 pieces of evidence
Definitions (optional)	Explains how the plan fits the topic	A few lines

Start from the resolution

Read the current resolution slowly. Write down every action word and every group named in it. Your plan must be an example of what the resolution asks. Ask your coach if you are unsure. Look up the current topic through your league rather than guessing.

Writing the plan text

A plan is a short, precise instruction, like a law written in plain English. The Negative will read it closely, so every word should be there on purpose.

- ♦ **Actor:** who does it? (a school board, a state, the federal government, depending on the topic)
- ♦ **Action:** what exactly do they do?
- ♦ **Scope:** who or what is covered?
- ♦ **Funding and enforcement:** how is it paid for and carried out? Keep it simple.
- ♦ Avoid extra detail that gives the Negative something to attack.

Template and worked example

This example uses a made-up school policy so you can see the shape without touching a real topic. Your actual case will use real evidence cited from published sources.

PART	TEMPLATE	EXAMPLE
Plan	The [actor] will [action] for [scope].	The district school board will extend library hours to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays at all high schools.
Inherency	Right now [status quo]. No change is planned because [reason].	Hours are set by the current budget. No increase is scheduled.
Advantage	Claim: [good result]. Because [link]. Impact: [why it matters].	Claim: Grades improve. Because students without rides gain study access. Impact: higher graduation rates.
Solvency	Evidence shows [similar action] produced [result].	Districts that expanded hours reported more library use (needs a real, cited study).

Every claim needs evidence

The example above is a teaching sketch. In a real round each claim must be backed by a cited card from a published source that you have actually read.

Checklist before you submit your case

- ☐ Plan text is short, clear and fits the resolution
- ☐ Each advantage has a claim, evidence and an impact
- ☐ Every card has author, year, source and date
- ☐ Case reads aloud within your 1AC time limit (8 minutes under NSDA rules) at a clear pace
- ☐ Two teammates tried to attack it and noted the weak spots
- ☐ You can answer: what happens if the Negative says it is not topical?
- ☐ Printed and digital copies ready

DRAFT YOUR PLAN TEXT HERE

Want a plan built around your debater?

Scholar Coach can coach your student through writing and testing a first affirmative. Book a free consultation at the link below.

Built from public guidance: DebateUS: The Basic Structure of Policy Debate · NSDA High School Unified Manual, 2021-2022 edition (speechanddebate.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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