



Policy Glossary and a 12-Week Novice Plan.

Forty terms explained simply, followed by a week-by-week practice plan for a new debater. Keep it by the desk for the whole season.

Glossary, part 1: the round

Affirmative (Aff)

The side that supports the resolution with a plan

Resolution

The topic statement debated all season

Status quo

How things work right now

Rebuttal

A later speech that sorts and compares arguments

Prep time

Time banked for preparing between speeches

Signpost

Telling the judge where you are, such as "on their first point"

Negative (Neg)

The side that argues against the plan

Plan

The specific action the Affirmative proposes

Constructive

A speech that builds arguments

CX

Cross-examination, the questioning period

Flow

The notes of the round, or the act of taking them

Block

The pair of negative speeches in the middle of the round

Abbreviations: 1AC, 2AC, 1NC, 2NC, 1NR, 1AR, 2NR, 2AR (see the round guide).

Glossary, part 2: arguments and evidence

Stock issues

Core questions every plan must answer

Inherency

Why the problem will continue without the plan

Advantage

A good result of the plan

Uniqueness

Why the bad result is not already happening

Impact

The final effect, good or bad

Topicality (T)

An argument that the plan does not fit the resolution

Card

A prepared quote from a published source

Harms

The problem the plan wants to fix

Solvency

Whether the plan works

Disadvantage (DA)

A bad result of the plan

Link

The connection between the plan and a result

Counterplan (CP)

A different proposal the Negative says is better

Kritik (K)

An argument questioning assumptions behind a case

Tag

The one-sentence claim above a card

Cite

The source details of a card

Drop

To fail to answer an argument

Voter

A reason the judge should vote for you

Collapse

Focusing on your best arguments

Framework

Rules for how the judge should evaluate the round

Presumption

Which side wins if nothing is proven; varies by judge

Ballot

The judge's form with the decision and comments

Extend

Bring an earlier argument back into a later speech

Turn

Argue that the other side's point helps you

Weighing

Comparing the importance of impacts

Overview

A short summary at the start of a speech

Burden

What a side must prove

Speaker points

Score for speaking quality; NSDA district rules use a 30-point scale, other leagues vary

Judge philosophy

A short statement of what a judge prefers

The 12-week novice plan

Aim for three or four sessions a week of 20 to 40 minutes. Adjust with your coach to match your tournament dates.

WEEK	FOCUS	PRACTICE
1	Round basics	Learn speech order; watch a recorded round
2	Stock issues	Do the practice prompts; explain them to a parent
3	Flowing	Set up paper; use shorthand drill 3 times
4	Research	Cut 5 cards with full citations
5	Plan text	Write and test a plan with a partner
6	Affirmative case	Draft a full 1AC; time it
7	Negative basics	Write one disadvantage chain
8	Cross-examination	Run 4 drills; do 2 mock CX sessions
9	Answering arguments	Practice a 2AC against your own DA
10	Rebuttals	Use the script template; collapse practice
11	Full practice round	Run a timed round; get written feedback
12	Review and goals	Compare feedback; set next-season targets

- ☐ I can name all 12 parts of a round in order (8 speeches and 4 cross-examinations)
- ☐ I can flow a speech with shorthand
- ☐ I can cut a card with a full citation
- ☐ I can state my plan in one sentence
- ☐ I can explain a disadvantage in four parts
- ☐ I can write my voters in a rebuttal

MY GOALS FOR THIS SEASON

Want a plan built around your debater?
Scholar Coach can turn this outline into a personal schedule. Book a free consultation at the link below.

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