

## **What makes for a good debate?**

### Procedural

- Clearly and fairly worded proposition that functions as the hypothesis to be tested.
- Appropriate time provided for “constructive” and “rebuttal” speeches, with time limits strictly enforced.
- Debates should have at least one moderator responsible for timing speeches and in general making sure the agreed upon format is followed.

### Substantive

- Clearly structured claims in support or opposition of the proposition, preferably numbered. Audience members should find it easy to take notes.
- Credible evidence provided to support claims. Sources should be identified clearly and their credentials explained if not obvious.
- Advocates should treat the proposition seriously and not avoid clash through odd interpretations of wording or excessively “meta” arguments about the debate format.
- Advocates should respond to their opponent’s arguments in addition to advancing their own reasons in support or opposition of the proposition. –
- Advocates should keep in mind that they are trying to persuade the audience. They should dress, speak, and in general conduct themselves in a manner to maximize their credibility.
- Debate is presumed to be an exchange of reasons to agree or disagree with the proposition. Argumentative fallacies should be avoided.
- Debate topics involving value comparisons are especially challenging, so advocates should be prepared to defend why their ethical framework or values are more desirable than their opponents, or otherwise offer the audience a means of logically resolving the value dispute.