

Opening Speeches

A. Goal of the lesson

The goal of this lesson is to introduce students to the structure and making of first Proposition and first Opposition speeches. By the end of this lesson students should be aware of all the necessary components first speakers must use in their speeches as well as have a general idea what first speakers and the team holistically should prioritize during preparation time.

B. Activities

Lecture (25 minutes)

Explain that 1st Prop speech consists of introduction (~1.5 min; status quo, definitions + model, position(teamline), burden, case split), constructive material (~6 min; 3 or 2 arguments) and conclusion (<30sec.). 1st Opp: introduction (~30sec; position(teamline), case division), refutation (~2.5 min; alternative model, reframing can also be included), constructive material (~5 min; 3 or 2 arguments), conclusion (<30sec)

Explain what are the nuances of all parts of the speech: status quo (sets the problem a motion is trying to solve, framing a debate from the more convenient side, proposition should be offensive towards the status quo from the beginning pointing out issues they will fix); definitions + model (have to be reasonable to frame the debate on grounds both teams can argue on, generally a bad strategy to challenge definitions), teamline (has to convey the main position of the team), burden of proof (principles on which debate should be judged, what each team has to prove), cover situations in which it would be convenient for opposition to have an alternative model.

A convenient way to introduce all of these would be by choosing a specific motion and going through each part of building a 1st speech together with the classroom.

We recommend using Simon Quinn's chapter on structure of first speeches in „Debating in the World Schools Style: A Guide”, p. 123-128. You can also fill the lecture with remarks on more important techniques first speakers use (see recommended reading in section C. Preparation).

Exercise (25 min)

Set the motion with similar principles to the one you just dissected with the classroom (ex. THW ban gambling and THW ban smoking) and give students 15 minutes to prepare. Then ask a few to present their speeches (6 minutes is standard time, but shorter speech would be more comfortable with such short preparation time).

The goal of this exercise is for debaters to grasp the general structure of first speeches and realize what roles do those speeches have to fulfill. When explaining each separate structural element only briefly cover the purpose of it and how it should be done, do not go in depth and do not expect debaters to present a status quo which frames the debate perfectly strategically for the proposition. The goal is

that they would simply grasp that there has to be a Status Quo. The same goes for model, case split etc. After the exercise firstly ask them to reflect themselves where they feel like they fulfilled/failed to fulfil the burdens of First Speeches and only then give them balanced feedback.

C. Preparation

Watch: WSDC debates and analyze 1st speeches. Write down examples of how specific models are chosen for specific debates.

Think of examples of bad debates you have judged or just attended in the past, where 1st speeches defined the debate in an unfair, unchallenging manner.

Read: S. Quinn "Debating in the World Schools Style: A Guide" p.10-21 on definitions, SQ; p.50-64 on Model; p.87-90 on Arguments; p.120-121; p.123- 128 on the structure of First Speeches.

For more knowledge, you can also watch lectures like [THIS](#) or [THIS](#).

D. Hints

Encourage students to think for themselves, constantly ask how would they set up the debate or interpret certain parts of speeches.

Give individual feedback to those who present speeches.

If you see that the class is struggling instead of asking to make 6 minute speeches you can alternatively offer to just do introductions. Students would have more time to prepare and more would come to speak.

During the lecture make sure that students note how important it is to grasp the main problem a motion is trying to fix, think of actors and possible burdens and to tie arguments back to the essential problem and burdens

E. Verification

To conclude the training, you can ask your students the following questions:

- What are the main principles you have to know if you are preparing and opening speech?
- What should an ideal structure of opening proposition and opposition speech should look like?
- What are frequent mistakes we should avoid during executing an opening speech?

As a trainer, you should be interested in these questions for your next trainings:

- What kind of impression about debates students take from the lesson? Why is it a positive/negative one?
- What should every trainer do to learn from the lesson for the future:
- What activity/example/discussion had the students engage most?
- What was the biggest problem during the lesson? What can be done to prevent it in the future?

