



BP DEBATING: STRUCTURE & ROLE FULFILMENT

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Speaker Development

British Parliamentary (BP) Format

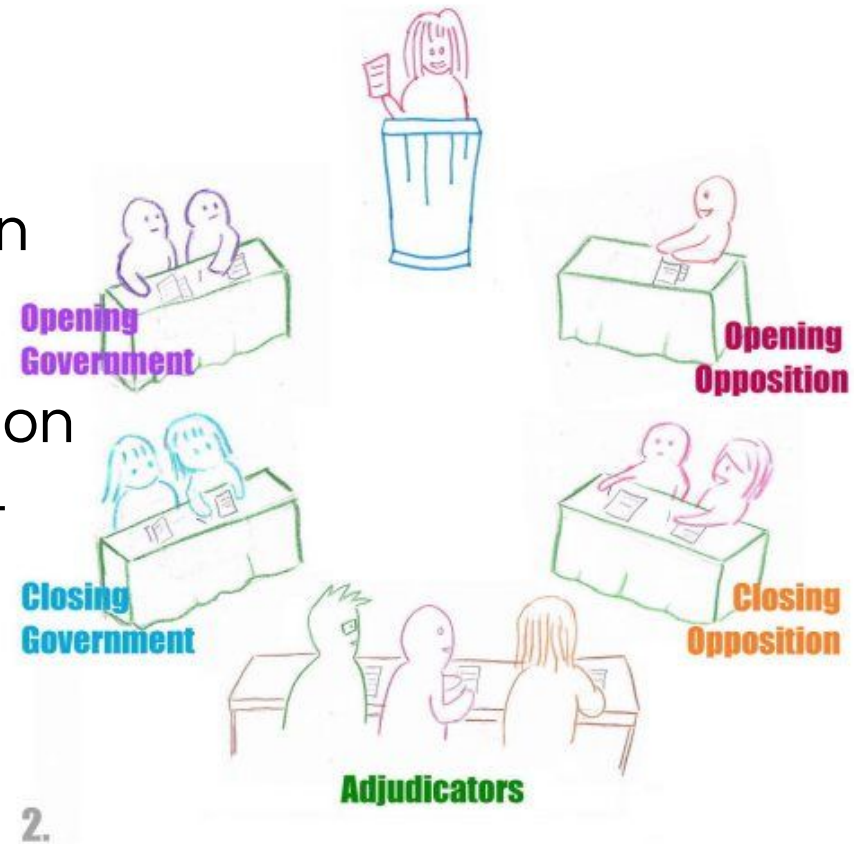
- Four teams of two debaters
- Opening and Closing Proposition (government)
- Opening and Closing Opposition
- Each team is competing with the other **three** teams.
- Teams on the same side cannot contradict each other.
- Closing teams must still distinguish themselves from opening teams.
 - Different arguments/actors to analyze or greater depth.
- Closing teams must refute ALL arguments presented by the other side.



BP Debate Flow

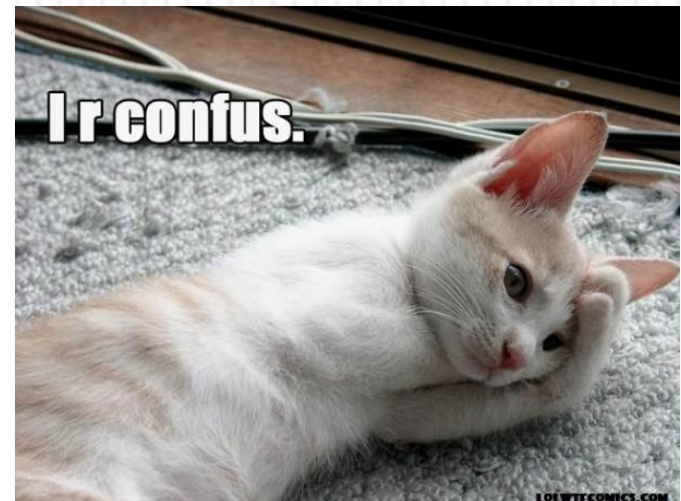
Speaking order:

- 1st Gov: Prime Minister
- 1st Opp: Leader of the Opposition
- 1st Gov: Deputy Prime Minister
- 1st Opp: Deputy Leader Opposition
- 2nd Gov: Member of Government
- 2nd Opp: Member of Opposition
- 2nd Gov: Government Whip
- 2nd Opp: Opposition Whip



Sample BP Resolutions

- THBT International development institutions (such as the World Bank) should not finance natural resource extraction projects in corrupt states
- THW legally permit soldiers to refuse to participate in military actions or missions on the basis of conscience
- Notice there there is great scope for analysis in these resolutions.



Structure of each speech: general

- Introduction] Say what you're going to say
- (Rebuilding)
- Constructive Argument 1
- Constructive Argument 2
(First speaker only)
- ...
- Refutation] Counterargument
(increasing in length as debate progresses)
- Brief summary Say it again!

'Front Half' of the Bench

- The two opening teams are often referred to as the “front half” of the bench.
- Much of what they need to do is similar to other forms of parliamentary debate (like Canadian Parliamentary)
 - Establish a clear principle
 - Present compelling arguments
 - Refute opposing arguments
- It is VERY important for the Front Half teams to present as much substantial constructive material as possible.
 - The other two teams (closing) will have the last word.

Specific Roles: 1st Gov

Prime Minister:

- Explain the problem with the status-quo
- Explain what your solution is: the mechanism/model
 - Also, what should be outside the scope of the debate.
- Explain how your resolution will solve the problem (constructive arguments x2)

Deputy Prime Minister:

- Defend the arguments presented by the PM.
- Further explain why it is still a good proposal - add new constructive argument(s).
- Explain why the arguments of 1st Opp are invalid, irrelevant or important (enough)

Specific Roles: 1st Opp

Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

- If possible, explain why you disagree with the way 1st Gov sees the problem,
 - and/or why it isn't a (big) problem,
- Explain why the model proposed by 1st Gov will not solve the problem they identified,
- And/Or explain why the proposal of 1st Gov will bring other/bigger/more substantial harms than the original problem.
- Try to avoid proposing alternative solution(s)

Back Half

- Must be consistent with model/stance of the opening team!
 - Disagreeing or being inconsistent is called “knifing”.
 - You are not allowed to ‘knife’ the Front Half teams (especially 1st Gov)!
- Must bring new, substantive material to the round,
- Must also distinguish themselves from the Front Half
 - As politely as possible.
 - Without contradicting the front half team on your side.

Specific Roles: 2nd Gov I (MC)

Extension speaker:

- Must be consistent with OG definition and model.
- Explain that there is another, even more important, reason to agree with the motion.
 - One good **NEW** argument, or
 - An important **actor** that has not yet been considered, or
 - a case study
 - A **detailed** study that applies previous arguments.
 - An **expansion** of an argument from front half.

Specific Roles: 2 Opp

Extension speaker:

- Similar to 2nd Gov. extension
- Engage with the 2nd Gov extension
- Give bigger / more important harms than 1st Opp
- Listen carefully; don't rely on your prep too much

Whip (summary) speaker:

- Similar to 2nd Gov. whip
 - Gov is wrong AND
 - Opp Extension argument won the debate.

Specific Roles: 2nd Gov II (Whip)

Whip (summary) speaker:

- 'Summarize' the entire debate in really biased way.
 - "What this debate boils down to is ..."
 - Ideally this should be two or three key issues/questions.
 - These could be presented as burdens the Gov needed to prove
- Clearly establish why Opp is wrong
 - Why so the Gov. points still stand.
 - Distinguish between opening and closing Opp.
- Refer to your partner's extension argument as the most significant one.
 - Why this argument won the debate

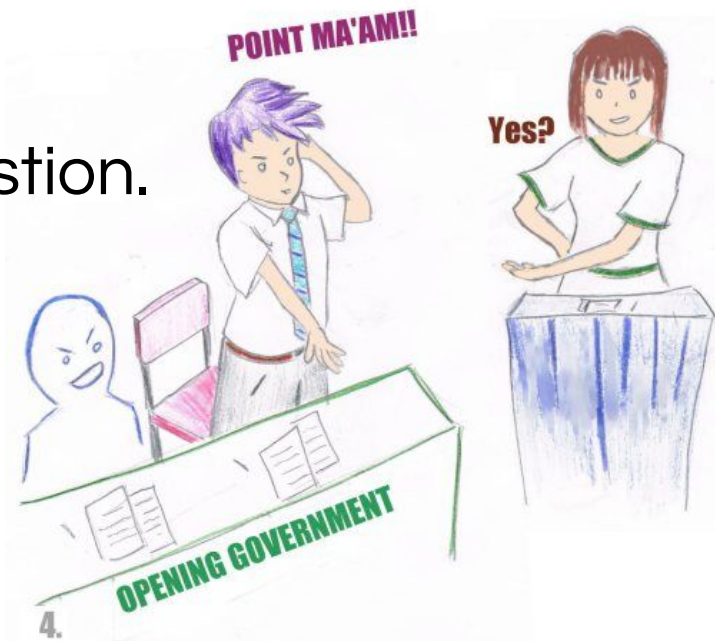
Exercise 2: A Debate

- THW (=This House Would) make drugs freely available
 - Why would someone want to do that?
 - Why would someone oppose that?
 - What other consequences will there be?
 - Who are the key stakeholders?



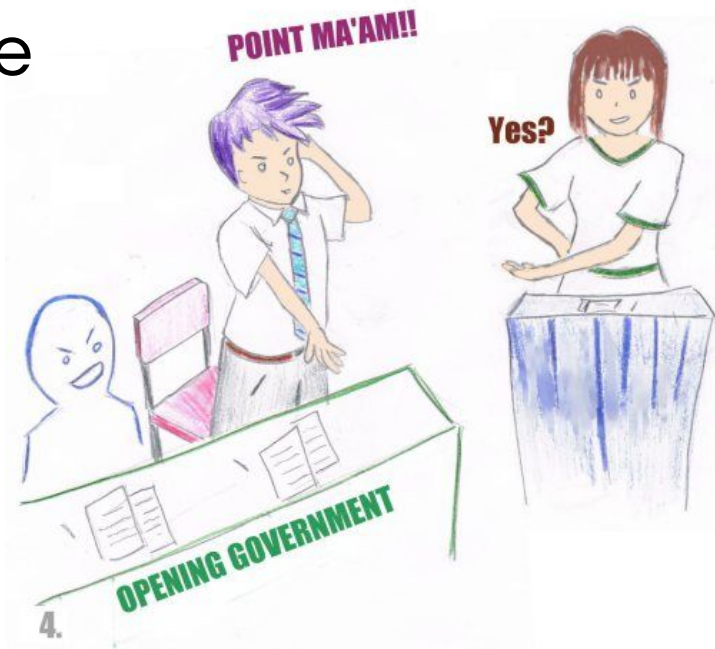
Speeches & POIs

- 5-minute speeches
- 0.5 - 1 minute protected time at beginning and end
- 3-4 minutes for Points of Information (POI)
- Only take 1 POI!
 - This should be ONE short question.
 - Only when **you** are ready
 - Limit POI's to 15 seconds



The Importance of POIs

- A good POI shows that a team opposing the speaker is **listening** to what is being said.
- It is up to the **SPEAKER** whether or not to take a POI.
- Taking a POI demonstrates the confidence of the speaker.
- Giving a POI can help to set up a refutation strategy.
- Giving POI's can help keep **opening teams** in the round.



Sample BP Debate 1

This House would ban abortion at all stages of pregnancy
(WUDC 2009, Cork, Final)

Notice the length of the resolution statement. It may seem counterintuitive for a debate with four teams to make this resolution so detailed but, in practice, this helps focus the round and offers opportunities for deep analysis.



Sample BP Debate 2

THBT Parents should be held responsible for the crimes committed by their children



Sample BP Debate 3

This House Would rather save the live of a single child over extending the life of 5 adults by 10 years.
(WUDC Final 2018, Mexico)



Further Resources

- [An introduction to BP Debate \(from CSDF\)](#)
- [Sample Adjudication \(from Botswana World Universities Championships, 2011\).](#)
- [A Debater's Guide to first Principles](#)
- [Cambridge Guide to BP Debate](#)
- [World Universities Debate Championships past resolutions](#)

Some Past BP Resolutions

- This House believes that all states have a right to nuclear weapons
- This house believes that central banks should set limits on government spending (topical!!)
- This house believes that the southern african development community (SADC) should pursue political union.
- This house would ban for-profit universities and colleges.
- This house would deny tax-exempt status to religious institutions that refuse to appoint female leaders.
- This house believes that the feminist movement should actively fight to liberate men from their prescribed gender roles

THW provide drugs through the government

- Why?
 - They're going to get it anyway
 - They would it through dealers
 - Stop crime – REDUCE CRIME
 - Control addiction: medical supervision – BETTER HEALTH
 - Consent
 - Stop funding drug cartels – REDUCE CRIME
 - Better drugs – CONSUMER RIGHTS
 - Tax it – FAIRER TAX SYSTEM
 - To raise insurance cost
 - Save the addicts money - GOAL
 - Because drugs provide a clear benefit – BETTER PARTIES
 - To control the people