
When you receive a resolution, especially when you are engaged in an impromptu debate, consider the following steps, which can help you generate claims.

Step 1: Identifying the Central Conflict. To generate claims, one should first ask, “What is the central conflict in the resolution?” Asking this question is important because it leads to a more profound understanding of the resolution, which is necessary to generate insightful claims. When you ask this question about the resolutions, you discover that there are three central conflicts, which can be described as follows:

- 1) **Pragmatic vs Principle.** For example, consider the following thesis: *Pornography should be banned.* The **Principled** focuses on the mental harm caused towards women whereas the **Pragmatic** position considers banning pornography unrealistic because it will simply go underground.
- 2) **Excellence vs Equity.** For example, consider the following thesis: *Standardized testing is necessary in school.* The **Excellence** position focuses on selecting out intelligence because these people are likely to innovate and resolve problems in society whereas the **Equity** position focuses on giving all students an opportunity to be productive members of society.
- 3) **Personal Freedom vs Social Responsibility.** For example, consider the following thesis: *Handguns should be banned.* The **Personal Freedom** side focuses on a person’s right to protect himself whereas the **Social Responsibility** focuses on the need to eliminate handguns to make society safer.

Once you identify the central conflict in the resolution, you should occasionally refer to it during your arguments and refutations because it will help you to maintain your focus in the debate.

Step 2: Considering different Perspectives. To thoroughly support or deny a resolution, it is important to generate claims that are uniquely different from each other. To do this, it is helpful to think about **Categories**, which are domains of knowledge, that prompt you to consider the resolution from different perspectives. In general, you should strive to generate a Claim from the following three perspectives:

Social, Political, Economic. Although three claims for a debate is adequate, you should strive to create four claims because each debater should be prepared to deliver two Arguments. With this expectation in mind, you should strive to consider a fourth category that is different from the Social, Political and Economic categories. What you select as your fourth category depends on the content of the resolution, so a fourth category could be *Psychological, Cultural, Educational, Moral*, etc.

Consider the following resolution: **Zoos should be banned.** If one is supporting the resolution, one may consider the following Claims:

Proposition 1:

- Claim 1:** (Political) *Zoos encourage the illegal trade of wild animals.*
Claim 2: (Economic) *The tax dollars supporting Zoos could be better spent.*

Proposition 2:

- Claim 3:** (Moral) *It is cruel to keep large animals in confined spaces.*
Claim 4: (Educational) *Seeing animals in videos in the wild is more truthful.*

If one is opposing the resolution, one might consider the following Claims:

Opposition 1:

- Claim 1:** (Political) *Zoos help to breed endangered species.*
Claim 2: (Educational) *Zoos enable scientists to study animal behavior.*

Opposition 2:

- Claim 3:** (Cultural) *They offer people a chance to see rare animals.*
Claim 4: (Economic) *Most zoos pay for themselves with ticket sales.*