

Parliamentary Debate Policy Debate Worksheet

In a policy debate, the Government team argues in favor of the adoption of a specific policy-related course of action. The Opposition team can agree with the need and the problem, but reject the specific Government policy and argue in favor of an alternative, OR they could argue that the problem is unimportant and that no policy needs to be adopted OR they could argue that the problem is important, but that the adoption of the specific policy will result in disadvantages that outweigh the Government's case. Here's a brief outline:

Government:

Define Terms.

(See Definition Worksheet).

State the policy change being advocated.

State the problem(s) with the current approach.

State the harm.

State the benefits of the policy change
(IE: The solution to the problem that causes the harms).

Specific Example: Suppose that you're debating the proposition "Resolved: This House would improve working conditions."

The Government defines improve as "strengthen" and working conditions as "regulations requiring increased worker safety measures."

The problem: Current laws do not promote on the job safety.

- 1) Workers are exposed to hazards.
- 2) Workers have no right to know.
- 3) Dangerous workplaces are unregulated.

Because of this problem, many harms result.

- 1) Death.
- 2) Dismemberment, serious injury.

Policy change will solve the problem.

- 1) Strong laws protect worker safety.

Opposition:

Accept Government Definitions OR
Quarrel with them and present counter-definitions.

Accept the policy change or propose an alternative

Accept the problem, argue for an alternative Approach OR argue that the problem does not lead to harmful outcomes.

Accept the harm OR argue that the harm is not significant or important.

Argue the benefits will not result, OR argue that the alternative solution is superior OR that the Government's policy solution will be worse than the harms.

Disagree – we have many laws, but they're not enforced.

- 1) Workers dis-obey rules.
- 2) Workers ignore safety training.
- 3) Most workplaces are regulated.

Disagree – workplace injuries are declining

- 1) Much lower than in years past.
- 2) Most result from worker error or equipment misuse.

Disagree – laws will not be enforced and the problem will worsen.

- 1) Laws do not increase protection.
- 2) Companies will shift to weak-enforcement areas or foreign countries.
- 3) More workers will be hurt.
- 4) Education solves better than regulation.

